

B-CLEAR DATA SET SPOTLIGHT: BLOOMINGTON RENTAL PROPERTIES

“B-Clear” is short for *Bloomington Clear*, a web-based, one-stop site for data about the City of Bloomington, its services, and its neighborhoods. The site is open to the public and includes over 200 data sets about everything from park trails to police calls to paving schedules. This month, I’m spotlighting *Bloomington Rental Properties* – a look at the houses, apartments and other residences available for rent. So how many rental units are registered with the City of Bloomington? Which owners have the most property under management? Who owns that rental property down the street from you? Start here!



FIND OUT MORE:

data.bloomington.in.gov/dataset/rental-properties



UREPORT: ON LINE REPORTING AND HELP REQUESTS

See a sidewalk that’s blocked by overgrown vegetation? A street light that’s not working? A pothole that needs to be patched? Have an idea for a program that you’d like to share with the Parks Department? Have a compliment for a city staff member? **Use UReport!**

This online portal is a quick, easy way to communicate with the city about non-emergency issues like those above. The site is easy to navigate with drop-down menus, open fields to record your comments, and even a place to upload your photos of whatever needs attention. When you submit your reports or comment to the City it will be sent to the appropriate department and you’ll hear back from the staff who are working on the issue (generally within a day or two). You may also send an e-mail directly to info@bloomington.in.gov or call the City at 812.349.3400, (but I’ve found UReport to be a lot faster!)

FIND OUT MORE:

bloomington.in.gov/ureport-about



PROPOSED WATER RATE INCREASES: WHAT’S BEEN DONE? WHAT’S AHEAD?

City of Bloomington Utilities (or “**CBU**” for short) is responsible for overseeing the City’s water including **drinking water, storm water, and wastewater**. Part of their role is to ensure that we stay current on water main maintenance/replacement and that we have the resources needed to cover inflation-driven increases in operations and maintenance costs. So, in 2016, the City Council asked CBU to conduct a **water rate review** every four years to help ensure that we have the resources necessary for these important tasks.

Following its completion in 2020, results of a **cost-of-service study** were first presented to the Utilities Service Board (USB) Finance Subcommittee on January 4, 2021. The study confirmed that *residential customers have historically paid rates that are higher than their cost of service while all other customers have paid less than their cost of service*, and it recommended that rates be adjusted to more accurately reflect the cost of service for these different users.

Now, CBU has begun the process of requesting an increase in customers’ water rates in order to modernize and



improve the public water utility, and their proposal was first presented to City Council on February 3rd. If passed by Council the coming weeks, CBU will file the rate request with the **Indiana Utilities Regulatory Commission** (IURC) before the end of March 2021. CBU anticipates that the IURC will then host public hearings, with the dates and times to be announced. Any final rates that are approved by IURC would be implemented in two phases (2022 and then 2024) to avoid an increase larger than 20% in any one rate change.

FIND OUT MORE:

<https://bloomington.in.gov/utilities/rate-case>



TIME TO APPLY FOR 2021 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT GRANTS!

Under the leadership of the City's Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND), the 2021 neighborhood grant application cycle is now open. Through the grant programs outlined below, neighborhoods may be awarded City funding for neighborhood improvements.

SMALL AND SIMPLE

The **Small & Simple Grant Program** offers funding up to \$500/year from January 4 through September 1 through two programs:

- The traditional **Small & Simple Grant** funds community building opportunities that might not otherwise be available, from training sessions to neighborhood newsletters to celebrations.
- The **Small & Simple Grant to Control Invasive Plant Species** is a pilot program that provides grant monies to fund improvements on private property *with the explicit purpose of supporting neighborhood-wide initiatives to remove invasive species and replace them with native plants*. This grant program is a partnership between HAND and Monroe County Identify-and-Remove Invasive Species (MC-IRIS)

FIND OUT MORE:

bloomington.in.gov/neighborhoods/grants/small-and-simple

NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP



Neighborhood Cleanup Grants provide an opportunity for neighbors to work together to build community

and instill pride in their neighborhood. A cleanup is a one-day event during which volunteers from the neighborhood receive City staff assistance and equipment to dispose of trash, tires, scrap metal, hazardous material, and brush. Through a competitive application process, two Neighborhood Cleanup Grants will be awarded in 2021.

FIND OUT MORE:

bloomington.in.gov/neighborhoods/grants/clean-ups

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO): NEW DRAFT ZONING MAP NOW AVAILABLE (THIS IS A REALLY BIG DEAL)

What changes will you be permitted to make to your property? Could you add a "granny flat"? What could a developer build on that lot next door (or down the street)? What materials need to be used for new construction in your neighborhood? Once finalized, the **Unified Development Ordinance** (local laws governing land use and development) and the **Zoning Map** will answer *exactly* these kinds of questions for years to come.

(So again ... this is a big deal!)

In recent weeks, the **Plan Commission** has begun meeting to review the proposed maps and UDO amendments. Once a "final" version of the map has been approved by the Plan Commission, the process moves to City Council.

City Council then has 90 days to do one of two things: **(1)** approve the map (which gives it force of law), or **(2)** send it back to the Plan Commission with recommended changes (in which case the cycle would start again). If City Council fails to do either of those things, then the new Zoning Map automatically becomes law.

Both the Plan Commission and City Council will offer multiple opportunities for public comment, and your feedback is welcome and needed. Help these groups understand how proposed zoning will affect you and your neighborhood. In addition, please consider sharing your feedback through online surveys on the project website.

FIND OUT MORE:

bloomington.in.gov/planning/udo/map/updates

KEEP IN TOUCH!



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