

STAFF REPORT

Department of Metropolitan Development Division of Planning Current Planning Section

Case Number: 2022-ZON-125
Address: 5212 and 5246 Bluff Road (*Approximate Addresses*)
Location: Perry Township, Council District #23
Petitioner: Burmese American Community Institute, Inc., by Andi M. Metzel
Request: Rezoning of 9.24 acres from the D-A district to the SU-38 district to provide for a community center.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff **recommends approval** of the request, subject to the following commitments being reduced to writing on the Commission's Exhibit "B" forms at least three days prior to the MDC hearing:

1. A 40-foot half right-of-way shall be dedicated along the frontage of Bluff Road, as per the request of the Department of Public Works (DPW), Engineering Division. Additional easements shall not be granted to third parties within the area to be dedicated as public right-of-way prior to the acceptance of all grants of right-of-way by the DPW. The right-of-way shall be granted within 60 days of approval and prior to the issuance of an Improvement Location Permit (ILP).
2. A tree inventory, tree assessment and preservation plan prepared by a certified arborist shall be submitted for Administrator Approval prior to preliminary plat approval and prior to any site preparation activity or disturbance of the site. This plan shall, at a minimum: a) indicate proposed development; b) delineate the location of the existing trees, c) characterize the size and species of such trees, d) indicate the wooded areas to be saved by shading or some other means of indicating tree areas to be preserved and e) identify the method of preservation (e.g. provision of snow fencing or staked straw bales at the individual tree's dripline during construction activity). All trees proposed for removal shall be indicated as such.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The following issues were considered in formulating the recommendation:

LAND USE ISSUES

- ◇ This 9.24-acre site, zoned D-A, is comprised of three parcels developed with single-family dwellings and accessory structures. It is surrounded by single-family dwellings, accessory structures and agricultural uses to the north, zoned D-A; open space to the south, zoned D-A; single-family dwellings to the east, across Bluff Road, zoned D-A; and railroad right-of-way to the west, zoned D-A.

(Continued)

STAFF REPORT 2022-ZON-125 (Continued)

- ◇ Petition 96-UV3-101 legally established three dwelling units on one lot with one of the units being a 980-square foot mobile home.

REZONING

- ◇ This request would rezone the site from the D-A district to the SU-38 (Community Center) district. “No building, structure, premises or part thereof shall be constructed, erected, converted, enlarged, extended, reconstructed or relocated except in conformity with these regulations and for uses permitted by this article and until the proposed Site and Development Plan and landscape plan have been filed with and approved on behalf of the Commission by the Administrator or approved by the Commission, as hereinafter provided.”
- ◇ The Comprehensive Plan recommends suburban neighborhood typology. “The Suburban Neighborhood typology is predominantly made up of single-family housing, but is interspersed with attached and multifamily housing where appropriate. This typology should be supported by a variety of neighborhood-serving businesses, institutions, and amenities. Natural Corridors and natural features such as stream corridors, wetlands, and woodlands should be treated as focal points or organizing systems for development. Streets should be well connected and amenities should be treated as landmarks that enhance navigability of the development. This typology generally has a residential density of 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre, but a higher density is recommended if the development is within a quarter mile of a frequent transit line, greenway, or park.
- ◇ The Comprehensive Plan consists of two components that include the Pattern Book and the land use map. The Pattern Book provides a land use classification system that guides the orderly development of the county and protects the character of neighborhoods while also being flexible and adaptable to allow neighborhoods to grow and change over time.
- ◇ The Pattern Book serves as a policy guide as development occurs. Below are the relevant policies related to this request:

Conditions for All Land Use Types

- All land use types except small-scale parks and community farms/gardens in this typology must have adequate municipal water and sanitary sewer.
- All development should include sidewalks along the street frontage.
- Hydrological patterns should be preserved wherever possible.
- Curvilinear streets should be used with discretion and should maintain the same general direction.
- In master-planned developments, block lengths of less than 500 feet, or pedestrian cut-throughs for longer blocks, are encouraged.

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Large-Scale Schools, Places of Worship, Community- Serving Institutions/Infrastructure, and Other Places of Assembly (defined as Schools, places of worship, and other places of assembly that are generally more than five acres in size. Particularly large centers of education such as township high schools and universities would not be included in this definition, and are considered to be regional special uses.)

- Should be located along an arterial street.
- If proposed within one-half mile along an adjoining street of an existing or approved residential development, then connecting, continuous pedestrian infrastructure between the proposed site and the residential development (sidewalk, greenway, or off-street path) should be in place or provided.
- Schools should not be within 1000 feet of a highway, freeway, or expressway.
- Should be located within one-half mile of a bus or rapid transit stop, unless there is no bus service within the institution's service area.
- In predominantly platted, single-family neighborhoods, site should be at least as wide as it is deep.
- Should be in harmony with the surrounding neighborhoods and site and screen their parking, service, and emergency vehicle areas to buffer surrounding residential uses.

Tree Preservation / Heritage Tree Conservation

- ◇ There are significant amounts of natural vegetation and trees located throughout the site. Due to their inherent ecological, aesthetic, and buffering qualities, the maximum number of these existing trees should be preserved on the site.
- ◇ All development shall be in a manner that causes the least amount of disruption to the trees.
- ◇ A tree inventory, tree assessment and preservation plan prepared by a certified arborist shall be submitted for Administrator Approval prior to preliminary plat approval and prior to any site preparation activity or disturbance of the site. This plan shall, at a minimum: a) indicate proposed development, b) delineate the location of the existing trees, c) characterize the size and species of such trees, d) indicate the wooded areas to be saved by shading or some other means of indicating tree areas to be preserved and e) identify the method of preservation (e.g. provision of snow fencing or staked straw bales at the individual tree's dripline during construction activity). All trees proposed for removal shall be indicated as such.
- ◇ If any of the trees are heritage trees that would be impacted, then the Ordinance requires that the Administrator, Urban Forester or Director of Public Works determine whether the tree(s) would be preserved or removed and replaced.

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STAFF REPORT 2022-ZON-125 (Continued)

- ◇ The Ordinance defines “heritage tree” as a tree over 18 inches Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) and one of the Heritage tree species. Heritage tree species include: Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*), Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), Yellowwood (*Cladrastus kentukea*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*), Walnut or Butternut (*Juglans*), Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), Red Elm (*Ulmus rubra*) and any oak species (*Quercus*, all spp.)
- ◇ The Ordinance also provides for replacement of heritage trees if a heritage tree is removed or dies within three years of the Improvement Location issuance date. See Exhibit A, Table 744-503-3: Replacement Trees.

Department of Public Works

- ◇ The Department of Public Works, Traffic Engineering Section, has requested the dedication and conveyance of a 40-foot half right-of-way along Bluff Road. This dedication would also be consistent with the Marion County

Indiana Fire Code

- ◇ This site would also be subject to, but not limited to, the following Indiana Fire Code provisions:

Indiana Fire Code 2014

Section 507.5 - Fire Hydrant Systems

Section 507.5.1 - Where Required

Where a portion of the facility or building hereafter constructed or moved into or within the jurisdiction is more than 400 feet (122m) from a hydrant on a fire apparatus access road, as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the facility or building, on-site fire hydrants and mains shall be provided.

Exceptions:

1. For Group R-3 and Group U occupancies, the distance requirement shall be 600 feet (183m)
2. For buildings equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2, the distance requirement shall be 600 feet (183m).

Detailed Project Description

- ◇ The detailed project description, file-dated October 26, 2022, provides details on the intended community to be served, the types of services and programs that would be offered, and the physical environment within which to provide these services and programs.

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STAFF REPORT 2022-ZON-125 (Continued)

Planning Analysis

- ◇ As proposed this rezoning would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of suburban neighborhood as a large-scale community-serving institution located on a primary arterial.
- ◇ As development occurs Administrator Approval of development plans would be required to assure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods with the appropriate buffering and screening of parking and service areas to minimize impact on surrounding land uses. The Ordinance provides that the development standards required for the C-3 district would be the applicable guide in reviewing development plans.
- ◇ For these reasons staff supports this request, subject to commitments related to right-of-way dedication and a tree preservation plan.

GENERAL INFORMATION

EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USE

D-A Single-family dwellings / accessory structures

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE

North -	D-A	Single-family dwelling / accessory structures
South -	D-A	Single-family dwelling / accessory structures
East -	D-A	Single-family dwelling / accessory structures
West -	D-A	Railroad right-of-way

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN	The Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Indianapolis and Marion County (2018) recommends suburban neighborhood typology.
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THOROUGHFARE PLAN	This portion of Bluff Road is designated in the Marion County Thoroughfare Plan as a primary arterial with an existing 50-foot right-of-way and a proposed 80-foot right-of-way.
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CONTEXT AREA	This site is located within the metro context area.
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OVERLAY	This site is not located within an overlay.
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SITE PLANS	File-dated October 26, 2022
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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN	File-dated October 26, 2022
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STAFF REPORT 2022-ZON-125 (Continued)

ZONING HISTORY

96-UV3-101; 5212 Bluff Road, requested a variance of use and development standards of the Dwelling districts Zoning Ordinance to legally establish three dwelling units in three separate dwelling structure on one lot, with one of the units being a 980-square foot mobile home, **granted**.

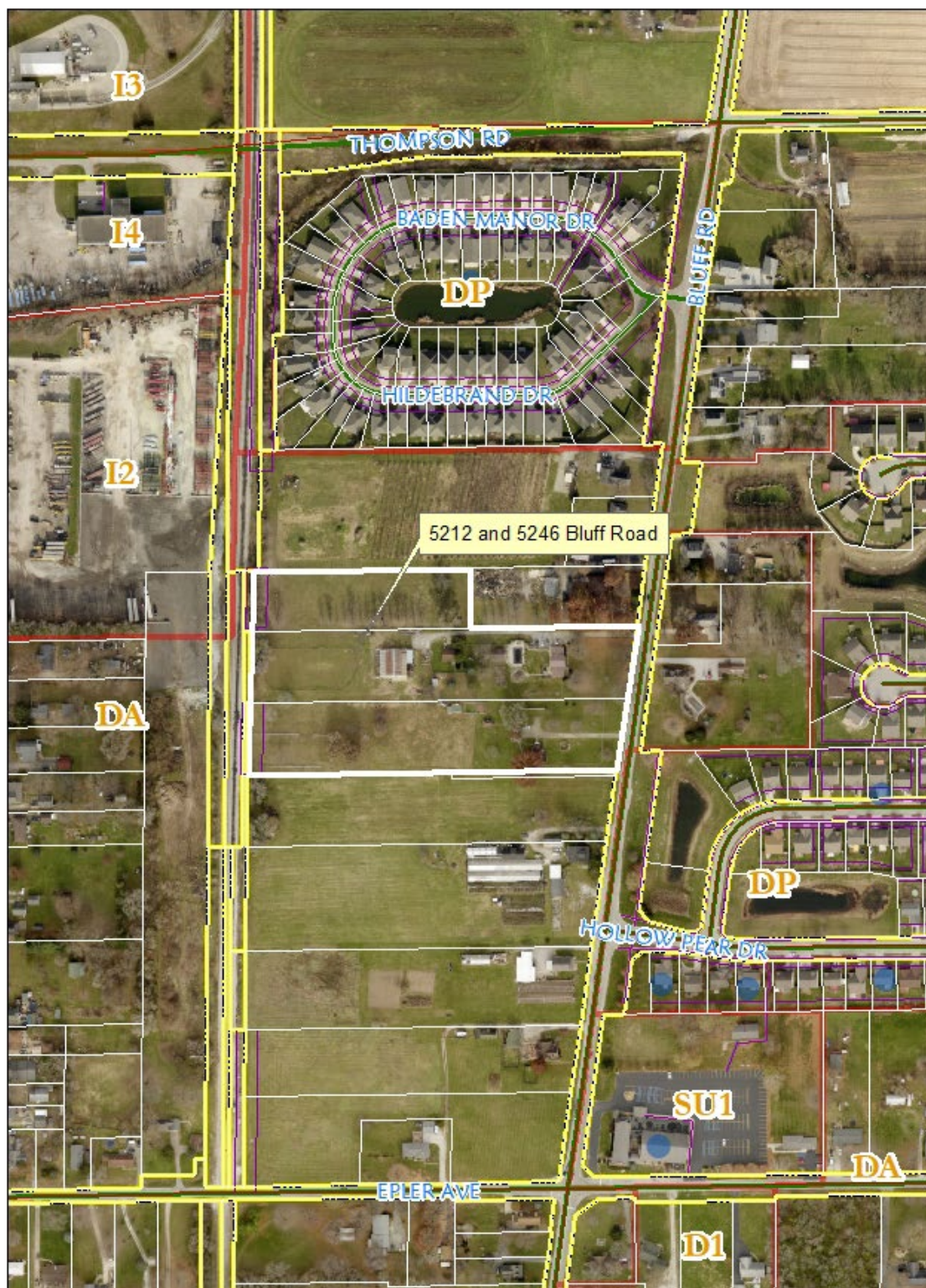
VICINITY

95-HOV-89; 5235 Bluff Road, (south of site), requested a variance of development standards of the Dwelling Districts Zoning Ordinance to provide for the construction of a covered porch, with a 27-foot front setback from Bluff Road, **granted**.

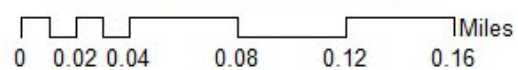
87-UV3-8; 5220 Bluff Road (south of site) requested a variance of use to provide for the manufacturing of signs in an existing building, **granted**.

73-UV2-165; 5220 Bluff Road (south of site); requested a variance of use to provide for a plumbing business and a variance of development standards to construct a pole barn and single-family dwelling with reduced setbacks and signage, **granted**.

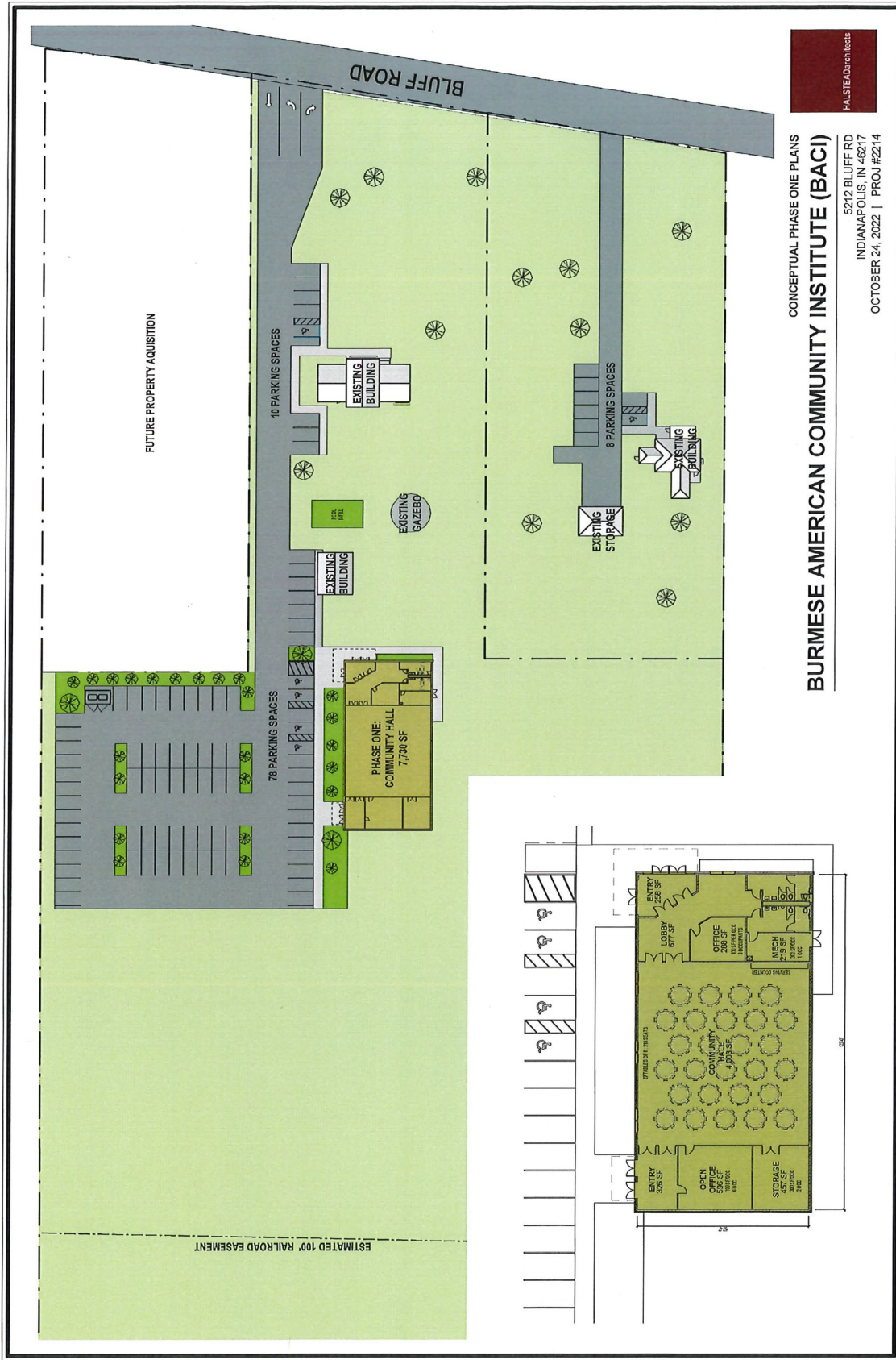
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5212 and 5246 Bluff Road



Conceptual Site Plan – Phase I



Overall Site Plan



Detailed Project Description



*Establishing a Home for BACI
Creating a Community Center Campus to
Serve the Community*

BACI's mission is to build a thriving, self-sufficient, and sustainable, integrated Burmese Community through advocacy, education, and employment.

A History of Serving the Community

Founded in 2011, the Burmese American Community Institute (BACI) is a non-profit organization that provides human services, social services, and educational and vocational support to the Burmese and newcomer community in greater Indianapolis. While the term “Burmese” refers to the people from Burma, BACI is unique for serving a wide array of refugees from eight diverse major ethnic groups in Burma: Chin, Kachin, Shan, Karenni (or Kayar), Karen, Mon, Arakan (or Rakhine), Bama (or Burman).

The BACI supports community members regionally, nationally, and globally through strategic partnerships and advocacy to connect, educate, and serve the community.



Since its inception, BACI has assisted more than 17,000 individuals through its diverse programs, including:

Employment & MicroEnterprise

We assist newcomers with their employment, training, small business start-up assistance as they become self-sufficient and allow them to give back to their communities and contribute to economic growth.

Upward College Program

The Upward College Program is an innovative year-round program with a comprehensive program design that assists area high school students with their college readiness and success.

Summer Programs

CRLD is a highly interactive, fun program, focuses on four core areas of learning and engagement, while the Scholars Program focuses on a scientific method of PAR research—solution oriented policy action.

Civic and Cultural Education

We provide English & Citizenship classes and assist newcomers with their naturalization process, including filing forms N400, G-28 etc. as well as help the community members, to become civically engaged citizens.

INDY

We help newcomers with their integration process and in effort to meet their needs by connection and information sharing through various channels, including newsletter, email mailing list, social media, referrals, and others means.

Technical Assistance Program

We help small businesses, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations with their organization registration, organizational development, bylaws, business plan, program design and more.

Advocacy Program

BACI advocates for successful integration of newcomers through education, employment, naturalization and civic engagement, refugee protection, the advancement of the Burmese-American community, peace and democracy in Myanmar.

Civic Participation & Community Engagement

We work with the community members and partners, creating avenue, such as cultural festivals, special engagement events, voter's education talk and others whereby increasing citizen's participation and civic engagement activities.

Special Projects

BACI collaboratively work with service providers and partners to implement the special projects that benefit the community, they include research projects, service projects, integration projects, citywide, statewide, nationally and internationally.

Additionally, responsive to the emerging needs in light of the COVID-19 and global crisis, BACI has been providing basic needs assistance to the community and services to assist Burmese, Afghans, and Ukrainians refugee/parolees through national and local partnerships.

Our Vision for Serving the Community

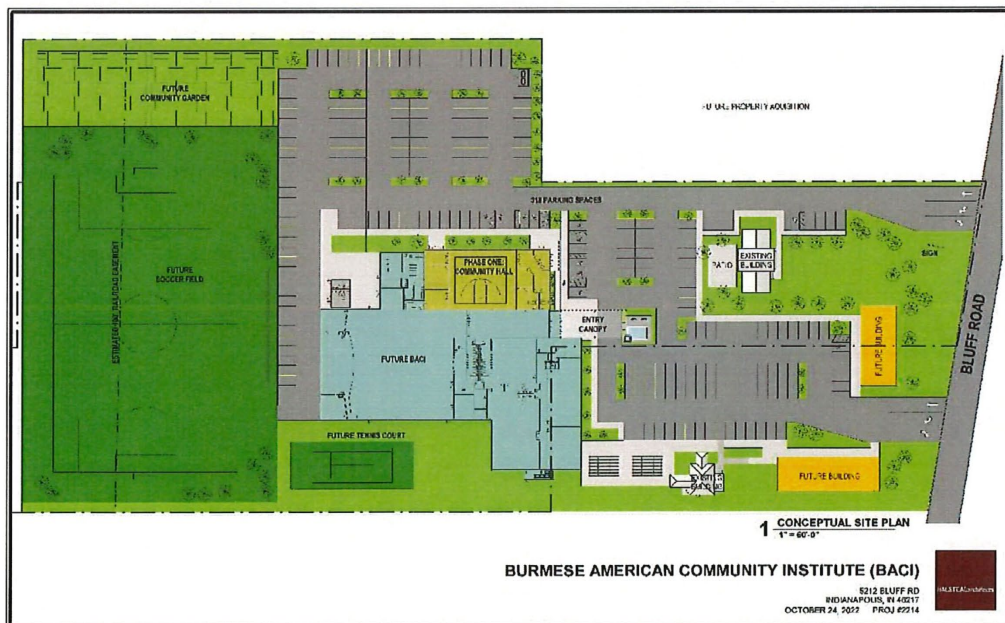
More than 40,000 Burmese refugees have settled in Indiana, and over 27,000 call Indianapolis home. They predominantly live on the south side of Indianapolis, with smaller communities on the north and west sides of the city. Looking at the ongoing crisis in Burma and observing the trends of the refugee resettlement and other factors, the Burmese population and newcomers community in Indianapolis are expected to grow quite rapidly.

These refugees count on BACI for services and advocacy. BACI has leased office space in the Perry Township Government Center since 2013, leaving them to rely on partnerships and contractual agreements to host programs across a large area. Access to transportation limits some program participants' ability to take full advantage of needed services.

BACI has developed a phased approach to creating a Community Center Campus that will effectively continue serving the community as a central location where BACI's programs will be delivered and space made available to provide services for Burmese entrepreneurs. The phases of the vision include:

- Phase I:** Acquisition of properties at 5212 and 5246 Bluff Road, construction of a community hall for events and educational activities, and relocation of some BACI's administrative offices.
- Phase II:** Construction of a gymnasium, multi-purpose space that can seat up to 1,000 people, tennis court, and a community garden as well as larger administrative offices and educational space, including computer lab, training space, education classrooms, and others.
- Phase III:** Construction of entrepreneurial space for small businesses and economic development activities.
- Phase IV:** Explore the possibility of additional constructions for service and program expansion.

BACI COMMUNITY CENTER CAMPUS MASTER PLAN



Community Impact & Outcomes of a BACI Campus

The newly developed Burmese Community Center Campus will allow us to engage in the following three main components in line with the BACI strategic plan 2021-2026, including:

- Enhance and grow existing programs and services: BACI will sustain and strengthen its social and educational services to the Burmese and newcomer population in central Indiana with their self-sufficiency and integration, as well as assist youth in college readiness and future success.
- Offer new programs and services: BACI will expand in new service areas that complement current programs and services and serve clients and stakeholders.
- Improve operational effectiveness and capacities: BACI will increase its effectiveness by increasing staff and exploring possibilities for a new office/community center. It will continue strengthening collaborations within the Indianapolis community, schools, funders, and partners.

Some of the expected outcomes and impact of a BACI Community Center Campus include:

- **Thousands of individuals** will be served annually at the BACI Community Center Campus.
- **300 youth** will be served each year through the Upward College Program, an innovative year-round program with a comprehensive program design that assists area high school students with their college readiness and success.
- An additional **700 K-12 students** will be served with various services, including one-time services such as assisting them with 21st Century Scholarship, Mentorship, Leadership Development, STEM, academic, social, and sports clubs.
- **100 children** will be provided childcare services and Pre-k schooling.
- **2,000 individuals** will be served through the Civic and Cultural Education Program (CCEP), which provides English & Citizenship classes and assist newcomers with their naturalization process, including filing forms N400, G-28, etc., as well as help the community members to become civically engaged citizens.
- **1,500 individuals** will be served through Employment & MicroEnterprise that assist newcomers with their job placement, job fairs, gainful employment, and training, as they become self-sufficient and allow them to give back to their communities and contribute to economic growth.
- In collaboration with post-secondary institutions, the BACI Career Pathways and Professional Development (CPPD) will train **100 young adults** over the next five years with job certification training in Indiana's high-growth fields identified as Next Level Jobs. This will provide an estimated economic return of over \$2 million annually.
- **30 small businesses** will receive Technical Assistance and Small Business Incubation.
- Over **500 individuals** will receive assistance with basic needs assistance such as affordable housing access, access to nutritional and healthy food, transportation, physical, behavioral health, and mental health services.

- More than **1,000 people** will be served through the community garden and food pantry on the BACI Community Center Campus.
- **400 participants** a year will be served through Refugee Resettlement and Placement Program, welcoming refugees and immigrants worldwide and assisting them with their integration.
- Over **100 youth** will participate in the BACI Upward College Summer Scholars Program/Center for Research, Policy and Innovation (CRPI) not only to help prepare the youth to succeed in their higher education but to help solve some of the most pressing issues and problems confronting the local Burmese-American community and broader society as a whole with a global perspective through a scientific method of research—Participatory Action Research. The researchers then provide solution-oriented policy action recommendations to the stakeholders to help address these fundamental problems for sustained change for the common and the greater good.
- More than **500 visitors** per year will visit the museum to learn about the people, history, diversity, and ethnicity of Myanmar and ASEAN.
- **Provide a home for partnerships and collaboration**, for activities like the **Myanmar Initiative**. Recognizing the challenges Myanmar is facing and the opportunity it offers and the unique position that BACI is in, collaborating with like-minded organizations, agencies and higher educational institutions in Indiana and USA, BACI will continue to promote strong ties between Hoosiers and the American people and the people of Myanmar and Southeast Asia through comprehensive and creative approaches including economic investments, cultural exchange and educational programs—teaching, learning and training opportunities, capacity building and professional development for teachers and emerging leaders, technical assistance for the development of constitution and institutions—with a view to laying strong foundations for democracy whereby supporting peace, sustainable development, and prosperity there in reciprocally beneficial ways and in a win-win.
- The BACI Community Center will also:
 - Serve as a hub for health fairs, various service fairs, connections, referrals, and information, helping newcomers with their integration process and meeting their needs by connection and sharing information through multiple channels, including newsletter, email mailing list, social media, referrals, and other means.
 - Serve as a hub for advocacy activities—advocating for a cohesive, vibrant, and integrated community at several levels—individual needs, community needs, and societal needs, as well as global needs to some extent.
 - Host at least **10 arts, cultural and musical performances** by Burmese community members.
 - Community members will use the space for community meetings and gatherings.
 - Serve as host to **youth and community members** for their sports and physical activities through soccer games, volleyball games, basketball, tennis, and other sports activities.

Burmese American Community Institute Leadership

BACI's Board of Directors reflects its original philosophy, values, and efforts to ensure the organization's leadership includes different groups within the incoming community from Burma/Myanmar and the mainstream community. The board consists of individuals from diverse backgrounds intellectually, professionally, and personally, and like-minded persons passionate about assisting the incoming individuals with their long-term integration and sustained development. BACI is also developing a Community Center Campaign Advisory Board of 25-50 carefully selected individuals representing a diverse group of people who will contribute financially, bring more donors, and provide advice as the center continue to develop.

Board of Directors

Dr. Ro Dinga - Chairman IUPUI, Mizo Society of America/Indiana Chin Community of Indiana	San Hlei Thang - Vice-Chairman FSSA	Anthony Gerard Adrian – Acting Secretary Eli Lilly and Company
Rev. Robert Biak Cung, Treasurer Living Chin Christian Church	Elly Kreutzer PNC Bank	Dr. Bruce Ray IUPUI, Retired
U Jeru Southport High School	Nguncer Bualteng Mang Tha Real Estate	Bonnie Kane Retired teacher, Burmese-American advocate
Lian Cin, Former Chairman Indiana Chin Baptist Church		Elaisa Vahnies, MPA BACI Executive Director

Board of Advisors

Rev. Dr. Stephen Kio Indiana Chin Baptist Church	Rev. Thang Mang Indiana Lautu Evangelical Church	Rev. Dr. Val Thang North America Matu Christian Church
Zapeng Sakhong Chin Evangelical Baptist Church	Matthew P. Schomburg State of Indiana	Leslie Lenkowsky, Indiana University
Ruby Sing Ph.D. candidate and educator	David Williams Indiana University	Dr. Fengyi Kuo IUPUI

BACI



Burmese American Community Institute

Advocating • Connecting • Educating • Serving

4925 Shelby Street, Ste 200 Indianapolis, IN 46227

www.TheBACI.org

Our Impact on People

The BACI programs and service continue to impact the lives of many in Central Indiana. Since its inception, we have been able to serve over 17,000 unduplicated persons. The following is some of the selected individual success stories:

Sarah BTC Mang participated in the BACI Upward College Program during high school and went to Indiana University Bloomington on a full-tuition scholarship. Sarah continued her education, earning a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from Chamberlain University in Fall 2021.

Sarah is working as a service coordinator at the Central Indiana First Steps. She develops strong relationships with families, therapists, and eligibility teams within a designated territory and coordinates therapy services. She is also serving our community through BACI as a part-time Lead Instructor of English and Citizenship Class at the BACI Civic and Cultural Education Program (CCEP) Program that empowers new Americans with security in their rights and liberties by providing English and Citizenship instruction, including rights and responsibilities education.

Julie Mawi is one of the first women to participate in the BACI's first federally funded Childcare Microenterprise Development Program (CMED), where over 15 Burmese refugee women were trained to become licensed childcare home-based service providers. The program sought to ensure that culturally and linguistically appropriate and competent childcare services were provided, beyond assisting these women in actively participating in the workforce and contributing to the community's economic activities. Ms. Mawi has 44 children currently enrolled at her three home-based childcare with a long waiting list.

"I am grateful to the BACI for giving me the opportunity and guiding me to become a licensed childcare service provider. I will not be here without the support of BACI," said Julie Mawi while donating \$5000 in February from her childcare "Chinsuh" towards the BACI Burmese Community Center buildings.

Jenni Thang participated in the 2016 Upward College Summer Research Scholars Program during her high school year. The experience allowed her to gain further interest in research and publish in two journal publications. She is now serving in the program as a Group Research Leader and is currently a Ph.D. student at Purdue University.

Emily Sung, a Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship recipient, was recently hired as ELA Teacher at Southport Middle School. "Thank you for all the help throughout my high school, college, and even after! My time with BACI has helped me greatly in many ways. I am really grateful for it," said Emily, who participated in the BACI UCP for four years and interned with us for two summers.

Cung Ling and Hlawn Nei Thang, a couple who became naturalized citizens through the BACI Civic and Cultural Education Program, said they are excited to exercise their rights and liberties as they cast their votes in the 2020 Presidential elections. CCEP empowers new Americans with security in their rights and liberties by providing English and Citizenship instruction, rights and responsibilities education, and Green card and Citizenship application assistance.

The BACI Civic and Cultural Education Program, in collaboration with its partners, promotes civic engagement and community participation and has served over **7,000** individuals since its inception.

Exhibit A

Heritage Tree Conservation

Removal of any Heritage Tree is prohibited unless any of the following determinations are made before removal:

1. The Administrator or the city's Urban Forester determines that the tree is dead, significantly and terminally diseased, a threat to public health or safety, or is of an undesirable or nuisance species.
2. The Director of the Department of Public Works determines that the tree interferes with the provision of public services or is a hazard to traffic.
3. The Administrator determines that the location of the tree is preventing development or redevelopment that cannot be physically designed to protect the tree.
4. The site from which the tree is removed is zoned D-A and the tree is harvested as timber or similar forestry product.

Table 744-503-3: Replacement Trees		
Size of tree removed or dead (inches)	Number of Trees to be planted to replace a Heritage Tree	Number of Trees to be planted to replace an existing tree
Over 36 DBH	15	10
25.5 to 36 DBH	11	8
13 to 25 DBH	8	6
10.5 to 12.5 DBH	6	4
8.5 to 10 DBH	5	4
6.5 to 8	3	2
4 to 6	2	2
2.5 to 3.5	1	1



View looking south along Bluff Road



View looking north along Bluff Road



View of site looking west across Bluff Road