



The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bloomington Chamber Urges City Council to Aid Public Transit Expansion

Bloomington, IN – January 31, 2020 – As our community works to strengthen public transit, the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce urges the Bloomington City Council to take an initial step: Amend Chapter 2.76 of the Bloomington Municipal Code, enabling Bloomington Transit to provide service outside the city limits.

According to Erin Predmore, President and CEO of the Chamber, “This is a small but necessary step to make our community’s public transit system even better for city residents, including employers and people who work in urbanized areas of Monroe County.”

The current code states that the boundaries of the Bloomington Public Transportation Corporation, which operates Bloomington Transit, must be “coterminous” with the city’s boundaries. Lifting this restriction, by itself, does not mean that Bloomington Transit will immediately start operating buses outside the city limits. But it does provide flexibility for BT to adjust its routes in the future, if BT staff and board find it to be financially viable.

BT is undergoing a route optimization process. Consultants for this project recommend that BT provide service out to Ivy Tech and Cook Group, located just beyond the city limits. However, this service would not be possible under the current city code. Nor can BT offer service to Ellettsville, under current constraints.

“Most of us don’t constrain our lives to the city limits, even if we live within them. Many city residents need to attend Ivy Tech, or work at Cook Group and other businesses located slightly outside the city, or shop on the western edge of our community. We need a transit system that reflects the realities of our community and serves the needs of city residents,” says Predmore.

Providing reliable public transportation helps all city residents. A recent report by the Bloomington Affordable Living Committee – “Working Hard, Falling Behind” – includes this feedback from Amethyst House, a local nonprofit: “Affordable, reliable and accessible public transportation is critical to many in our community as they work to sustain employment, fulfill basic needs, gain access to social services, and engage in our community.”

The Chamber recognizes there are many challenges to expanding transit, including financial resources and political issues between the city and county. Looking at how to improve public transit in other ways should also be a goal for our community. There’s hard work to be done. But changing this city ordinance is an easy step, and we urge council to take it.

About the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit membership organization serving as our community’s leading advocate for business. We offer unique leadership opportunities, meaningful volunteer activities, and exclusive business-building programs focused on critical economic, civic, and social priorities. Chamber members support each other and community initiatives, sharing information and resources to help create economic opportunity and community well-being. At the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, we believe that better business leads to a better community.

Contact: Erin Predmore, President & CEO
812-336-6381
epredmore@chamberbloomington.org
<https://www.chamberbloomington.org/>