



Business Brief



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Insights, Updates and Opportunities



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Economic Development

Seasonal Reflections and Important Developments in Normal

With Thanksgiving approaching, we're reminded of the vital role local businesses play in strengthening Normal's economy and enriching daily life. That's why in this issue we highlight Small Business Saturday, along with new data demonstrating the positive impact across Bloomington-Normal.

We also share an important update on the **Town Council's approval of the Uptown Underpass project**, a transformational investment that will improve connectivity and support long-term development in Uptown.

Thank you for staying engaged with the Town of Normal. We wish you a warm and productive start to the holiday season.

Shop Small with Normal Businesses

Nov. 29 is Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday returns on **Nov. 29**, encouraging shoppers across the country to support the small businesses that drive our local economy. Here in Normal, our independent retailers, restaurants, service providers, and makers play a

a crucial role in creating a thriving community and strong local economy.

Our small businesses contribute year round, creating local jobs and adding character in Uptown, Main Street, Constitution Trail Centre, and commercial corridors throughout the community.

This holiday season, we encourage residents and visitors to explore Normal's locally owned shops and restaurants. Your support strengthens the local economy, keeps dollars circulating in the community, and helps our small business owners thrive throughout the year.



Quick Facts of the Bloomington- Normal Small Business Economy

- 95.3 % of businesses in Bloomington-Normal have **less than 50 employees**
- 32.5 % of businesses have **less than four employees**
- Over the last 12 months, Uptown has seen **over 3.3 million visits** from over **700 thousand unique visitors**
- Bloomington-Normal's retail sector generates **more than \$778.64 million** in gross regional product
- Bloomington-Normal's retail workers earn an **average wage of \$42,946**, significantly higher than the \$34,320 average retail wage across the United States

Town Council Approves Underpass Project

Transformational Project Linking Uptown North and South

At the Nov. 3 meeting, Council took several actions to make way for an underpass in Uptown Normal, connecting Uptown North to Uptown South.

This effort will **create a more accessible community**, **improve rider experience** for those using Uptown Station and **enhance economic development opportunities** for Uptown South.



Nov. 3 Council actions included

- Increasing the Town's Food and Beverage Tax from 2% to 2.25% and the Hotel Motel Tax from 6% to 8%, allowing the Town to service the debt financing required to complete the project
- Approving a modified grant agreement with the United States Department of Transportation updating the BUILD Grant with new completion timelines and budgets
- Authorizing contracts for Millstone Weber, Clark Dietz and WSP USA for construction and engineering services

Economic Impact

Short-Term Economic Impact:

The project will create approximately **190 construction jobs** and generate **\$19.4 million** in immediate economic activity.

Long-Term Economic Impact:

The Uptown Underpass will unlock new development opportunities in Uptown South, creating space for future residential, retail and commercial projects. These investments will support increased property tax, sales tax and long-term economic vitality for the Town of Normal.

Commercial Growth & Activity



Throughout 2025, the Town of Normal has issued **125 commercial building permits**, representing a total construction valuation of **\$359.8 million**, highlighting strong development activity and continued investment in the community.

Both Daiso and Boot Barn are tentatively on track to open after the start of the New Year.

Key projects from the [Town's Open Data Portal](#) highlight last month's building permit activity.



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