

4.1.7 OBJECTIVE SEVEN

07 ENCOURAGE AGRICULTURE



COMMUNITY GARDEN STUDY & LEADERSHIP

AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

SMALL AND LARGE SCALE PRODUCTION OF LOCAL FOOD IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE CULTURE AND ECONOMY OF THE BLOOMINGTON REGION.

A. BACKGROUND

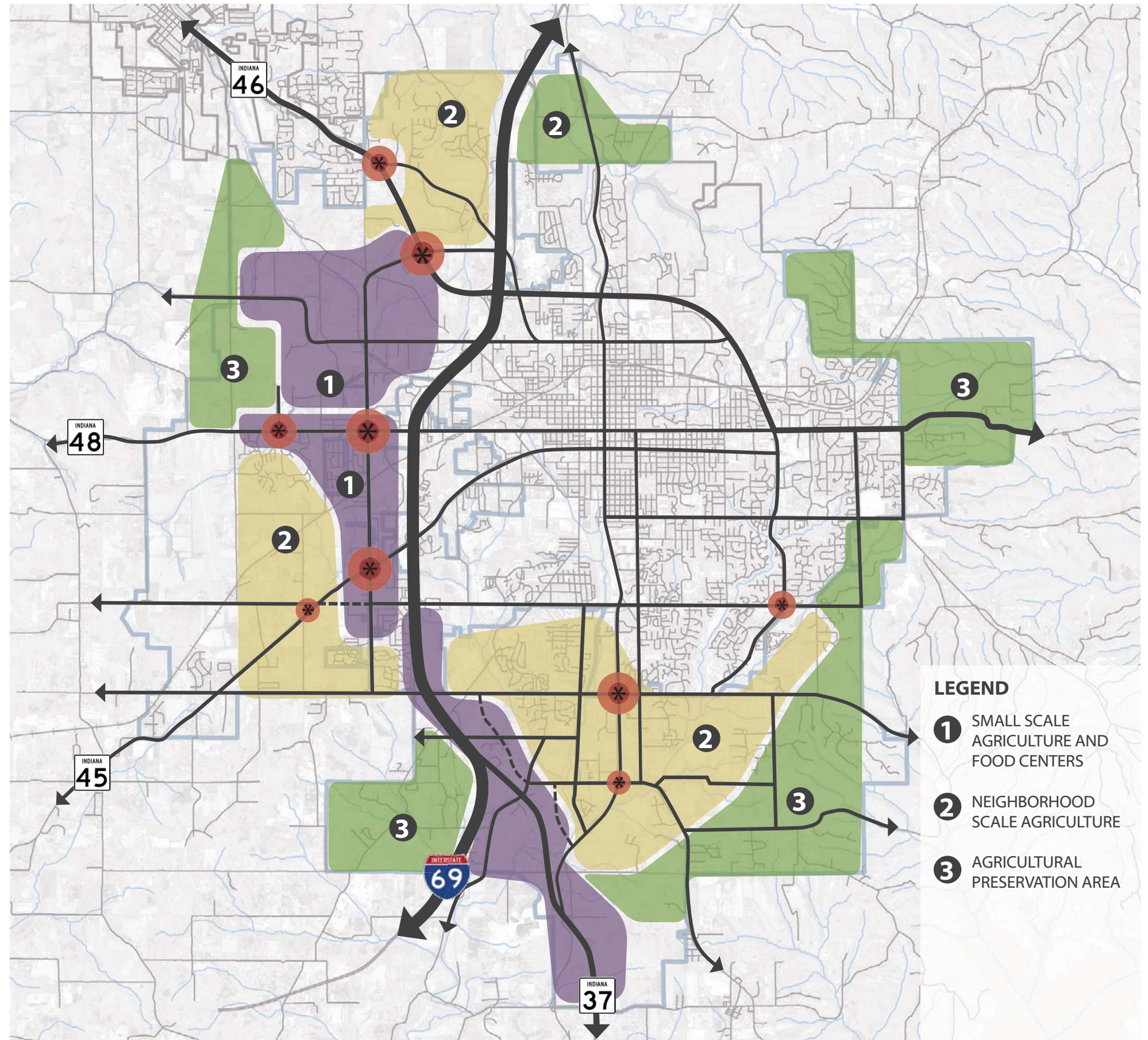
Agriculture is an important part of the Bloomington region's local economy and culture. Various scales of agriculture exist in the Urbanizing Area including large existing family farms, smaller orchards and hobby farms, and local small community gardens.

B. EXISTING LARGE SCALE FARMS

There are several large scale farms still in production, particularly in the southern end of the Urbanizing Area. These are generally owned by families that have held the land in perpetuity. With growth in the greater Bloomington Area, there will be pressure to convert these working farms into development. A core goal is to preserve these family farms as they are a key element for economic considerations and for the rural feel of the study area.

C. COMMUNITY GARDENS

Monroe County should creating a Community Garden program similar to City of Bloomington's. This would provide residents with an opportunity to maintain their own garden plot within a larger community garden. This would also provide the opportunity for participation by volunteers who are not able to commit to the responsibility of maintaining a full garden plot throughout the growing season.



80% DRAFT

LOCATION

Community Gardens are generally smaller in scale and are located on public or community controlled property. These are often integrated into public parks and other open spaces and are a good use of unprogrammed open space.

ADMINISTRATION

Monroe County should consider creating a community garden leadership committee. This committee would be responsible for creating strategies for implementation, selecting sites, collecting necessary materials, and appointing individual site ‘champions’. Also, in order to support community gardens, the provision of conveniently accessible potable water, soil and soil amendments, and other necessary elements would be coordinated by the committee.

D. PRIVATE GARDENS

Private gardens are smaller gardens which are located on small community lots or individual properties. Generally, these are no more than 3,000 square feet in size and are owned and maintained entirely by private citizens.

PRODUCTION

In spite of their relatively small size, these gardens are capable of supporting significant agricultural production. During World War II, for example, these ‘Victory Gardens’ accounted for nearly a third of the total vegetables produced in the United States. These high yields per acre are created through a high density approach to planting the soil and very attentive maintenance.

TABLE 4.X: XXXXXXXXXXXX

F. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS					
STRATEGY		ACTION	CODE	TYPE	LEAD
1	STUDY POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN INTEGRATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Meet with neighborhood groups to determine need and potential use for public gardens + Develop strategy and conceptual plan for incorporation of community gardens into existing and proposed neighborhoods + Develop potential project scope(s) and magnitude(s) of cost + Develop funding strategy and sources 	4.1.7.1	Community Agriculture Program	Public/Private Partnership
2	CREATE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Create a Community Garden committee to progress the development of fully integrated + Provide the necessary policy support for the program 	4.1.7.2	Community Agriculture Program	Monroe County & Private Citizen Groups
3	DEVELOP AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Work with local farm owners to understand pressures related to development and economics + Develop agriculture preservation strategy document and vet through a public process + Provide the necessary policy support and modifications to support agricultural preservation 	4.1.7.3	Public Policy	Monroe County

SUPPORT

Monroe County should support private gardens through various funding programs or volunteer coordination activities. These may include the provision of free seeds and soil amendments, training, and coordination.

E. FOOD CENTERS

A new concept in the local foods movement is the creation of community ‘food centers’. These are locally based and privately or philanthropically supported facilities which provide a foundation for the production, process, distribution, preparation, sales and marketing of local food.

FOOD PROCESSING

Because most local food is harvested at generally the same time, there is typically a need to process freshly harvested food into packaged food for use outside the harvest season. Canned pasta sauce, for example, can be locally grown food which is processed for use significantly beyond the season. In order to support local agriculture, it may be possible to create a community driven processing center in which community or private gardeners are able to sell their excess produce at a wholesale rate to the food processing center. This would infuse food production into new sectors of the economy and provide a way to use excess food which may be wasted.

BUSINESS INCUBATION

Local food-related businesses are a significant growth sector in the US economy. A food center should include business training, funding support, affordable small kitchens, and other key support facilities for new or established entrepreneurs.

CREATE AGRICULTURAL SPACE FOR ALL RESIDENTS



High Point Community Garden; Seattle, Washington

Agricultural production works successfully at various scales, forms and contexts across the globe.



Ohio City Farm; Cleveland, Ohio