

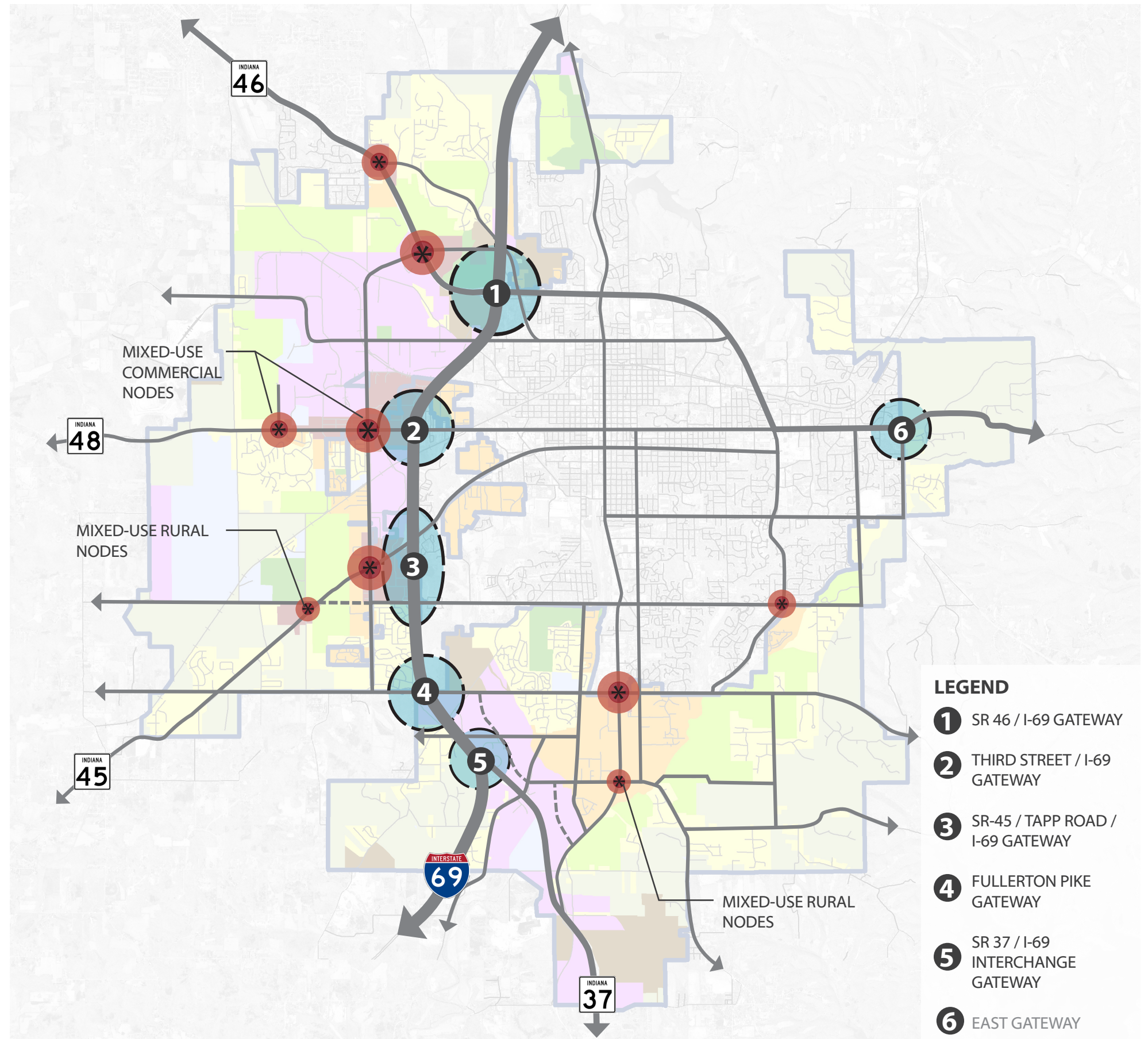
## CHARACTER & SENSE OF PLACE

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND “SENSE OF PLACE” IS THE RESULT OF BOTH PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS, AND LESS TANGIBLE ELEMENTS, SUCH AS HOW CITIZENS TRAVEL FROM PLACE TO PLACE AND INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER.**

### BACKGROUND

The City of Bloomington has a distinct image and character, embodied by its vibrant downtown, strong residential neighborhoods, celebrated bicycle culture, robust local food scene, proud history of limestone production, and university presence. Aspects of Bloomington’s culture and character permeate the surrounding region. In some ways, it is difficult to distinguish where the city “ends” and the county begins. However, in a number of ways, and especially in terms of the built environment, there is a stark contrast between the image of Bloomington and that of the Urbanizing Area.

The Urbanizing Area, particularly to the west of State Route 37, has a more suburban character, with a largely disorganized pattern of development that has occurred through a series of individual private developments over many years. Portions of the area also have a more industrial character, reflecting an important aspect of the regional economy, with business activity that is appropriately located near the city, but not at the urban core. And despite the name “Urbanizing Area,” much of the area continues to have a very rural character, with scenic roadways, historic farmsteads, streams, woods and other natural features, large open spaces and beautiful vistas.



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## A. APPROPRIATE CHARACTER

### EXISTING CHARACTER

The character of the developed areas of the Urbanizing Area is very suburban in nature, particularly in the Third Street and I-45 corridors. This stands in stark contrast to both City of Bloomington and the rural areas of Monroe County which are distinctive, genuine, and beautiful. The cause of this is likely the timeframe in which these areas were developed combined with a lack of strict development guidelines. The effect of this development pattern and style is an experience in portions of the Urbanizing Area that diminishes the overall impression of the Bloomington region.

Identifying an appropriate character for these areas key element in developing effective guidelines which will direct new development toward a better and more suitable character.

### COMMON ELEMENTS

The City of Bloomington, Urbanizing Area, and rural areas share a number of common elements or themes which should be emphasized in new developments:

- + An architectural style that is both rural and contemporary in character, with high quality materials and design intention.
- + Creative use of limestone should be utilized as a baseline material to celebrate the tremendous quality of native building materials.
- + There is a unique and whimsical spirit present throughout the Bloomington region. This is present throughout the study area in the form of public art and cultural traditions. This should be celebrated through additional public art and architectural elements.

## B. POTENTIAL PROJECTS

### KEY CORRIDOR STUDIES

Third Street, SR-46, and SR-45 are examples of key corridors which define the way in which the Urbanizing Area is perceived by both residents and visitors to the Urbanizing Area. These should be studied in greater detail to determine an appropriate aesthetic.

### I-69 MAINLINE TRENCH ENHANCEMENT

I-69 will be a major corridor for motorists travelling through southern Indiana from Evansville to Indianapolis and points beyond. With thousands of motorists passing through the study area each day, this corridor will represent how many people experience and perceive the Bloomington region as a whole. Further study and subsequent capital improvements projects should be completed to develop an I-69 corridor experience that is fitting with the character of Bloomington.

### I-69 GATEWAY STUDY

Just as the mainline trench experience is critically important, the experience of exiting I-69 and entering Bloomington and the Urbanizing Area is even more critical. The current interchanges do not have any gateway features. A study and subsequent capital improvements project should be considered for these key gateways. This gateway study could be combined with the trench enhancement project above.



## CREATE EYE-CATCHING COMMUNITY GATEWAYS



There is a significant opportunity to create unique and exciting gateways to the Bloomington Community along the new I-69 corridor. Concepts could include a signature public art piece, a unique or unusual building, or a signature bridge, wall or other designed public infrastructure.

A key gateway opportunity is located at the intersection of SR 46 and I-69. This is the primary northern entrance to Bloomington and should be celebrated with a bold gateway. A potential architectural landmark could be built adjacent to the freeway interchange. For example, a major visitor center could be built adjacent to the existing quarries and provide an excellent way for visitors to be introduced to the historic landscapes that are a trademark of the Bloomington Region.



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