6 Urban Design Plan

The urban design plan proposed for the University Avenue corridor is organized into five areas which correspond to the five different villages. The urban design plan provides a preferred development scenario for how redevelopment could occur over the next 25 years. This plan is based on the goals of the overall vision for the study area and the principles laid out in the Framework Chapter. Future plans from Champaign, Urbana, the University of Illinois, Christie Clinic, Provena, Carle, and the park districts of Champaign and Urbana were reviewed and incorporated into the urban design plan.

While the urban design plan does lay out specific parcels for redevelopment and illustrates desired building massing and orientation, the scenario shown for each village is only one example of how future development may play out. This plan is meant to show how the recommendations described in the Framework Chapter could look if the general guidelines are followed. In order for this scenario to become a reality, more specific design codes and zoning ordinance changes would need to be put in place. More specific strategic steps still need to be established at the municipal level which would provide the structure and incentives necessary to carry out the recommendations in the plan.

A specific market study was not conducted as part of this planning process to determine future development potential and square footage build out of each parcel.

Redevelopment Potential

A redevelopment potential analysis was completed for each parcel and building in the corridor. A list of criteria was developed to evaluate redevelopment potential which included:

- Current use and compatibility with future plans
- Development interest as reported by the Cities
- Existing conditions of the building and parcel
- Existing development agreements or approvals
- Existing community and campus wide plans

Redevelopment potential was a key impetus in creating the urban design plan for the corridor. A majority of the parcels with high to medium potential are located at node locations and along the segments of University Avenue from Second Street to Sixth Street in Champaign and McCullough Street to Cunningham Avenue in Urbana. These areas tend to have older single use commercial structures which are either vacant or underutilized. This map also provides municipalities with target areas for redevelopment that can be presented to developers during discussions regarding the corridor. Incentives can also be targeted toward the areas with the highest redevelopment potential. Figure 6.1 shows the redevelopment potential of buildings and parcels along the corridor.

Figure 6.1: Redevelopment Potential Map
Urban Design Plan - Downtown Champaign Village

The Downtown Champaign Village has two primary focus areas for redevelopment: between State Street and Neil Street and between Second Street and Fourth Street. These two areas are very different in terms of character, market appeal and location. Redevelopment between State Street and Neil Street concentrates on replacing surface parking lots with large scale mixed-use buildings and structured parking. The area between Second and Fourth Streets support lower density development as well as single family and multi-family housing along Park Avenue. The northwest corner of the Fourth Street node is another focus area for higher intensity mixed-use development.

Key Village Concepts:
1. Encourage infill development of existing surface parking lots along the corridor. Mixed-use developments provide housing options along the corridor, as well as commerce and employment.
2. Construct parking decks in appropriate locations to alleviate pressures on surface parking lots, opening them up to development.
3. Encourage expansion of current Christie Clinic facilities.
4. Develop public plaza on north half of existing City owned surface parking lot outside Illinois Terminal.
5. Build upon artist district as described in 2006 Downtown Champaign Plan. Construct mixed-use building which includes artist lofts, gallery space and retail. Existing warehouse conversion is encouraged in this area as well.
6. Second Street Reach of Boneyard Creek project will add urban green space and a community amenity to the corridor.
7. Redevelop deteriorating housing stock. Townhouses and duplexes can add a density transition between the commercial fronting University Avenue and the single family homes along Park Avenue.

Second Street Reach of Boneyard Creek

Surface Parking Infill Development

Figure 6.2: Downtown Champaign Village Urban Design Plan
Urban Design Plan - Champaign Urban Village

The Champaign Urban Village is only three blocks long, but provides a critical link between the Fourth Street and Wright Street nodes. Many parcels in this village are underutilized and have high redevelopment potential. The Wright Street node is also a gateway into the University of Illinois. Redevelopment along this corridor should serve the surrounding residential areas, the University of Illinois and the Provena medical campus.

Key Village Concepts:

1. Promote higher intensity mixed-use development at the Fourth Street/University Avenue node. Development should include a mix of uses, incorporate transit facilities, bike and pedestrian amenities, and additional landscaping.

2. Encourage infill development of existing surface parking lots along the corridor. Mixed-use developments provide housing options along the corridor, as well as commerce and employment.

3. Construct new infill housing units on existing vacant lots. Promote alley style garage access to keep garages to the rears of parcels.

4. Redevelop existing car dealership with mixed-use development that caters to University students and faculty, as well as Provena employees and patrons. Encourage medical, educational and neighborhood-oriented uses. Mixed-use development should include provisions for workforce housing at varying price points.

5. Promote redevelopment of the northeast and northwest corners of the Wright Street/University Avenue node. New development should include a mix of medical, educational and neighborhood-oriented uses. This node should also include transit facilities, bike and pedestrian amenities and additional landscaping.
Urban Design Plan - Provena/University Village

The Provena/University Village, as the name indicates, is primarily composed of parcels owned by Provena or the University of Illinois. Redevelopment potential in this village is greatest on the north side of University Avenue between Goodwin Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. Future redevelopment in this village should target businesses and housing options that cater to both University employees and students, as well as hospital staff. Mixed-use developments that incorporate a variety of housing options and price points is desirable and would be consistent with the vision of the corridor serving a live/work/shop/play functionality. The Lincoln Avenue node is at the eastern edge of the village, and is a major gateway for both Urbana and the University. Lincoln Avenue also provides a direct connection to I-74. If industrial use of the railroad should discontinue in the future, the development of the Rail-to-Trail facility would provide a link between University Avenue and Downtown Urbana for cyclists and pedestrians.

Key Village Concepts:

1. Promote redevelopment of the northeast and northwest corners of the Wright Street/University Avenue node. New development should include a mix of medical, educational and neighborhood-oriented uses. This node should also include transit facilities, bike and pedestrian amenities and additional landscaping.
2. Construct new medical facilities as per Provena campus master plan.
3. If rail line is not used for industry in the future, investigate Rail-to-Trail conversion to provide bike connection between the corridor and the rest of the community.
4. Proposed location of University owned buildings. Between now and the time of construction, a park and ride facility should be pursued for this surface parking lot.
5. Develop retail and office space that supports Provena and Carle employees and patrons. Support mixed-use development that includes workforce housing for hospital and University employees.
6. Develop Lincoln Avenue/University Avenue node as a gateway to the University, City of Urbana and Carle campus. This node should include transit facilities, pedestrian and bike amenities and additional landscaping.
Urban Design Plan - Carle Medical Village

Redevelopment in the Carle Medical Village is focused around the modernization and intensification of the Carle campus. Redevelopment at the Lincoln Avenue node centers around a signature building for the Carle campus on the northeast corner of the intersection and a prime location for a hotel/conference center at the southeast corner. Carle’s master plan is focused on the campus modernization project between Coler Avenue and McCullough Street. The closure of the Orchard Street intersection along University Avenue is a key component to improving signal timing and safety in the village. Carle is the second largest employer in Champaign County and the redevelopment efforts in this village should be centered around serving their employees and visitors.

Key Village Concepts:

1. Promote redevelopment of the northeast and northwest corners of the Lincoln Avenue/University Avenue node. New development should include a mix of medical, educational and neighborhood-oriented uses. This node should also include transit facilities, bike and pedestrian amenities and additional landscaping.

2. Encourage the development of hotel and conference center space to support the needs of both hospital campuses and the University of Illinois.

3. Redevelop existing medical building as part of the Carle Campus Modernization Project.

4. As Carle campus redevelopments and roadways are reconfigured, ensure that bicycle facilities are constructed to be consistent with what is shown in Figure 5.34 Bicycle Facility Connection Map.

5. Pursue closure of Orchard Street intersection and access point off University Avenue and remove traffic signal.
Urban Design Plan - Urbana Urban Village

The Urbana Urban Village is marked with two key intersections: Broadway Avenue/University Avenue and Cunningham Avenue/University Avenue. The Broadway Avenue node serves as a connection between University Avenue and Downtown Urbana. Redevelopment at this node should be reflective of an extension of Downtown Urbana. Buildings along the proposed Boneyard Creek improvement areas should incorporate plazas and outdoor seating to create indoor/outdoor spaces for gathering and commerce. The Cunningham Avenue intersection marks another gateway for Downtown Urbana and a connection to I-74 to the north. This Village also has two excellent recreation destinations in Crystal Lake Park and Leal Park. Wayfinding signage should be developed along University Avenue to help visitors and residents locate these two park facilities.

Key Village Concepts:

1. Develop wayfinding signage to help promote and direct visitors to Crystal Lake and Leal Parks.
2. Redevelop Broadway Avenue/University Avenue node with buildings that front the street, parking oriented to the sides and rears of buildings, transit facilities, bike and pedestrian amenities, and additional landscaping.
3. Improve segments 3, 4 and 5 of the Boneyard Creek as described in the 2008 Boneyard Creek Master Plan. Encourage redevelopment of existing buildings along the Boneyard as described in the Boneyard Creek Master Plan. Redevelopment should include outdoor plazas and seating and maximize the location along the improved segments of the creek.
4. Continue construction of Gateway Shoppes to fill out corners of Broadway Avenue/University Avenue and Cunningham Avenue/University Avenue intersections.
5. Implement streetscape improvements as recommended in the Cunningham Avenue Beautification Study and the 2002 Urbana Downtown Strategic Plan. Improvements include planted medians, art elements, gateway features, and additional landscaping.
6. Continue to develop Five Points center and encourage redevelopment of existing car wash along University Avenue.