

Bloomington Common Council Ordinance No. 2026-12 - To Amend Title 15 of the Bloomington Municipal Code Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic" to Create a Chapter for Streets and Alleys that are Closed to Vehicular Traffic

Preamble

Whereas, the City of Bloomington originally implemented the seasonal conversion of certain blocks of Kirkwood Avenue to a carless street to support local businesses, enhance pedestrian safety, and foster community vibrancy; and

Whereas, the Common Council, in Resolution 2025-05, signaled a commitment to a predictable seasonal schedule, and still seeks to provide long-term certainty to businesses, residents, and visitors regarding the summer street closure, allowing them to plan, adapt, and invest with confidence; and

Whereas, the Common Council recognizes that while daily visit rates may fluctuate due to construction or weather, the documented increase in "dwell time" suggests that a pedestrian-oriented Kirkwood Avenue creates a higher quality of engagement and a more meaningful "third space" for the community; and

Whereas, this Ordinance seeks to harmonize the administration's goal of a "comprehensive vision" with the public's desire for a car-less Kirkwood, ensuring that the street remains a safe, inclusive, and vibrant destination during the peak visitor months of April through November; and

Whereas, by formalizing this closure within Title 15, the City establishes a transparent framework for governance, allowing the of the City Engineer to manage emergencies while maintaining a consistent and predictable standard for the public; and

Whereas, the City Council is committed to activating Kirkwood Avenue as a premier destination for commerce, pedestrians, civic engagement, and community life, fostering economic vitality and social interaction; and

Whereas, this ordinance does not preclude the City of Bloomington from advancing additional investments in Kirkwood Avenue as outlined in the Transportation Plan and Safe Streets for All Plan, ensuring future improvements align with the city's vision for a vibrant, accessible, and multimodal corridor.

Be It Ordained by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, That:

Section 1.

Title 15, entitled "Vehicles and Traffic," is amended to add the following chapter:

15.65 – STREETS AND ALLEYS CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAVEL.

Upon those streets and parts of streets described in Schedule X, attached hereto and made a part hereof, motor vehicular traffic shall be prohibited on such dates as are indicated therein. In case of emergency, the City Engineer may temporarily restore motor vehicle traffic as authorized in 15.08.040 - Temporary, experimental or emergency traffic regulations. If the City Engineer proposes to restore motor vehicular traffic for more than 90 days (consecutive days, or cumulative over the span of the annual closure), the restoration must be approved by the City Council.

SCHEDULE X

Restricted Streets

Street	From	To	Closure Period
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Walnut St.	S Washington St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Washington St.	S Lincoln St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Lincoln St.	S Grant St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Grant St.	S Dunn St.	April 1 to November 15, annually
E Kirkwood Ave.	S Dunn St.	S Indiana Ave.	April 1 to November 15, annually

Upon those alleys and parts of alleys described in Schedule Y, attached hereto and made a part hereof, motor vehicular traffic shall be prohibited on such dates as are indicated therein. In case of emergency, or other practical difficulties, the City Engineer may temporarily restore motor vehicle traffic as authorized in 15.08.040 - Temporary, experimental or emergency traffic regulations. If the City Engineer proposes to restore motor vehicular traffic for more than 90 days (consecutive days, or cumulative over the span of the annual closure), the restoration must be approved by the City Council.

SCHEDULE Y

Restricted Alleys

Alley-Between	From	To	Closure Period
E Kirkwood Ave. and E 4thSt.	S Walnut St	~100' east of S Walnut St.	Annually

Passed

Passed by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon the ___ day of _____, 2026.

Isak Nti Asare
President, Bloomington Common Council

Attestation of Bloomington City Clerk:

Nicole Bolden
Clerk, City of Bloomington

Presentation by Bloomington City Clerk:

Presented by me to the Mayor of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this ___ day of _____, 2026:

Nicole Bolden
Clerk, City of Bloomington

Approval by Mayor

Signed and approved by me upon this upon the ___ day of _____, 2026:

Kerry Thomson
Mayor, City of Bloomington

Synopsis

This ordinance seeks to codify streets and alleys in Bloomington that disallow vehicular traffic. Specifically, this ordinance codifies the seasonal carless schedule of specific blocks of Kirkwood Avenue. With this ordinance, businesses and residents can expect a permanent seasonal carless Kirkwood, allowing businesses the predictability to invest in outdoor infrastructure for guests. The City Administration has provided valuable operational feedback in its 2026 memorandum, identifying important challenges regarding infrastructure, sanitation, public safety, and accessibility that naturally arise as temporary programs transition toward permanent city fixtures. With that, this ordinance aims to provide the necessary legal and budgetary certainty

for the City to move beyond "incomplete solutions" and invest in more permanent infrastructure, such as more ADA-compliant features and high-quality seating, recommended by staff.