



2012 Downtown Urbana Plan

2012 DOWNTOWN URBANA PLAN

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Part I

Executive Summary

Background

Planning Process





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Downtown Urbana is the heart of our city. Downtown is more than just central to the day-to-day life of our community; to many residents it represents the community as a whole. Not only do we visit Downtown to shop and enjoy some of the City's best food and beverages, but also to take part in community celebrations, regional festivals, and commemorative ceremonies. We attend the Downtown farmer's market not just to buy fresh, local foods but also to build a sense of community. At Downtown's institutions we attend to courthouse matters, mail a letter, and browse the library. But additionally our civic buildings and historic architecture contribute substantially to our community heritage and self identity. While its role has changed over the decades, Downtown remains at the heart of Urbana and its identity.

The purpose of the 2012 Downtown Plan is to expand upon downtown's recent success and guide future growth to match the needs of our community. As an update of the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan, this plan recognizes the many changes Downtown has undergone over the past decade, including major expansions at the County Courthouse and Urbana Free Library; reuse of Lincoln Square through a mix of offices and specialty shops; and the ongoing revitalization of the Urbana Landmark Hotel. Since the 2002 Plan, the Market at the Square has grown into one of the largest and most successful farmers markets in the Midwest. And the City of Urbana's Gallery Incentive Program has succeeded in supporting downtown tenancy and arts-related businesses during a national economic downturn.



As Downtown continues to change, so must our response to opportunities and challenges. Specifically, the 2012 Downtown Plan identifies opportunities for:

- Better connecting Downtown with the community, the University, and the region;
- Creation of a “critical mass” necessary to make Downtown a more vibrant and competitive destination;
- Optimal uses of building spaces for Downtown success;
- Increasing residents in the immediate downtown;
- Additional welcoming outdoor public gathering spaces;
- Filling key building vacancies and underdeveloped land; and
- Filling gaps in downtown’s urban pedestrian core.



Vision and Goals

The 2012 Downtown Plan is based upon extensive public input and guided by a Steering Committee composed of representative stakeholders in the Downtown’s future. The plan articulates a vision for the future of downtown Urbana and identifies seven key goals to achieve that vision.



Vision Statement

Based on public input, the Downtown Plan Steering Committee crafted the following vision for Downtown’s future.

Downtown Urbana is the heart of our city. It is built at a human scale and embraces the historic urban fabric, while also promoting a high quality of compatible new building development in appropriate locations. It is an economically vibrant environment with welcoming public spaces and an active arts and culture scene. Downtown is accessible to all and well connected to surrounding neighborhoods and to the University. The mix of businesses, residences and other attractions in our downtown helps to promote sustainable, healthy lifestyles.



Seven Key Goals

Seven key goals emerged from many hundreds of comments and ideas submitted by the community for moving Downtown forward, from which:

- Strengthen economic activity in downtown Urbana.
- Promote context-appropriate urban-style infill development to extend downtown’s core character.
- Increase downtown’s vitality by attracting more residents and visitors.
- Develop engaging public spaces and streetscapes.
- Improve mobility to and within downtown.
- Protect and enhance the character of downtown.
- Reduce downtown Urbana’s environmental impact.



Making an Impact

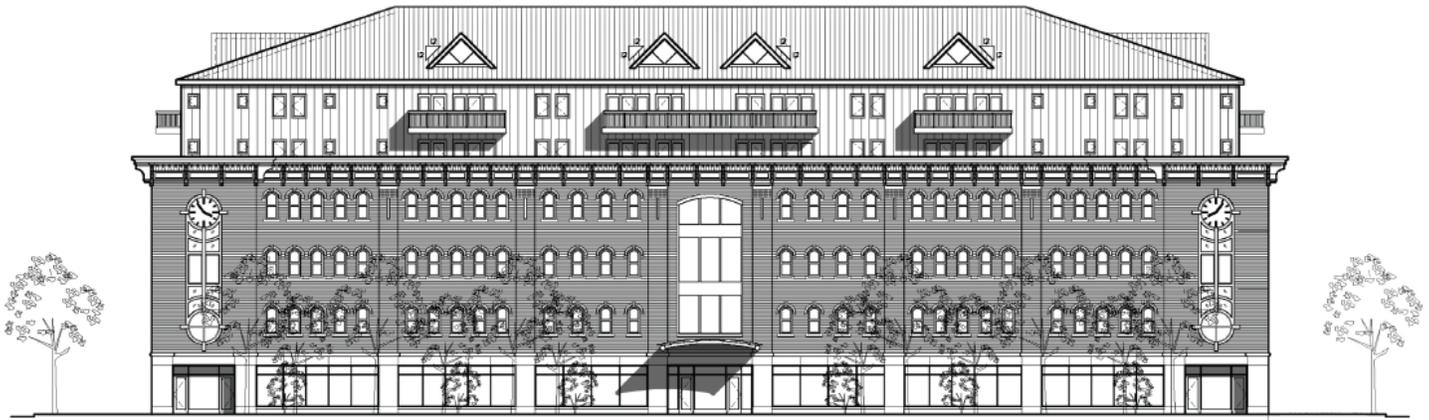
To achieve the vision and goals, the Downtown Plan prescribes specific implementation strategies, key redevelopment projects, and proposed programs and incentives. The final three chapters of this Plan detail the adopted measures, from which the following near-term projects are highlighted.

Boneyard Creek Improvement Project, Phase I

The Boneyard Creek will become downtown Urbana's premium public open space. Recognition of Boneyard Creek as not just storm drainage but potentially a public amenity culminated in 2008 when the City of Urbana adopted the Boneyard Creek Master Plan. Currently under design, construction of Phase I (Griggs Street to Broadway Avenue) beginning in 2012 will transform this urban drainage corridor as a community attraction. Plans include opening up the creek by sloping back walls, installing public paths and public plazas. North Race Street will receive a new streetscape treatment and a new bridge crossing the creek. Public art will be incorporated throughout these improvements. The City will pay for design and construction of Phase I using tax increment finance (TIF) funds.



*Rendering of
the Boneyard
Improvement
Project*



*Elevation
of the Block
North Project,
Courtesy Gary
Olsen*

The Block North of the City Building

This City-owned, largely-vacant block – bounded by Vine Street, Green Street, Urbana Avenue, and Elm Street – is anticipated to be redeveloped as a mixed-use, urban-style development. The City is currently working with a prospective developer of the site. Development plans include a mixed-use, multi-story building oriented toward Vine Street including shops and restaurants, offices, and residences with all underground parking. A row of two-story townhomes, scaled to match existing residences to the east, would line the Urbana Avenue frontage.

Streetscape Improvements

Along with the Boneyard Creek Improvement Project, the City will improve streets and sidewalks along Broadway Avenue, Race Street, and Main Street. A “road diet” and intersection improvements will make Main Street safer for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. On Broadway Avenue, a road diet will result in greener stormwater facilities and wider sidewalks to allow for more sidewalk cafés.



*Downtown
Urbana’s new
identity logo*

Urban Design Standards Overlay District

The Downtown Plan promotes extension of the traditional “Main Street” style urban core to adjoining blocks as new development occurs over time. To this end, the Downtown Plan calls for adoption of urban design standards. Some of the benefits of adopting design standards will be to ensure that new multi-storied buildings are positioned close to sidewalks with display windows at the sidewalk edge. Parking would be encouraged to be located behind or within enclosed buildings. The City can adopt Urbana Design Standards as a zoning overlay district requirement.

Signage & Wayfinding Study Implementation

The 2010 Downtown Signage & Wayfinding Study identifies new identity signage for downtown parking lots and structures as a Phase I priority for downtown. This signage will help customers and visitors find parking near their destination. It will also make the downtown parking deck easier to use as the signage will inform visitors of parking rates and how many spaces are available. The City plans to complete Phase I improvements in 2012. Future phases will include wayfinding signage, district identity signs, and directory kiosks. As part of this study, a downtown logo was created, and new downtown signs will incorporate this logo.



*Additional
Signage
planned for the
Parking Deck*

Market Study Implementation

In 2011 Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) of Evanston, Illinois prepared a market study for Downtown Urbana's retail, residential, and office markets. More than 500 participants responded to a market survey conducted as a basis for the study. In terms of retail, BDI found Downtown Urbana to have a strong market within an equally strong regional market for retail and restaurants. The downtown district is home to multiple unique businesses, both retailers and restaurants, which understand how to sell to local customers, how to attract customers regionally, and how to be financially successful in a downtown business environment. Among other opportunities indicated in the study, Downtown Urbana has market capacity to expand grocery stores, eating and drinking establishments, and entertainment. Based on the market potential, the Study offers recommended development scenarios for selected key infill development sites downtown. Finally, several major objectives are recommended in order to move Downtown Urbana's retail, residential, and office markets forward.

*The Downtown
Market Study
contains strategies
to attract and retain
successful businesses
in key sectors.*





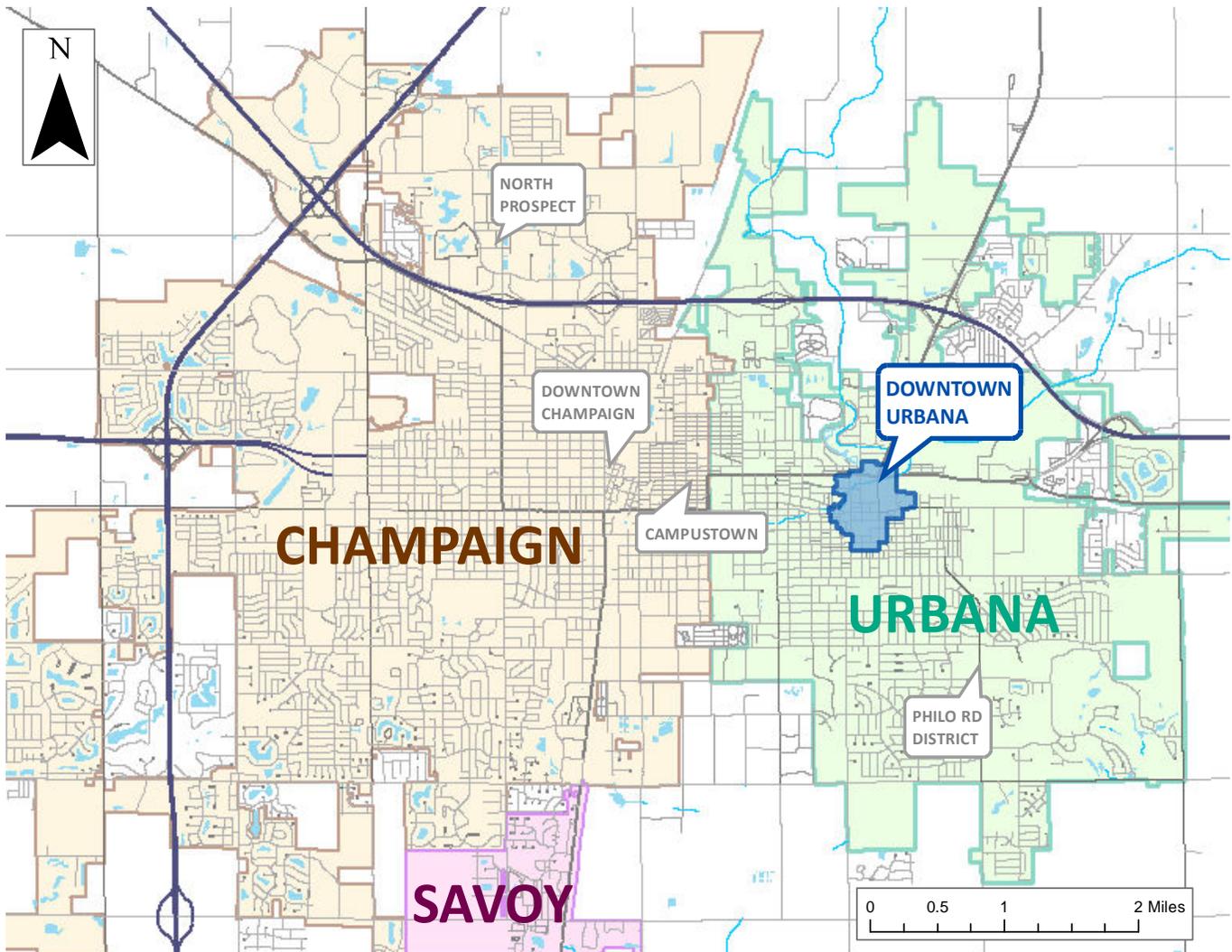
*The south side of the
100 block of Main Street,
looking east. Courtesy of the
Champaign County Historical
Archives.*

BACKGROUND

Downtown Context

Downtown Urbana is moving forward. Over the past decade there have been major investments in key properties that contribute to the civic realm as well as to Urbana's economic vitality. Recent successes in our Downtown were guided by a Strategic Plan that was prepared with stakeholder input and adopted in 2002. While the Strategic Plan has served us well over the past ten years, it is time to revisit it and to update the guiding document for downtown. The purpose of the 2012 Downtown Plan is to help ensure that Downtown continues to develop in line with Urbana's collective vision. The Plan outlines guidelines, projects, and incentives to direct future development in a way that enhances and expands the best aspects of downtown.

Redeveloping downtown is also key to making Urbana a more sustainable city. Bringing more businesses and residents to downtown allows for walkability and mobility enhanced development. When residents can meet their daily needs within walking or bicycling distance, or within short distance of a transit hub, it encourages fewer car trips, which is healthier for both people and the environment.



Location of Downtown Urbana in relation to the region

Downtown’s Place in Urbana-Champaign

Champaign-Urbana (population 122,000) is often described as having three “downtowns”: downtown Urbana, downtown Champaign, and Campustown. Downtown Urbana primarily serves as the center of activity for the municipality of Urbana (population 41,250).

For the purposes of this Plan, Urbana’s Downtown is defined as a 32-block area generally bounded by University Avenue on the north, Illinois Street on the south, Birch Street on the west, and Maple Street on the east.

As the county seat of Champaign County, and home to a Federal courthouse and City building, Downtown Urbana is a major employment center for public employees and legal professionals. As a retail and entertainment center, Downtown Urbana complements and competes with downtown Champaign and Campustown, as

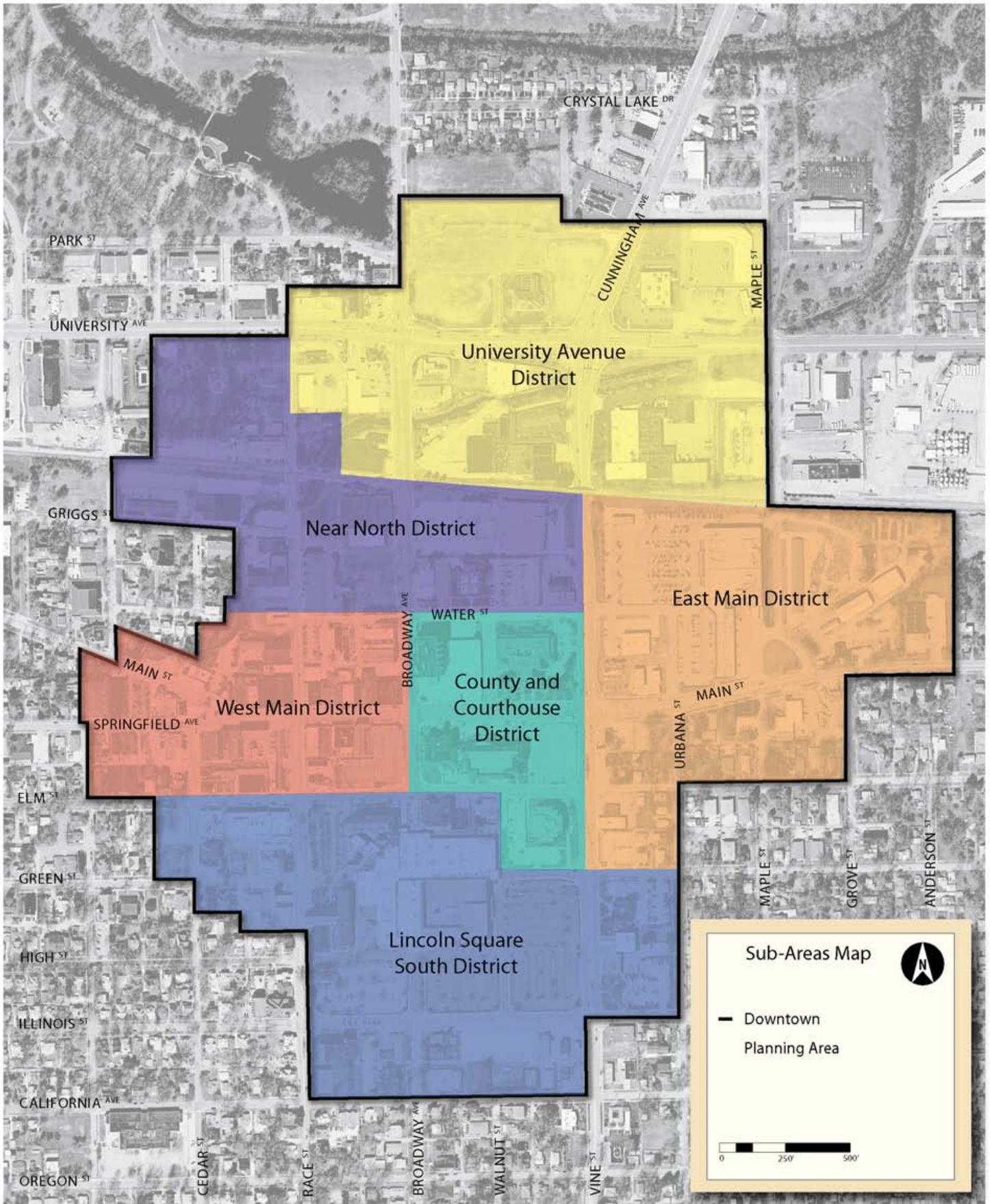
well as with regional suburban shopping centers. Champaign's downtown is in the center of that city and has a thriving entertainment and office district along with residential condominiums. Campustown is a dense area of restaurants, bars, and retail stores, located along Green Street which caters primarily to University students. These three districts can be classified as local destinations. Champaign-Urbana has other significant outlying retail districts such as North Prospect/Market Place Mall in Champaign, S. Neil Street in Champaign/Savoy, Village at the Crossing in Champaign, and the Philo Road Business District in Urbana. North Prospect/Market Place Mall in particular is a regional retail destination attracting shoppers from across central Illinois.

Recent Development Trends

Since adoption of the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan, Downtown has benefited from major investments in key properties which contribute to its overall vitality. These changes include:

- **Courthouse:** The Champaign County Courthouse doubled in size in 2002, and in 2011 the County undertook an award-winning reconstruction of its historic clock tower paid for through private donations.
- **The Urbana Free Library:** The Library likewise underwent a major expansion in 2005 leading to increased usage.
- **Lincoln Square Village:** In the mid 2000's, Lincoln Square Mall was renovated as Lincoln Square Village, a mixed office/retail center providing hundreds of jobs and a variety of locally-owned shops, services, and restaurants.
- **Stratford Residences:** As a result of the 2002 Plan, a public-private partnership resulted in construction of the 40-unit Stratford Residences on Race Street.
- **University Avenue/Cunningham Avenue:** Within the past six years, both the Five Points Commerce Center and Gateway Shoppes shopping centers successfully redeveloped obsolete commercial developments.
- **Gallery District:** Over the past ten years, dozens of new businesses have opened in the greater downtown area, many in response to the City's Gallery District incentive program. These unique arts and entertainment-related businesses have added a liveliness to Main Street that has not been seen for many years.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** City of Urbana completed streetscape improvements on downtown streets.

Upcoming projects, such as the Boneyard Creek Improvement Project, Phase I, and renovation of the Urbana Landmark Hotel, will help improve Downtown business and vitality.



PREPARED FOR:
City of Urbana

Sub-Areas Map

Downtown Urbana 2012

Urbana, Illinois


**Hitchcock
 Design Group**
 Creating Better Places®
10000 S. 47th, February 17, 2011
 PROJECT NUMBER: 10100000000000
 All drawings are preliminary and subject to change.
 © 2009 Hitchcock Design Group

Downtown Sub-Districts

Looking closer at Downtown Urbana, six sub-districts can be identified within the overall downtown area, each with its own unique character. The subdistricts are identified in the Sub-Areas Map on the facing page.

- **West Main Street:** This area contains the core of retail and offices, located in historic buildings. The character of this area is walkable and historic, with buildings that front on wide sidewalks. This area is densely built, with many two- and three-story masonry buildings that were constructed generally at the turn of the last century.
- **Near North:** The character of this district transitions from the walkable core of the 100-300 blocks of Main Street to the automobile-related shops, offices, and restaurants on University Avenue. The area is characterized by a number of surface parking lots that support county employees and law offices. The city looks to redevelop this area to extend the core walkable character north along Race Street and Broadway Avenue. This area also contains the first phase of the Boneyard Creek Improvement Project which will provide an attractive gathering space for downtown visitors.
- **Lincoln Square/South District:** This area generally includes the southern third of downtown from Lincoln Square Mall south. Besides Lincoln Square and adjacent parking lots, the district includes key civic buildings such as the Urbana Free Library, the Post Office, and the City Building.
- **County and Courthouse District:** This area contains the County Courthouse, Federal Courthouse, Sheriff's Office/Jail, and County Plaza office building. During local and regional festivals, portions of Main Street and Broadway Avenue in this area are blocked to traffic to create public spaces for those attending the festival.
- **University Avenue:** The northeast portion of Downtown and north of the rail line, is defined by the intersection of University Avenue and Cunningham Avenue, which has one of the top traffic counts of any intersection in Champaign County. Consequently its strength lies as a regional retail center with automobile-related businesses.
- **East Main Street:** The Urbana Crossing/Schnuck's grocery and strip retail center dominates the area east of Vine Street. East of this shopping center is a mix of older industrial, residential, and office uses. To the south are auto-related service uses along South Vine Street which will be phased out as the area is redeveloped.

History of Downtown

In 1833, the Illinois Legislature approved the charter for Champaign County and named Urbana as its county seat. Although construction of the Illinois Central Railroad two miles west of Urbana led to development of West Urbana (which was later incorporated as the City of Champaign), Urbana moved to retain the County seat by building a new courthouse in 1861. Construction of the Indianapolis, Bloomington, and Western Railroad in 1869 through downtown Urbana further ensured the town's future, especially after the Big Four rail car repair shops opened just east of downtown in 1871.



*The previous
County
Courthouse in
Urbana (CCHA)*

On October 9, 1871 – the same day the Great Chicago Fire burned – much of downtown Urbana was destroyed by fire. One of the few buildings to survive this conflagration was Busey's Hall (now the Cinema Gallery). Downtown Urbana was rebuilt with fashionable and fire resistant two- and three-story brick commercial buildings that were more amenable for commerce at the time. These commercial buildings were typically built at the sidewalk edge with first floor display windows to invite potential customers. The downtown streetscape was also upgraded with brick-paved streets lit by gaslight.

Like other American cities in the decades leading up to the new century, Urbana benefited from an unprecedented period of new public infrastructure and utilities. These improvements included paving of streets; installation of public sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and water systems; installation of electrical, natural gas, and telephone systems; and the electrification and expansion of the streetcar system. An extended surge in building construction, lasting through World War I, changed the face of downtown. Construction at the turn of the century and early years of the 20th century included a new City Hall (1893), Champaign County Courthouse (1901), the Stephens Building (1903), County Jail and Sheriff's Residence (1905), Flatiron Building (1906), Cohen Building



Main Street looking west from Broadway (CCHA)

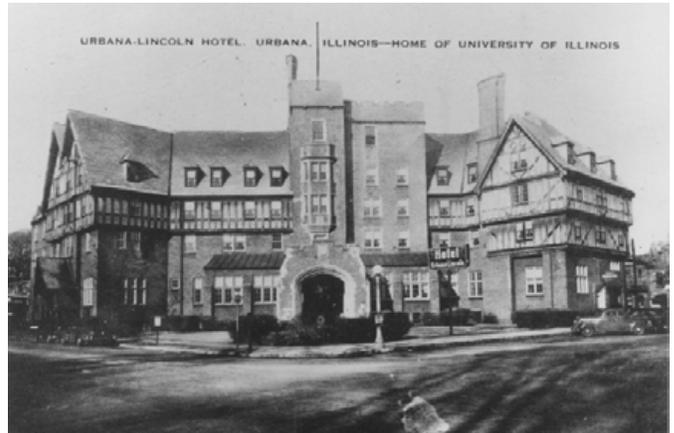
(1907), Canaan Baptist Church (1910), new Post Office (1914), Tiernan Building (1914 redesigned façade), Armory Building (1915), and Urbana Free Library (1918). The decade following World War I saw the addition of the Urbana Lincoln Hotel (1924) and Knowlton & Bennett Drug Store (1926). The traditional downtown core was largely set during this 40-year period.

Downtown Urbana changed little from the Great Depression through World War II. Then, Champaign County's population jumped 50% during the 1940's, and Urbana-Champaign experienced an acute housing shortage as University of Illinois enrollment increased. In response, the City expanded to accommodate new residential neighborhoods to the south and east of the core.

With construction of Interstate 74 (part of the interstate highway system) one-and-one-half miles north of downtown in 1959, there was concern among residents that downtown would decline as the community's business center. State highways through town, especially those leading to the interstates (e.g., Cunningham Avenue, University Avenue, and Philo Road), became automobile-oriented commercial corridors. The heavy through traffic on downtown Urbana streets hurt business as a shopping district. Downtown businesses felt that the area was deteriorating and needed to adapt to succeed.

In response to this challenge, in 1956 the Urbana Association of Commerce advocated for the location of a department store downtown to anchor the retail base. The Association and City leaders worked closely to convince Carson Pirie Scott and Company to locate a store in downtown Urbana as part of a nine-block shopping district redevelopment just south of downtown.

The Association and City leaders worked closely to convince Carson Pirie Scott and Company to locate a store in downtown Urbana as part of a nine-block shopping district redevelopment just south of downtown. Carson hired Victor Gruen Associates, a nationally recognized architectural firm specializing in retail centers, to design what would become Lincoln Square Mall. Site clearance for its construction required the removal of more than 80 downtown dwellings, many of which were relocated elsewhere in the City. The mall wrapped around and partially enclosed the historic Urbana-Lincoln Hotel, designed by Joseph Royer, and located along Race Street. Opening in 1964 with Carson Pirie Scott and Company as its primary anchor, Lincoln



Historic Lincoln Hotel viewed from the southeast (CCHA)



Former Fire Station on Elm Street (CCHA)



Flat Iron Building at Main Street & Springfield Avenue (CCHA)

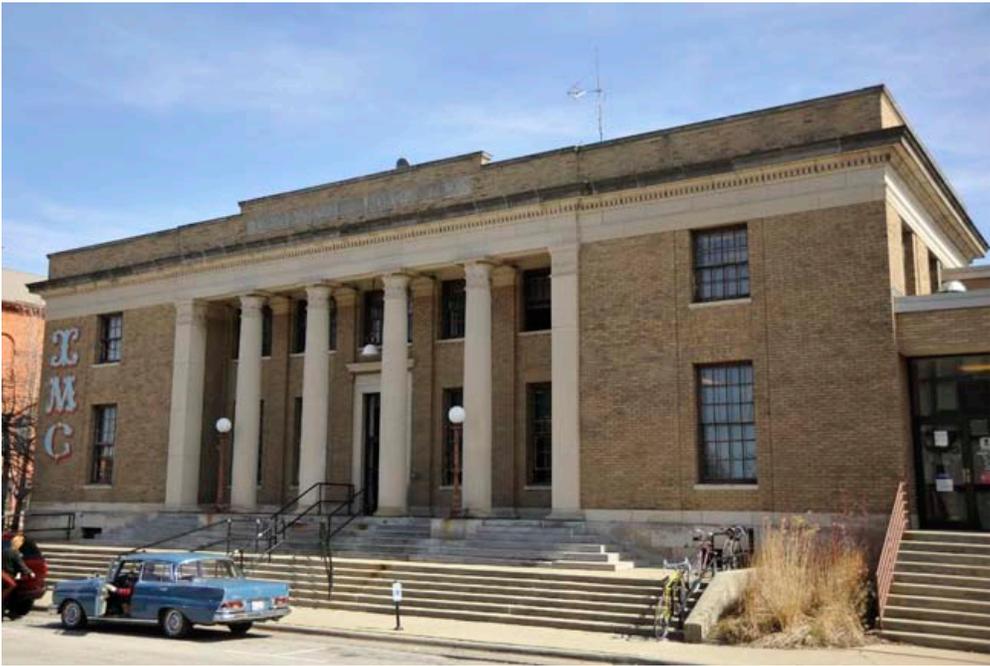


Lincoln Square Mall (CCHA)

Square Mall added 274,000 square feet of retail space in a climate-controlled environment, drawing shoppers from a radius of at least 50 miles. It was one of the earliest downtown enclosed shopping malls in the nation. The total project cost was approximately \$11 million, \$9 million of which was spent by Carson and \$2 million in City-issued revenue bonds for public parking.

Although the business mix of Lincoln Square was designed to complement rather than compete with Main Street shops, Main Street would continue to struggle to remain competitive as a destination. Lincoln Square Mall remained a strong retail draw for downtown Urbana through the 1980's, after which Marketplace Mall in north Champaign became the more dominant retail center in the region. With the departure of Bergner's (the successor to Carson Pirie Scott) in March 2002, Lincoln Square Mall lost its main anchor. Following unsuccessful efforts to land a new national anchor store, the Mall was purchased by a local group of investors who marketed it for a variety of local uses and redeveloped it as the mixed-use center of Lincoln Square Village.

Urbana Post Office Building



Today, Lincoln Square Village once again has a high occupancy rate with Health Alliance offices, a successful natural foods co-op, and the 88 Broadway event venue in the former Bergner's space, and numerous other stores, restaurants, and services, including long-time tenants Art Mart and International Galleries. In 2006, Lincoln

Square Village and the Urbana Landmark Hotel (formerly known as the Urbana-Lincoln, Jumer's and Historic Lincoln Hotel) were placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the early 1980's the City received an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) which allowed for the demolition of the Empire Building on Elm Street and the subsequent construction of the Jumer's hotel addition to the historic Urbana Hotel and a new City parking deck. This development was closely followed by the expansion of Busey Bank to

the entire block southwest of Main and Race Streets, which involved demolition of the remaining structures on the Race and Elm Street frontages. The site for the City parking deck was already a surface parking lot with the demolition of several structures having taken place earlier. Likewise, Champaign County Bank and Trust occupied the northeast corner of Main and Broadway. The bank acquired and demolished all properties on that block to construct the five-story building and surrounding parking that is now at that location. These developments, along with earlier fires and demolitions, combined to remove a good portion of the historic fabric of downtown Urbana, which now only remains along portions of Main Street, Race Street, and Broadway.

The next major project in the downtown area was a competition for the federal courthouse. Champaign and Urbana both submitted proposals for it to be located in their respective downtowns, and Urbana was the successful



Civic Center under construction (CCHA)



A newly constructed County Plaza (CCHA)

bidder. As the site was a City-owned parking lot for Lincoln Square, other properties were acquired to build replacement parking on the east side of Vine Street and within the Lincoln Square block.

A later major downtown redevelopment project was the Urbana Crossing shopping center (and Schnuck's grocery store), located on the northeast corner of Main and Vine Streets. This large undertaking involved property acquisitions and clearance by the City through the use of bonds issued under the City's downtown tax increment financing district. Also during this timeframe (1997), the City undertook a major expansion of its City Hall on Vine Street, consolidating a number of City offices into this facility which now houses the Mayor's office, City Clerk, Finance, Community Development, Police, and Fire Departments.



Urbana's farmer's market, known as Market at the Square, was established in 1978 by a group of produce vendors. It has existed at its current location for over thirty years. During its initial years, it was managed by a variety of entities, including the founding vendors, Lincoln Square staff, and the Urbana Business Alliance (now the Urbana Business Association). Starting in the spring of 1997, the City of Urbana took over management of the Market. Since that time, Community Development Services staff have planned, promoted, and operated the Market under the direction of the Mayor and City Council. The Market acts as a magnet for downtown businesses, bringing thousands of people downtown every Saturday during the Market season. The presence and visibility of Market at the Square contributes enormously to Urbana's identity and economic vitality.

Market at the Square



The Urbana Business Association (UBA) is a key actor in shaping the economic climate of downtown. The UBA was originally organized as the Urbana Promotions Corporation to run the annual Urbana Sweetcorn Festival, which is a two-day festival held on the streets of downtown Urbana. In addition to offering sweetcorn, the festival has numerous attractions such as rides, games, entertainment, a classic car muster, and free concerts from local and national touring acts. Now in its 36th year, the Urbana Sweetcorn Festival is the largest festival in the County and attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year. The organization later expanded to represent builders, and in 2005 adopted the UBA name. Today, UBA runs several community events, undertakes marketing campaigns to promote Urbana, and provides assistance local businesses.

*Urbana
Sweetcorn
Festival*

Today, downtown Urbana is thriving as a successful community-wide employment and government service center, and as a lively shopping and entertainment district. It has a healthy blended economic base composed of independent stores and shops, restaurants and bars, professional offices, and government services. It is well supported by the community as a whole and is easily accessible from the surrounding residential neighborhoods and from the University of Illinois campus.



*Sculpture installed
at the expanded
Urbana Free Library*

Summary of Existing Plans

In addition to the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan, the City has adopted a number of downtown-related plans and studies. As the overall policy document for future growth and development in the community, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan includes land use and development policies, goals, and objectives for downtown. The Boneyard Creek Master Plan sets the vision for transformation of the creek from a drainage ditch to a natural amenity. There are two corridor studies for arterial roads that run through downtown -- University Avenue and Cunningham Avenue – as well as for mobility-enhanced development along Springfield Avenue. Downtown Urbana contains two Tax Increment Financing districts (TIF 1 and TIF 2), both of which have redevelopment plans with amendments. There have also been numerous targeted studies for downtown, including the 2008 Parking Study, and most recently a Market Study and a Signage and Wayfinding Study.

The list of Plan documents guiding policy and planning decisions in downtown Urbana include the following:

- Downtown Strategic Plan (2002)
- 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan (2005)
- Tax Increment Finance District #1 Plan & Plan Amendment (2004)
- Tax Increment Finance District #2 Plan & Plan Amendment (2005)
- Champaign County Greenways & Trails Plan (2004)
- Boneyard Creek Master Plan (2008)
- Cunningham Avenue Beautification Plan (2008)
- Downtown Urbana Parking Study (2008)
- University Avenue Corridor Plan (2009)
- Urbana Bicycle Master Plan (2010)
- Long Range Transportation Plan (2010)
- Market at the Square Strategic Plan (2011)
- Downtown Signage and Wayfinding Study (2011)
- Downtown Urbana Market Study (2011)
- Capital Improvement Plan (Annual)

All of these documents are available online (see list of referenced documents after the table of contents).

The following section summarizes the most crucial plans relevant to the 2012 Downtown Plan. Further discussion of plan elements is included in the Implementation section of this document.

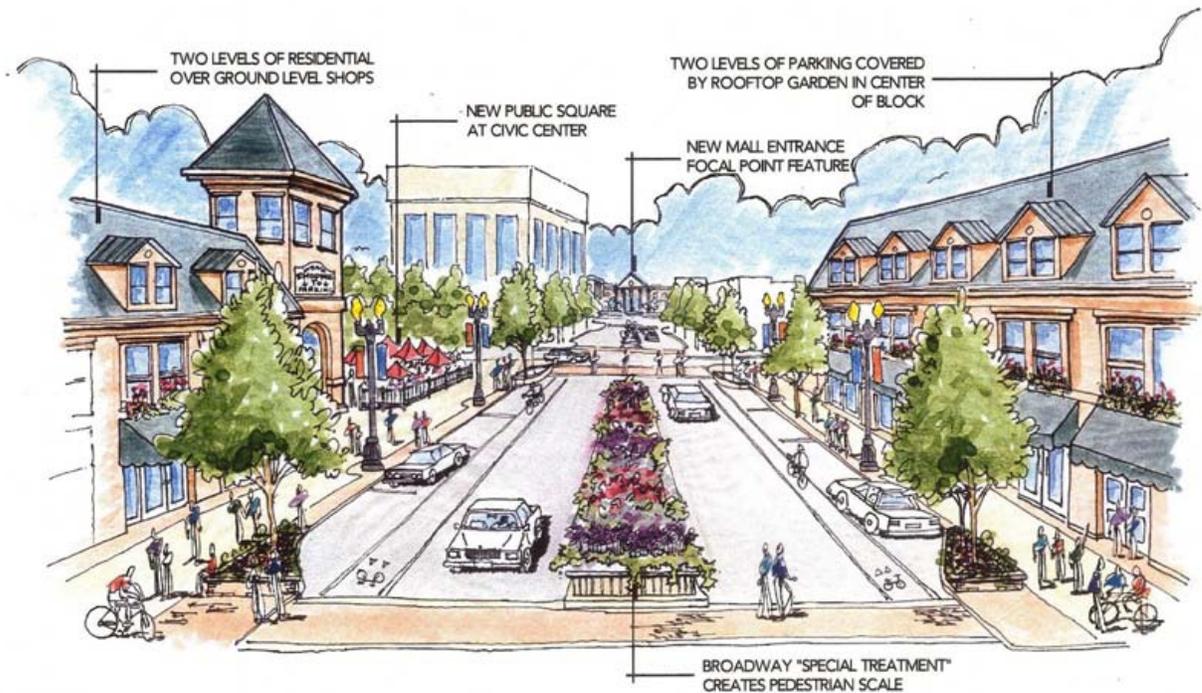


FIGURE 29:

"NEAR NORTH" REDEVELOPMENT (Broadway looking South)

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN

Urbana, Illinois

CAMIROS
Planning, Strategy, Research, Design, Construction

Downtown Strategic Plan (2002)

In 2002, the City prepared a Downtown Strategic Plan with the assistance of Camiros, Ltd., a Chicago-based planning consulting firm. The plan was prepared under the guidance of the City Council and a Downtown Plan Steering Committee, chaired by Art Zangerl. The current document is an update to the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan and employs the analysis and recommendations from the earlier plan as a foundation.

Illustration from 2002 Strategic Plan showing a previously considered option for redeveloping Broadway Avenue

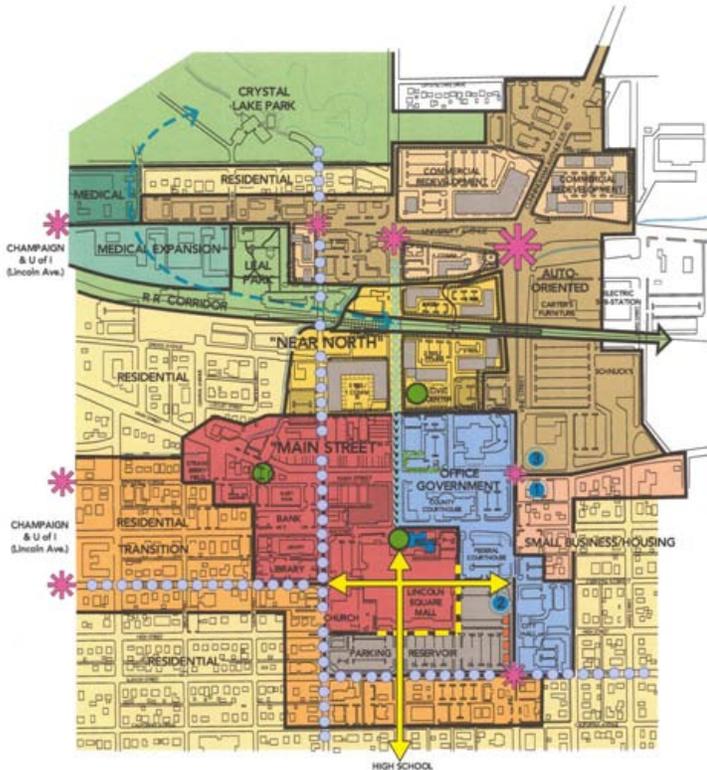
The 2002 Strategic Plan envisioned a number of ways to move the downtown forward, which were organized into six key initiatives:

The Downtown Leadership Initiative – strategies designed to implement the plan and manage the development of downtown.

The Downtown Image Initiative – strategies to improve the visual quality and aesthetics of downtown, and to better organize its development pattern.

The Center Of Urbana Initiative – strategies for maintaining downtown as the center of town.

The Downtown Neighborhood Initiative - strategies to increase the amount of downtown housing.



The Niche Market Initiative – strategies developed to give downtown a particular market orientation and attract uses related to it.

The Lincoln Square Initiative – strategies to better integrate Lincoln Square into the core of downtown.

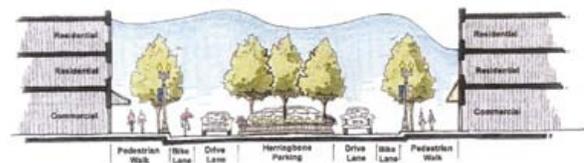
The 2002 Plan listed six target demographics that needed to be better served in order to make downtown more vibrant: general community residents, University students and their families, high school students, people looking for food and entertainment, downtown residents, and downtown workers. The plan included a number of concepts and renderings showing potential ways different areas of downtown could be redeveloped. It also

Concept Plan from 2002 Strategic Plan

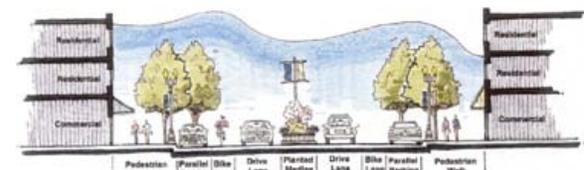
identified a number of specific projects which are illustrated in an exhibit entitled Key Improvement & Redevelopment Sites. Full-sized versions of key graphics from the 2002 Plan are included in the appendix to this 2012 plan.

Since its adoption, a number of the strategies identified in the 2002 Plan have been accomplished, but much more remains to be done. Progress toward the six key initiatives includes:

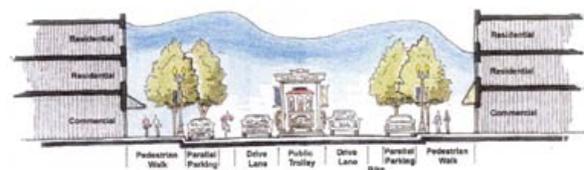
- Strengthening of downtown leadership by the Urbana City Council and Urbana Business Association, as well as by a number of key stakeholders.
- Improvement of downtown’s image through streetscape improvements and a number of building façade upgrades.
- Advancing the housing initiative by construction of the 40-unit Stratford Residences.



Herringbone Parking Option



Planted Median Option



Public Trolley Option

Street Sections from 2002 Strategic Plan

- Promotion of the niche market initiative through the Gallery District rent subsidy program, the expansion of the Market at the Square, and the indoor Lincoln Square holiday market.
- Better integration of Lincoln Square with the rest of downtown through events and UBA programs such as “First Fridays”.

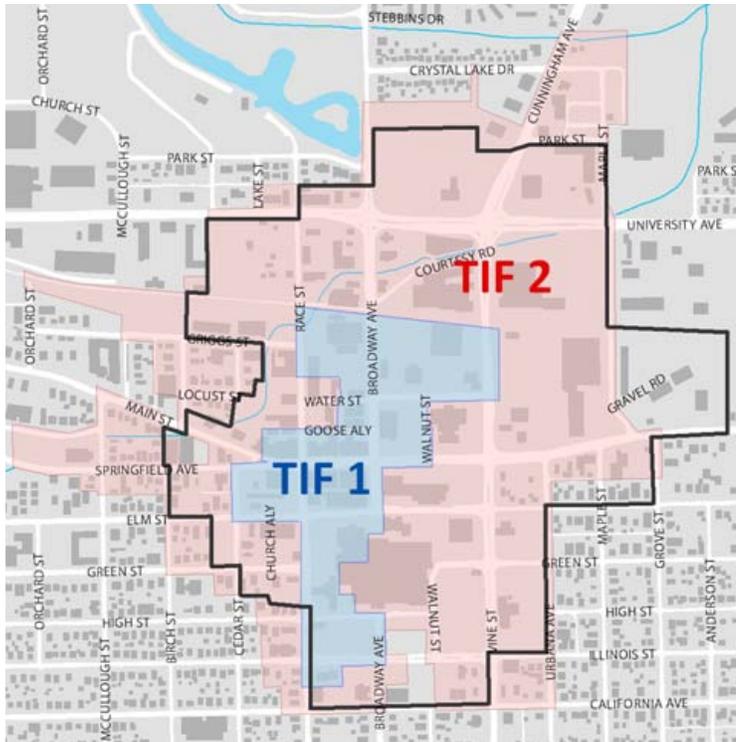
2005 Comprehensive Plan

Like the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan, the 2012 Downtown Plan is presented as an element of the Urbana Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan provides a guiding framework for future development and policy decisions for the entire City of Urbana and its growth area. It identifies some specific trends and issues important to downtown such as Vitality, Lincoln Square, Historical and Cultural Significance, and Improvement of Public Infrastructure, many of which have been addressed since adoption of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan also lists some Goals and Objectives related to downtown:

Goal 22.0 Increase the vitality of downtown Urbana as identified in the Downtown Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan.

Objectives

- 22.1 Promote the creation of housing in downtown Urbana.
- 22.2 Promote the rejuvenation of Lincoln Square.
- 22.3 Continue to promote the highly successful Market at the Square.
- 22.4 Encourage public/private partnerships to foster new development in the downtown area.
- 22.5 Use tax increment financing to promote new development and redevelopment opportunities, mini-parks and plazas.
- 22.6 Continue to improve the public infrastructure of parking lots and streetscapes.
- 22.7 Pursue redevelopment of the North Broadway corridor.
- 22.8 Promote visible, outdoor activity in downtown.
- 22.9 Pursue the development of a permanent outdoor public square and performance/event space.



Map of TIF 1 & TIF 2

TIF Redevelopment Plan Amendments (2004 & 2005)

Many important projects identified in the various plans pertaining to downtown are funded or partially funded by the downtown Tax Increment Finance Districts (“TIF 1” and “TIF 2”). Each of the TIF districts has an expiration date, thus making it important to ensure projects are funded within the available timeframes and that the most important projects are funded. TIF 1 was created in 1980 and is set to expire on December 31, 2016. TIF 2, created in 1986, will expire on December 31, 2022. Considering the time involved in executing the type of projects identified, it is important to plan ahead to resolve strategic funding issues that may potentially arise. TIF 1 generally includes the core downtown area (Main Street, Broadway, and part of Race Street,

including the Historic Lincoln Hotel), and TIF 2 generally encompasses the rest of the area of downtown surrounding TIF 1 (see adjacent map). The TIF plans were updated and timelines extended in the mid 2000’s: TIF 1 in 2004, and TIF 2 in 2005. The status and priorities of the TIF Redevelopment Plans are addressed further in the Implementation section and in the appendix.

Downtown Market Study (2011)

In a related effort to this plan, in 2011 the City hired Business Districts, Inc. of Evanston, Illinois to complete a market analysis of downtown Urbana. The goals of this study were to provide useful information on retail sales gaps and leakage, retail draw, potential office and residential markets, potential square footages for desired uses, and recommendations for redevelopment of key sites specific to downtown. The findings and recommendations of this Downtown Market Study are reflected throughout this plan, particularly in the Redevelopment Sites section of the Implementing the Vision Chapter.

The market study examined existing businesses and assessed markets and potential commercial opportunities within downtown. This was carried out in four phases: information assembly, market analysis, market strategy development, and final documentation. The study formulated short- and long-term market strategies to improve the downtown economy. These strategies identify and prioritize those immediate efforts and activities which can capitalize on improving sales in existing businesses, recruiting new tenants to existing properties, and focusing on

those downtown uses that can succeed economically in downtown Urbana. The market study also included an examination of four potential redevelopment sites as identified by City staff. Two potential redevelopment scenarios were identified for each site. These redevelopment scenarios reflect Downtown Urbana's key opportunities. These four sites are discussed in the Implementation section of this Downtown Plan, and the conceptual site plans are incorporated into Appendix B. The market study also included a component to examine the hotel market and the strategies that would be useful for the redevelopment of the Historic Lincoln Hotel (now being renovated as the Urbana Landmark Hotel).

Finally, the study recommends the following major objectives:

Retail Market Development

- Strengthening property management, ownership, and reinvestment
- Improving sales and profitability of existing businesses
- Recruiting businesses to enhance mix and to improve competitive position
- Continuing strategic build-to-suit development, as broader economy improves

Residential Market Development

- Strengthening property management and redevelopment potential
- Maintaining ongoing relationships with the regional multi-unit developer community.
- Focusing on proposal success factors after broader economy improves

Office Market Development

- Strengthening office property management, ownership, and re-investment
- Understanding expansion plans for major employers in and near downtown Urbana
- Considering office development opportunities, as development economics improve.



*Rendering of
Boneyard Creek
improvements*

Boneyard Creek Master Plan (2008)

The Boneyard Creek Master Plan, completed by WENK Associates in 2008, lays out the vision and conceptual plan for beautifying Boneyard Creek through downtown and opening up public access to the creek. It aims to turn the Boneyard from an underserved and unattractive part of downtown to an attractive amenity that will help draw people to downtown Urbana. The plan identifies four implementation phases. The Boneyard Creek Improvement Project, Phase I includes the segment from Griggs Street to Broadway Avenue, and will include reconstruction of the Race Street bridge and construction of a public park and walkway along the creek on either side of Race Street, including an outdoor performance space, railroad trestle overlook, and opportunities for public art. Example visuals from this plan are shown in the Implementation chapter. The project will be funded by TIF.

University Avenue Corridor Study (2009)

The University Avenue Corridor Plan was completed in 2009 by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission and funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation. This Plan provides concepts and recommendations for the beautification and safety improvements of University Avenue between downtown Urbana and downtown Champaign.

Cunningham Avenue Corridor Study (2008)

This study, completed in 2008 by the Indianapolis-based landscape architecture firm CBA (now renamed Landstory), recommends improvements to beautify and create gateway features along Cunningham Avenue between downtown Urbana and Airport Road. It provides a number of recommendations and visual concepts to guide future development and streetscape improvements along the corridor.

White & Springfield Corridor Analysis (2010)

This study was prepared in 2010 by the Center for Neighborhood Technology of Chicago in conjunction with the Mobility Implementation Plan (miPlan) Transportation Study being spearheaded by the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD). It proposes mobility-enhanced developments (MED) along key transit corridors in Urbana and Champaign, including the Springfield Avenue Corridor in downtown Urbana. According to the study, MEDs “present a place-making opportunity to create mixed commercial and residential neighborhoods where residents can meet everyday needs without complete dependence on a car for mobility and survival.”

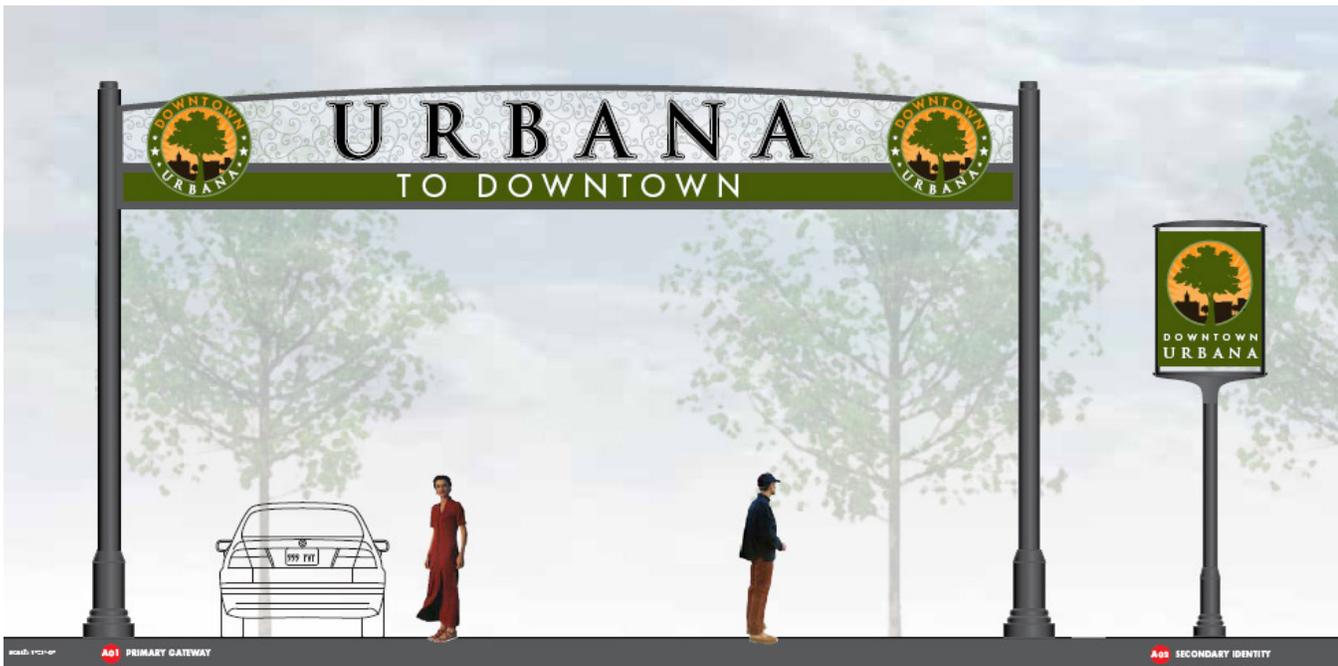
Downtown Parking Study (2008)

In October 2008, the Urbana City Council adopted a Downtown Parking Study prepared by parking consultants Rich and Associates. The recommendations of this study encompassed modifications to safety/security, enforcement practices, signage, marketing, parking supply, and equipment. In February 2009, City Council prioritized the recommended action items into high, medium, and low categories. High priority implementation items concerned parking duration, signage, marketing, handheld ticket writing equipment, issuance of courtesy tickets, graduated fines for parking violations, improved lighting, and parking deck equipment replacement. Of the highest priority recommendations, all items have been implemented or are in the process of implementation, with marketing being an on-going effort.

Market at the Square Strategic Plan (2011)

Urbana’s farmer’s market, officially known as Market at the Square, draws thousands of visitors to Downtown every week during the Market season from mid-May to mid-November. In 2011 the City adopted a Strategic Plan for Urbana’s Market at the Square with the intent of better managing growth of the Market and supporting Urbana City Council’s environmental sustainability goals. The plan defines a clear mission statement and set of goals for the Market, and outlines strategies to achieve those goals.





*Proposed
Downtown
Identity Signage*

Signage and Wayfinding Study (2010)

In response to the recommendations of the Downtown Parking Study, in 2010 the City of Urbana contracted with Selbert Perkins Design of Chicago to conduct a Signage and Wayfinding study for the downtown area. The study concluded that signage in the downtown area does not adequately convey the necessary information to motorists or pedestrians and therefore is in need of substantial upgrade. In early 2011, the City Council budgeted to implement the first phase of the study recommendations such as addressing deficiencies in parking and regulatory signage including that for the parking deck. Subsequent phases will include directional signage to destinations, gateway entrances into downtown, information, street identity, and city-wide direction into the downtown. These phases will be implemented over the next several years on a priority basis as funding allows.

Other Plans

Other plans and documents set guidelines or regulations that impact the downtown, such as the Mixed Office Residential District Development Guidelines (for portions of Green and Elm Streets), the Champaign County Facilities Plan, the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, and the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Another important effort involves increasing the amount of art in public spaces. The Urbana Public Arts Commission is tasked with this endeavor.

Setting Priorities

With the myriad of projects and guidelines identified within the plans described above, the City has been concerned about the need to properly evaluate and prioritize proposed infrastructure and redevelopment projects in order to best meet the goals of the pertinent plans. Consequently, in 2010 City Council directed

staff to conduct a holistic analysis to identify and prioritize potential projects in the downtown to help guide future decisions that impact annual budgets and influence the overall growth and identity of the downtown. In prioritizing these projects, it is important to consider conformance to the 2012 Urbana Downtown Plan, the TIF Redevelopment Plans, and the overall Council Goals, along with other policy documents; to provide for a strategic approach in making the biggest positive impact upon the downtown; to exercise good fiscal stewardship in promoting the economic well being of the downtown; and to reflect stakeholder input.

Of critical importance related to all of these plans and the projects identified within them is achieving a healthy balance of implementing public infrastructure and beautification projects with providing redevelopment support for private development projects. Without revenue-generating projects in the form of private developments or expansions and renovations of existing buildings, the goals of the Downtown Plan and TIF Redevelopment Plans will not be met and there will be reduced revenues generated to help accomplish the goals set forth in the plans. In order to effect downtown revitalization, it is critical that public funds be leveraged by private investment and that there is a good balance of public and private projects.

A roadmap for how to achieve a desirable balance of redevelopment projects was laid out by the Downtown Projects Prioritization Memoranda and Spreadsheets, presented to City Council in late 2008 (see Appendix C). These documents identified the plans affecting downtown and briefly recapped recently accomplished projects in the TIF districts, as well as an update of projects underway. The memoranda also analyzes pending projects in the TIF districts, along with a financial breakdown of what those projects would cost and when they were scheduled to be completed. Projects were prioritized based on a strategic approach in making the biggest positive impact upon the downtown and the exercising of good fiscal stewardship in promoting the economic well being of the downtown. An update to this information is included in Appendix C and projects that are identified as priority projects are reflected in the Implementation Chapter.

PLANNING PROCESS

Collaborating on the Plan

The 2012 Downtown Plan began with adoption of City Council and Mayor Goals in 2010, including the following:

Goal: A vibrant, innovative downtown

A. Strategy: Update the 2002 downtown strategic plan

- Work with stakeholders on visioning for downtown and a goal-setting process.
- Hire design firm to obtain updated visualizations of downtown.
- Create an overarching downtown vision statement and executive summary of existing plans.
- Assign priorities and timelines to existing plans for downtown and develop several scenarios based on potential redevelopments.

Downtown Plan Steering Committee

The initial task in achieving this goal was to form a Steering Committee composed of downtown stakeholders to advise on the planning process and creation of the plan. Several downtown business owners, property owners, residents, and institutional users participated as a part of a Downtown Plan Steering Committee. The committee had its first meeting in April 2010, and has met regularly throughout the planning process. At these meetings, members of the Steering Committee provided input on the planning vision, goals, and concepts. The Steering Committee also hosted a public forum for residents, officials, and professionals to present ideas

on improving downtown. For example, a City Council member from St. Charles, Illinois, spoke to the group about his town's success in promoting their downtown. Steering Committee members also made presentations to the group, including a photo-essay and photographic illustrations of potential redevelopments. During the final meetings, the Steering Committee finalized the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, and approved the final draft of the plan.

Design & Graphics Consultant

While the Steering Committee was being formed, the City began searching for a consultant to prepare illustrations as well as urban design support for the plan. A request for proposals was issued, and Hitchcock Design Group of Naperville was selected. Working on the City's behalf, Hitchcock's team provided graphic analysis and visualization for redevelopment of key downtown infill sites. Their illustrations and graphics are found throughout this document. Hitchcock's team leader also participated in a staff charrette and participated in a public open house of the draft plan. Concurrently with the Downtown Plan, Hitchcock also provided conceptual site layouts and square footages for potential downtown redevelopment sites (Appendix B). In addition to Hitchcoc Design Group, several student interns assisted City staff with graphics and managing data from public outreach.

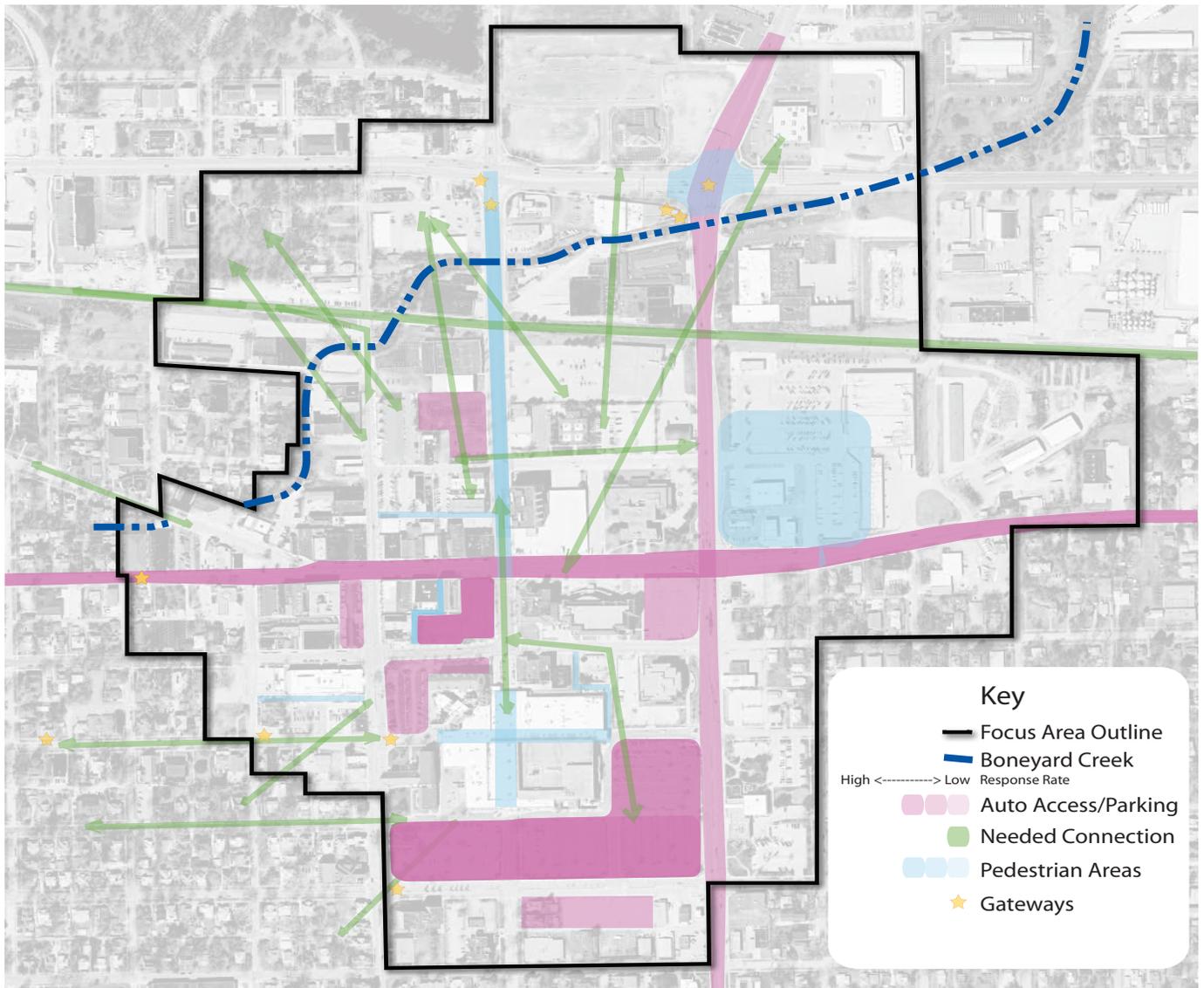
Public Outreach

The 2012 Downtown Plan is based on input from area residents, businesses, and downtown stakeholders. From the early visioning stages through the finalization of plan concepts and goals City staff carried out an extensive public input process for the plan with ideas collected through several events and venues. In addition to traditional methods of public involvement, the City used electronic media extensively, including a plan webpage, interactive visual preference survey with more

than 500 participants, Facebook, and emails. To cap off the planning process, residents and City officials had the opportunity to comment on the plan during public hearings before Plan Commission and City Council.



The Downtown Plan Facebook Page



Visioning Workshop

The initial public outreach event was a Visioning Workshop, held in May 2010. At this event, 40 community participants shared their thoughts on the current state of downtown and for improving downtown. After a brief presentation on the state of downtown planning efforts, participants were divided into small groups. Each group collaborated on exercises to list and map “likes” and “dislikes” about downtown Urbana, and how they would change downtown. Results from the groups regarding mobility are shown above. See Appendix D, Visioning Workshop Results for more detailed exhibits summarized by category.

Graphic result from a Visioning Workshop question.

Online Survey

Another method by which the City collected input for the Downtown Plan was an online survey. Available from June through August 2010, the survey had two major components -- visioning and built-image preference -- as well as a section on demographic data. Over 500 people responded to the survey and provided over a thousand written comments. The majority of the questionnaire consisted of an image preference survey, which asked respondents to rate images of different types of development according to how appropriate or desirable they are for downtown Urbana. Results indicate that residents want to see more traditional “Main Street” type development with multi-storied buildings at the sidewalk edge, vibrant public spaces, and fewer surface parking lots.

A sample question from the Image Preference Survey (photo source unknown)

The other major component to the survey was similar to the Visioning Workshop, with questions about what respondents like about downtown, and how they would change downtown. Survey results were used in formulating goals and objectives for the plan. Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix E. Below is a “word cloud”, which summarizes responses to the question “What do you like most about downtown Urbana?”. The word cloud shows all of the words from the various

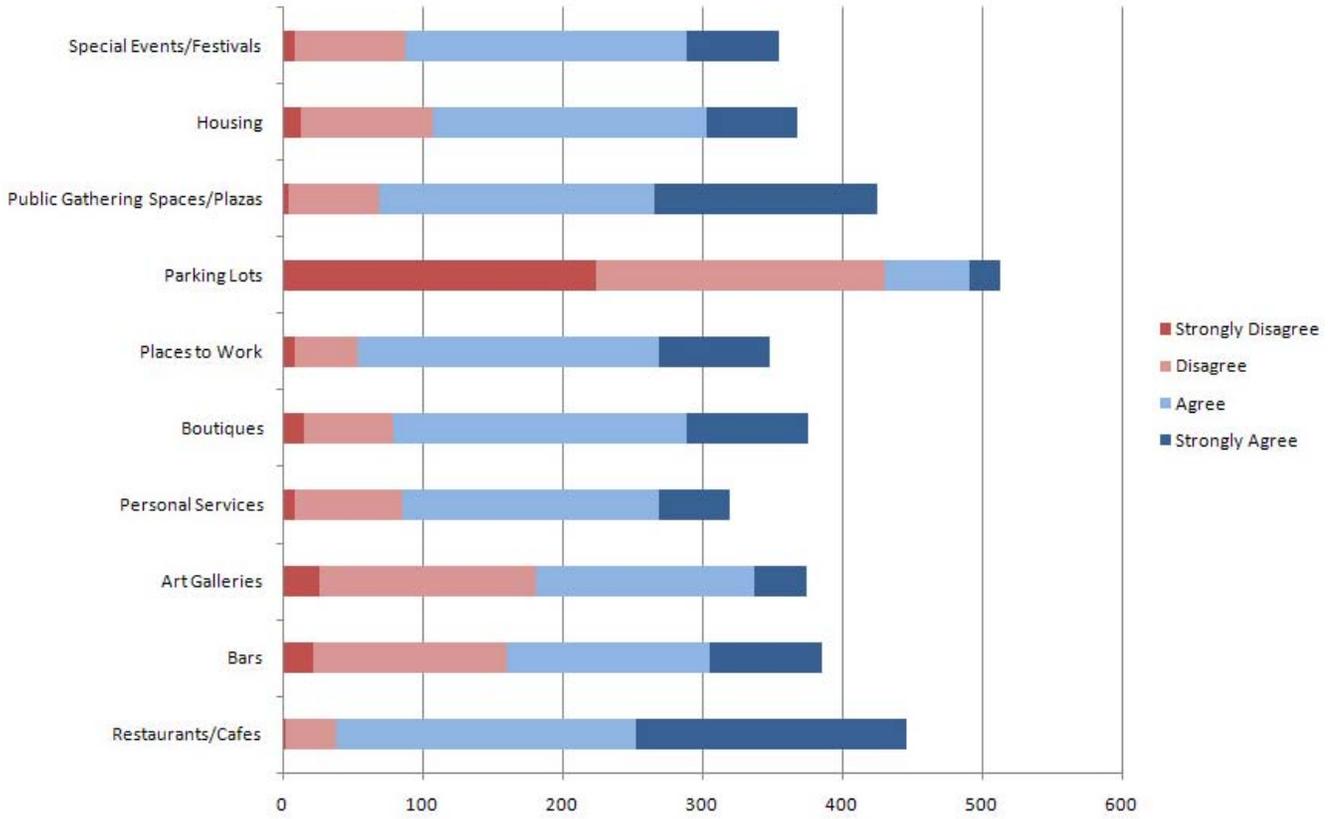
responses in random order and color. Word size is proportionate to how frequently they appeared in the responses.



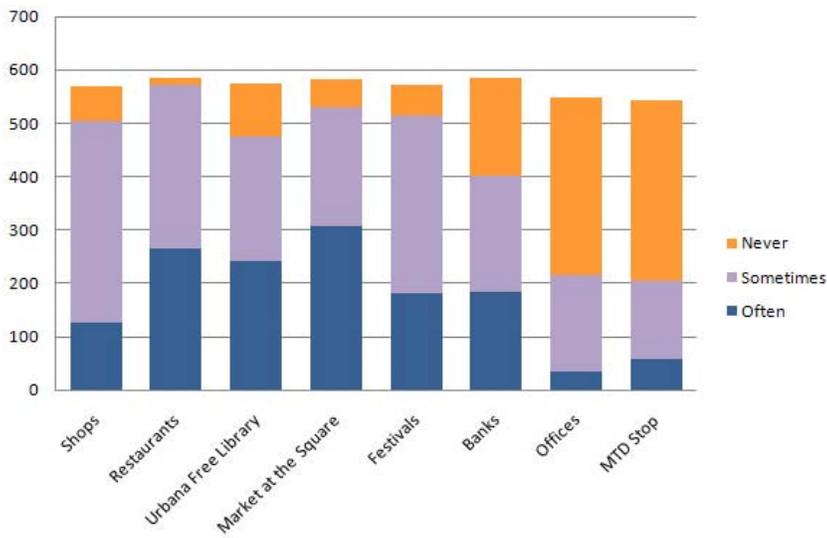
4. How desirable is the built form depicted above?

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

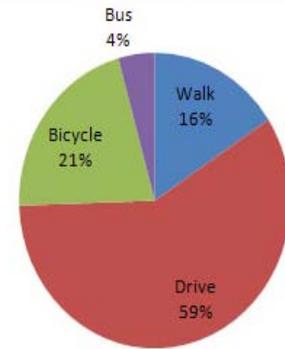
Downtown Needs More...



Which Destinations Do You Visit Downtown?



How Do You Travel To Downtown?

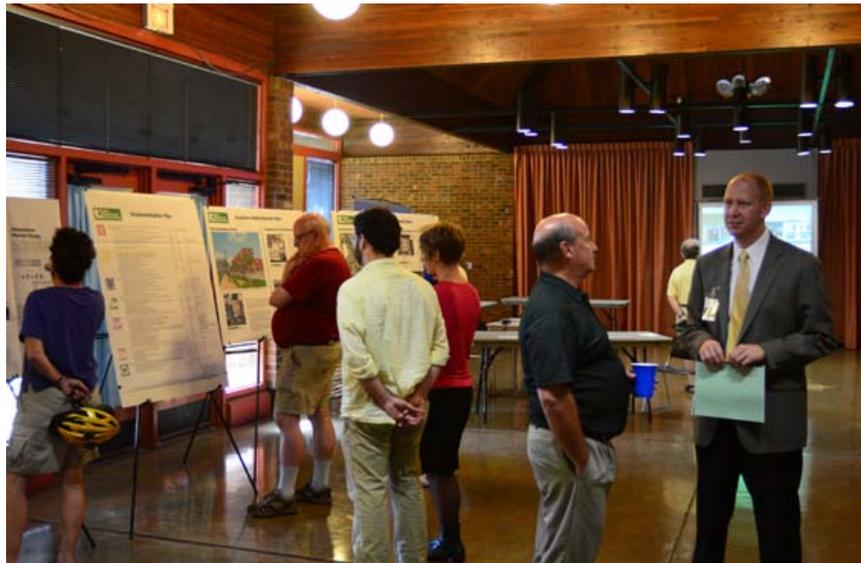


Results from some of the visioning and demographic questions portion of the survey.

broadcast on Urbana Public Television (UPTV). Five presentations were given on topics such as bicycle lanes, roundabouts, public spaces, and establishing a unique identity for Downtown Urbana. One of the presentations included several visualizations of potential redevelopments for different areas of Downtown, as depicted in the graphic on the facing page.

Concept Plan Open House & Market Booth

The City of Urbana hosted two public input venues on the draft plan concepts. These included an Open House held in July 2011 and a public display booth at the Market at the Square in August 2011. At these events the City presented the draft elements of the Downtown Plan, including the Concept Plan map, Goals and Objectives, Implementation Items, and Redevelopment Site Concepts. Staff collected verbal and written comments from participants, and the event posters were provided on the plan web site, where further input from the public was collected.



Participants at the Concept Plan Open House

Official Adoption

Following the events aimed at capturing input from the stakeholders and the general public, the 2012 Downtown Plan will be presented to Plan Commission and City Council for final review and adoption. Because the Plan will be adopted as an element of the Urbana Comprehensive Plan, the Plan Commission will hold an official public hearing on the document and the final version will be adopted by Ordinance by the City Council. Comments from the Plan Commission and City Council meetings, as well as any additional public input, will be incorporated into the Plan before final adoption.

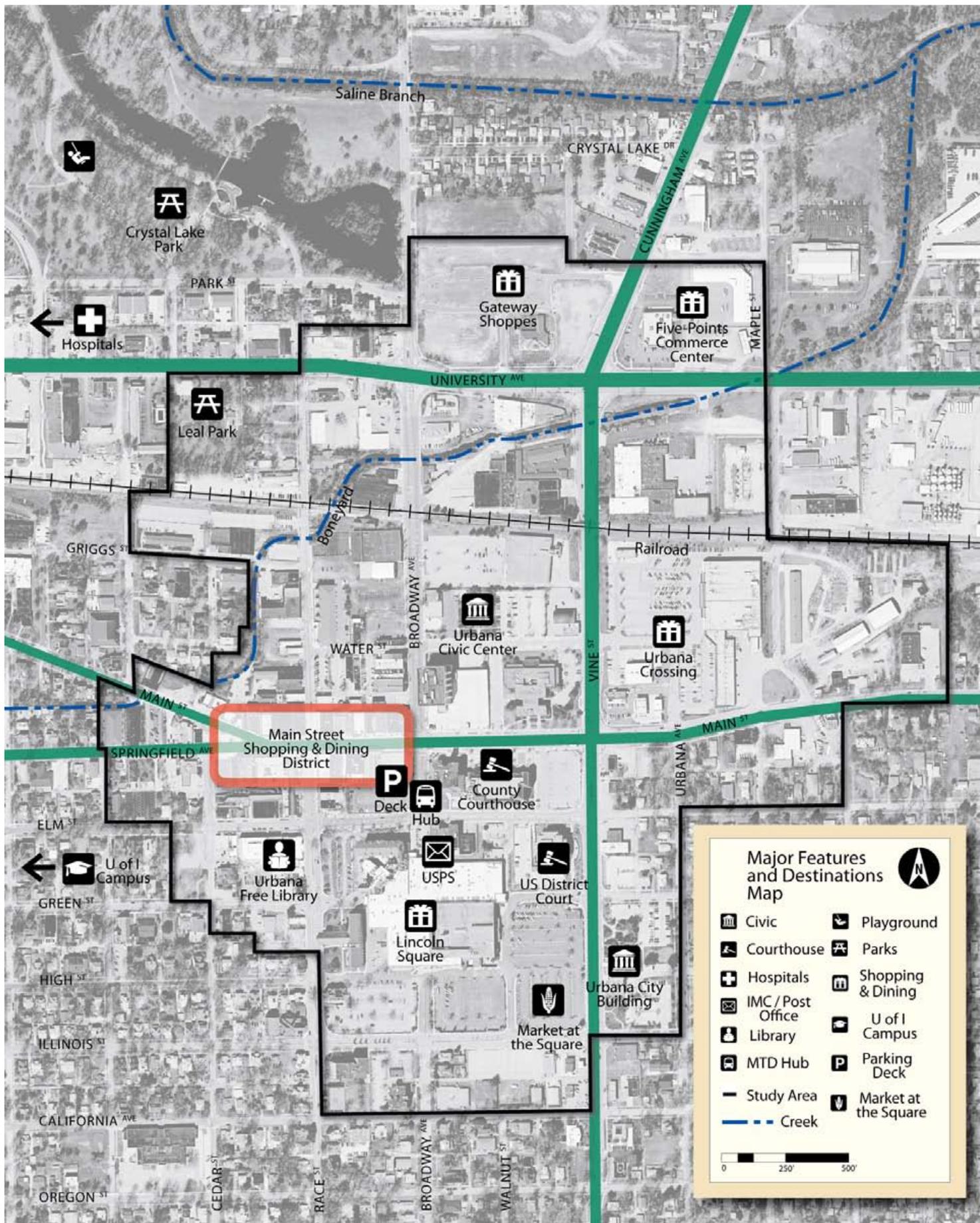




Part II

Trends & Issues

Vision & Goals



TRENDS & ISSUES

This section examines the current state of Downtown Urbana. Survey results and data collection and analysis help paint a picture of where downtown is at today, and where it is going. Since the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan, Urbana's downtown has seen many changes in the form of new businesses, streetscape and infrastructure improvements, and expanded civic facilities. One major change has been the repositioning of Lincoln Square Mall into Lincoln Square Village, now a mixed-use development with significant office space, health and fitness services, and a grocery store. The Urbana Lincoln Hotel closed for a few years but now a new owner is making significant investments and plans to re-open in 2012 as the Urbana Landmark Hotel. New retail centers have been built at the northwest and northeast corners of University and Cunningham Avenues. Civic buildings such as the Urbana Free Library and the Champaign County Courthouse have seen major expansions. The City has invested in major project planning and studies for the Boneyard Creek, signage and wayfinding, downtown parking, and a Public Arts program that has made its mark on downtown. New festivals such as the International Beer Tasting and Chili Cook-off have also been established downtown. Many of these efforts are ongoing and will continue to reshape Downtown Urbana over the next decade. The Major Features Map, on the opposite page, gives an overview of the general locations of downtown's civic and shopping spaces.

Trends

Current Land Uses

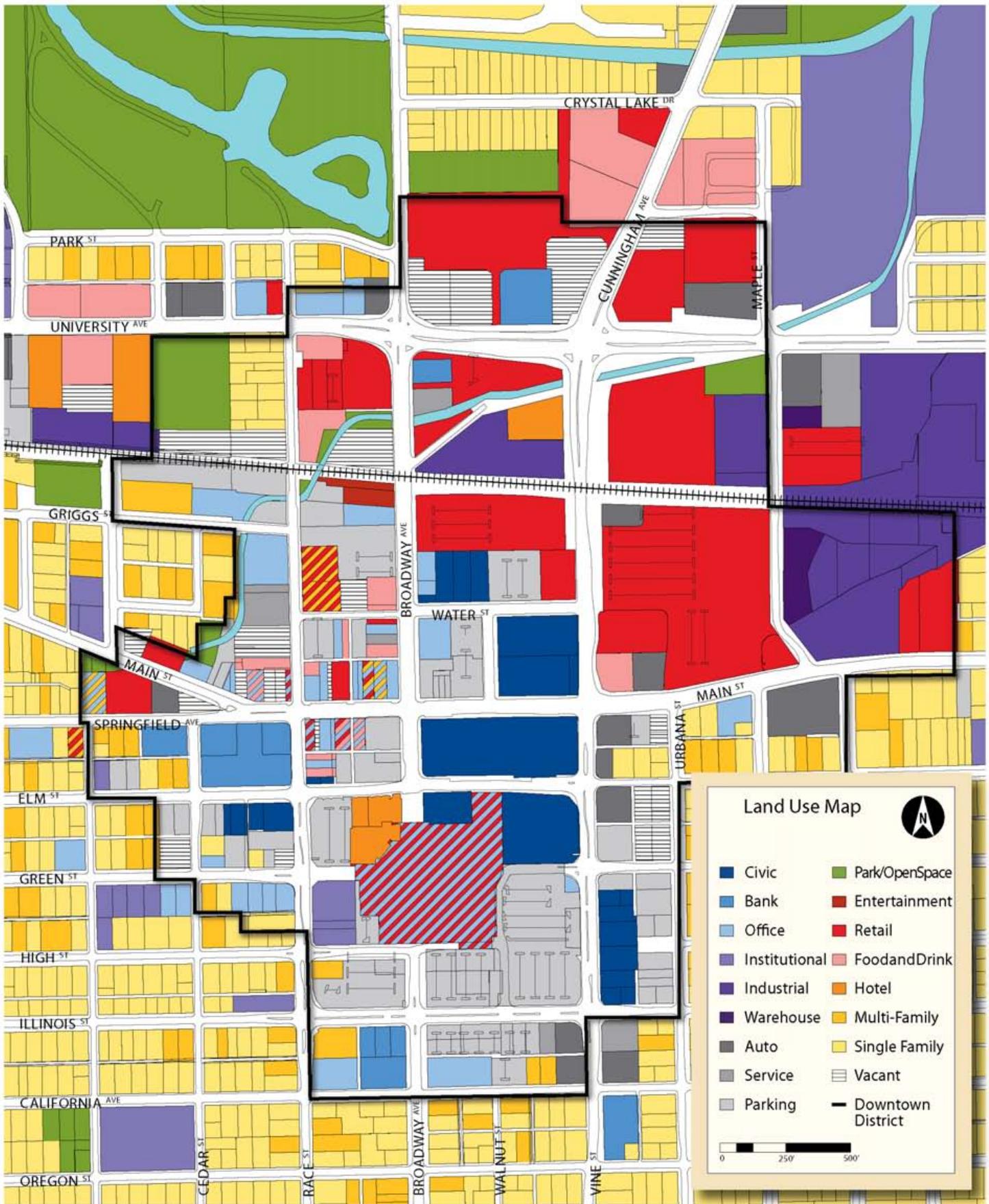
Downtown Urbana supports a wide range of uses, ranging from retail to offices to dining to housing, as shown in the Land Use Map (opposite page). As indicated in the following classification of uses, commercial uses, such as retail shops, offices, galleries and bars/restaurants occupy the majority of the built space in downtown. Single-use commercial buildings account for 50% of the floor space downtown, and mixed-use buildings, which are mostly commercial, account for another 17%. Lincoln Square Village is one example of a mixed-use development, with most of the floor area devoted to retail stores and restaurants, and the remainder used for office.

<i>Building Use Classification</i>		
Use	Area (square feet)	Percent of Total
Commercial	1,093,936	50%
Residential	254,340	12%
Mixed Use	363,346	17%
Industrial	22,177	1%
Public	429,968	20%
Religious	31,278	1%
Total Floor Area	2,195,046	100%

Commercial uses can be further classified as shown below. Retail uses (including stores, galleries, restaurants and bars) are the largest commercial users at 48% of building floor space. Office uses comprise 34% of space. The remainder is divided among hotels and service uses, which include auto services and dry cleaners.

<i>Commercial Use Breakdown</i>		
Use	Area (square feet)	Percent
Hotel	111,064	10%
Office	367,922	34%
Retail	528,032	48%
Service	86,917	8%
Total Commercial Space	1,093,936	100%

Public uses, including City Hall, the County Courthouse, and the Civic Center, account for one fifth of downtown floor space. Downtown Urbana is an important civic destination, attracting patrons and employees to the Urbana Free Library, the U.S. Post Office, courthouses, and City Building.



PREPARED FOR:
City of Urbana

Land Use Map

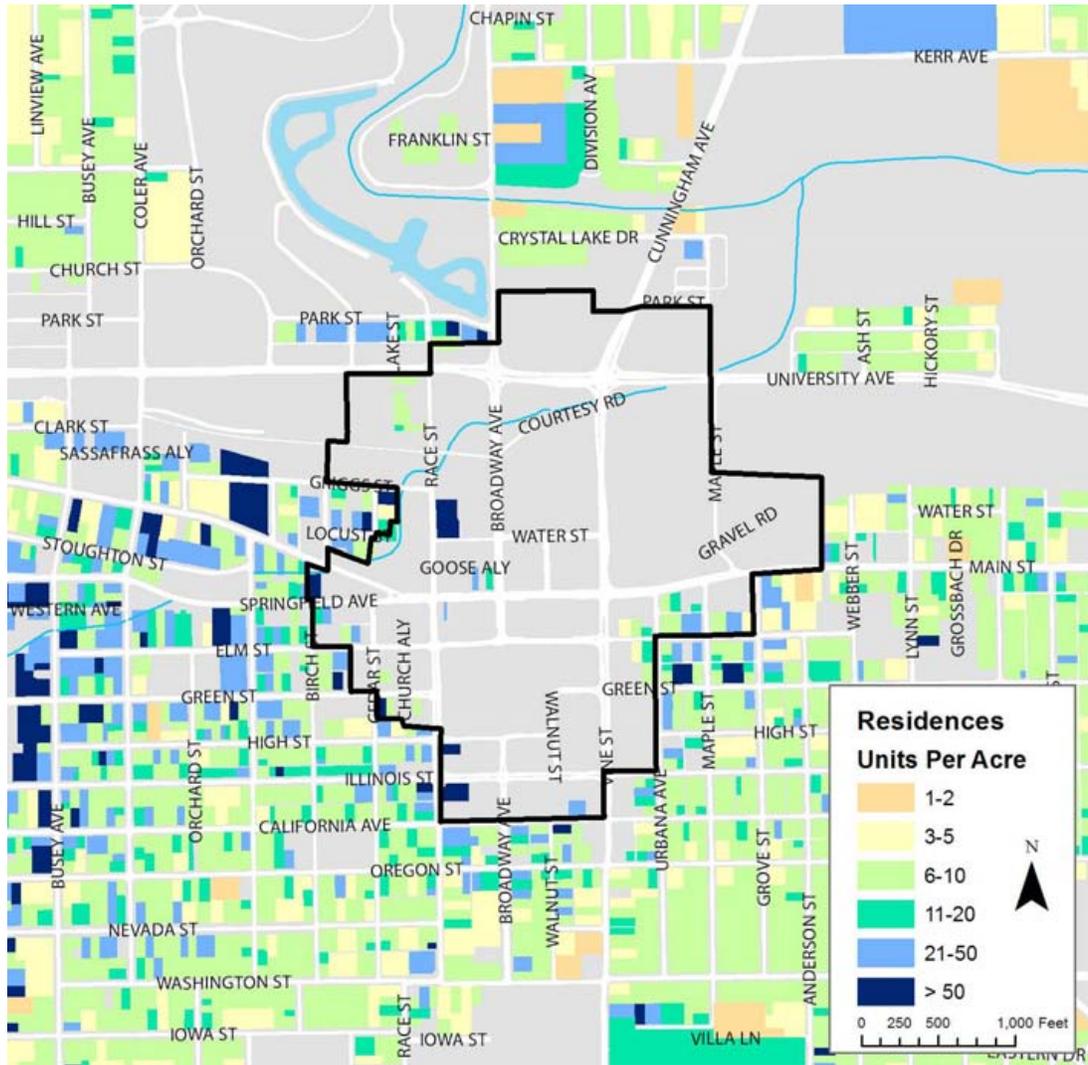
Downtown Urbana 2012

Urbana, Illinois


**Hitchcock
Design Group**
Creating Better Places™

ISSUE 3/12, February 17, 2011
PROJECT NUMBER: 10-00000000-000
All drawings are preliminary and subject to change.
© 2008 Hitchcock Design Group

Housing Density near Downtown Urbana



Housing

Residential uses account for about 9% of floor space in the study area. About 600 people live in 238 units within the study area. All residences within the downtown proper are apartments, with the Stratford Residence being the most recently constructed significant residential development. However, the areas immediately surrounding Downtown consist mostly of older residential neighborhoods in a compact, traditional grid. This ring of housing provides a large number of potential customers within easy walking or bicycling distance of the downtown. Adding more housing within the downtown itself would increase vibrancy.

Residential Units Near Downtown

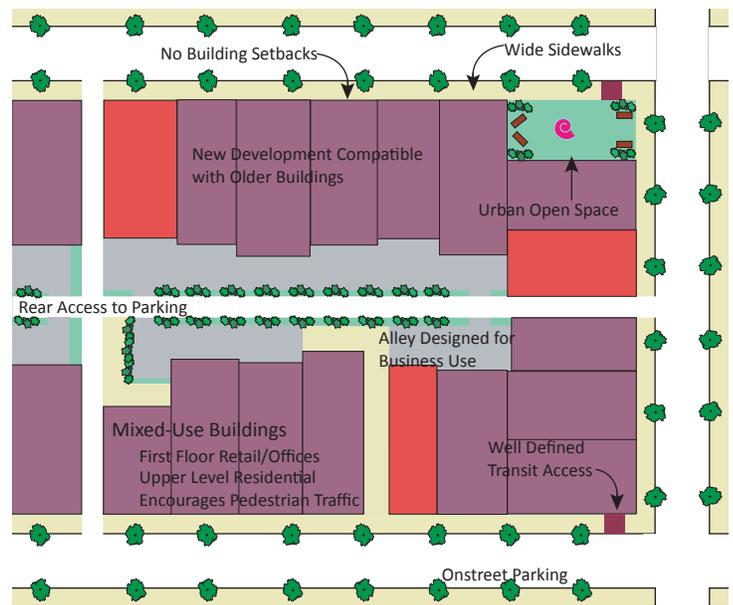
Distance from Main & Broadway (miles)	Units
0.25	316
0.50	2,255
0.75	5,540
1.00	8,559

Future Land Use and Zoning

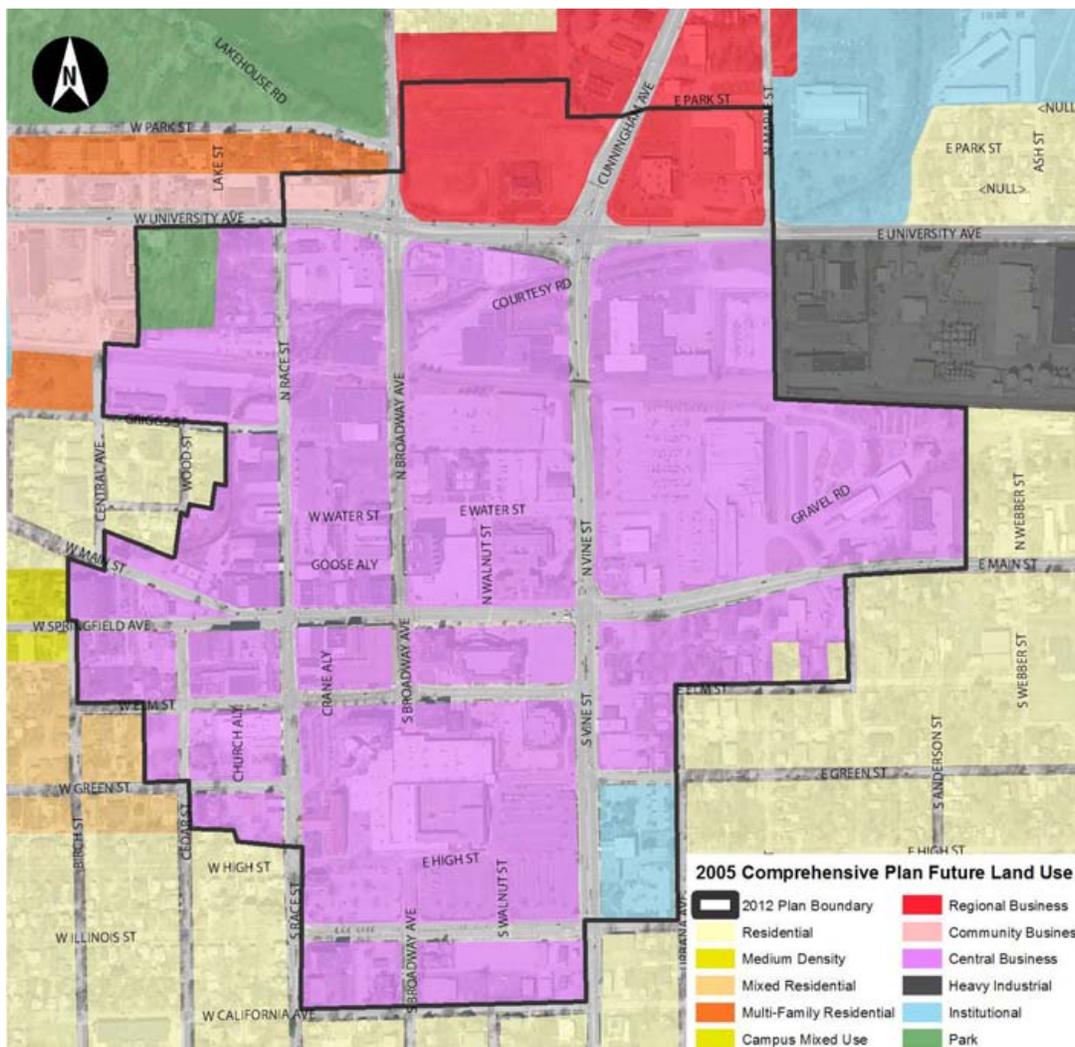
The 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan is the official City guide for future growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan is a community vision that lays out what types of uses should be located downtown in the form of a Central Business Future Land Use. The Comprehensive Plan

description and illustration of the Central Business Future Land Use is as follows:

The Central Business land use designation is exemplified by Downtown Urbana but also includes other mixed-use areas. Contains a dense, highly intensive land use pattern focusing on an urban style of development and architecture. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are emphasized to ensure areas are walkable. Contains a mix of land uses ranging from commercial, high-density residential, office, and well as institutional. Mixed-use developments offer residential uses above first-floor commercial and office space.

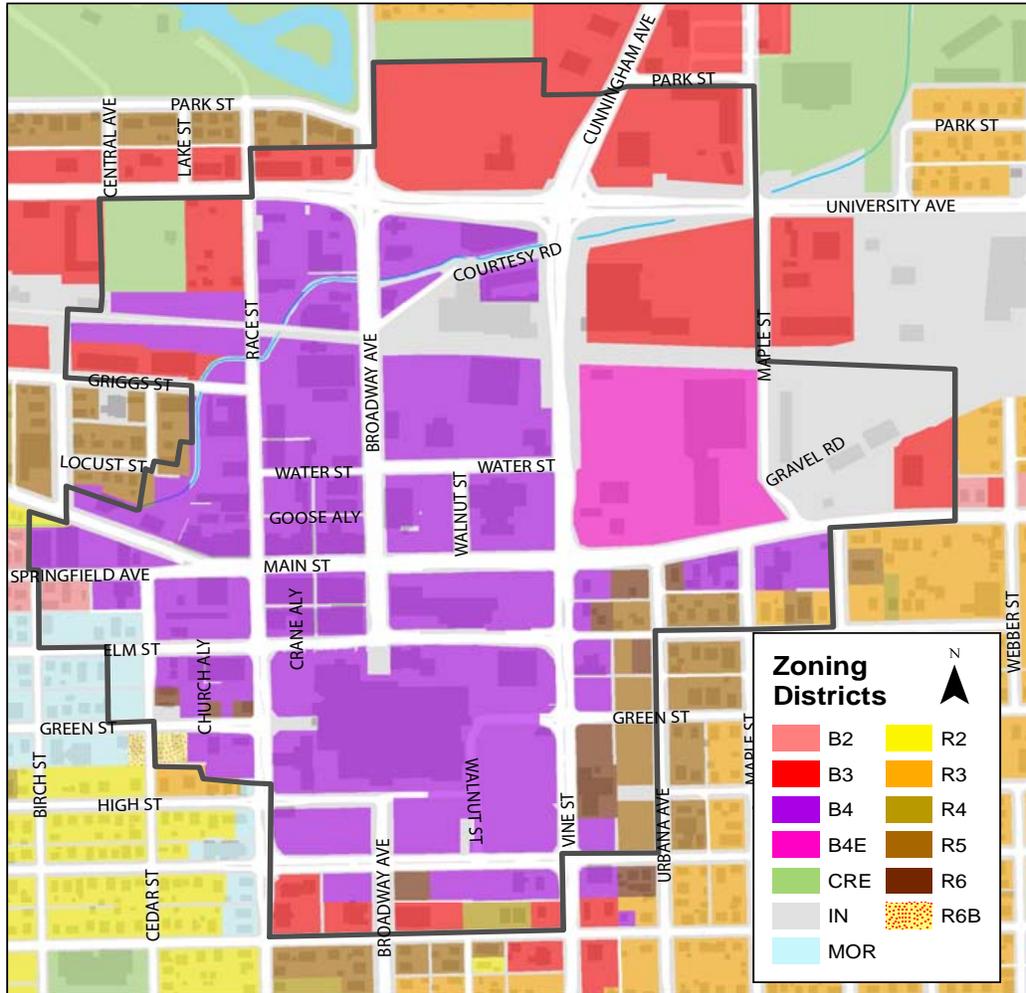


Comprehensive Plan Central Business Future Land Use Illustration



2005 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Designations

Zoning
near
Downtown
Urbana



The Urbana Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map provide standards for uses and development of land. Most of the downtown study area is currently zoned B-4, Central Business District, as shown in the adjacent map. The B-4 district allows for many types of commercial and residential uses while excluding intense industrial uses and low-density residences. The B-4 district allows for downtown buildings to be built without any setbacks, and with fewer constraints on height and density. The Zoning Ordinance requires no onsite parking in the B-4, Central Business District, meaning that onstreet parking and shared public parking lots take on heightened importance here. These regulations have been put in place in recognition and support of downtown’s traditional, compact building form as exemplified by high-density, mixed use buildings with little to no building setbacks from street rights-of-way.

Mobility, Transit and Parking

Downtown Urbana is accessible via an interconnected street network that includes sidewalks and bicycle lanes/routes. Most respondents to the City's online survey indicate they arrive downtown by car. However, 21% of respondents ride a bicycle, 16% walk, and 4% take the bus. Walking to downtown is easy for residents who live close by. Neighborhoods surrounding downtown are built on a traditional grid, and all of the connecting streets have sidewalks. Bicycling to downtown is also convenient as most streets leading to downtown are bicycle-friendly. Over the next few years the City plans to upgrade bicycling infrastructure through the addition of bicycle lanes, bicycle route designations, and "sharrows", which are street markings indicating that automobiles and bicycles are sharing certain routes. Car-sharing is also available, with three Zip Cars stationed at Lincoln Square Village.

Public transit to Downtown Urbana is provided by the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD). Seven bus routes connect downtown to campus, downtown Champaign, and neighborhoods throughout Champaign and Urbana. According to the CUMTD, on average over 2,500 riders board or exit from buses in downtown Urbana every day.

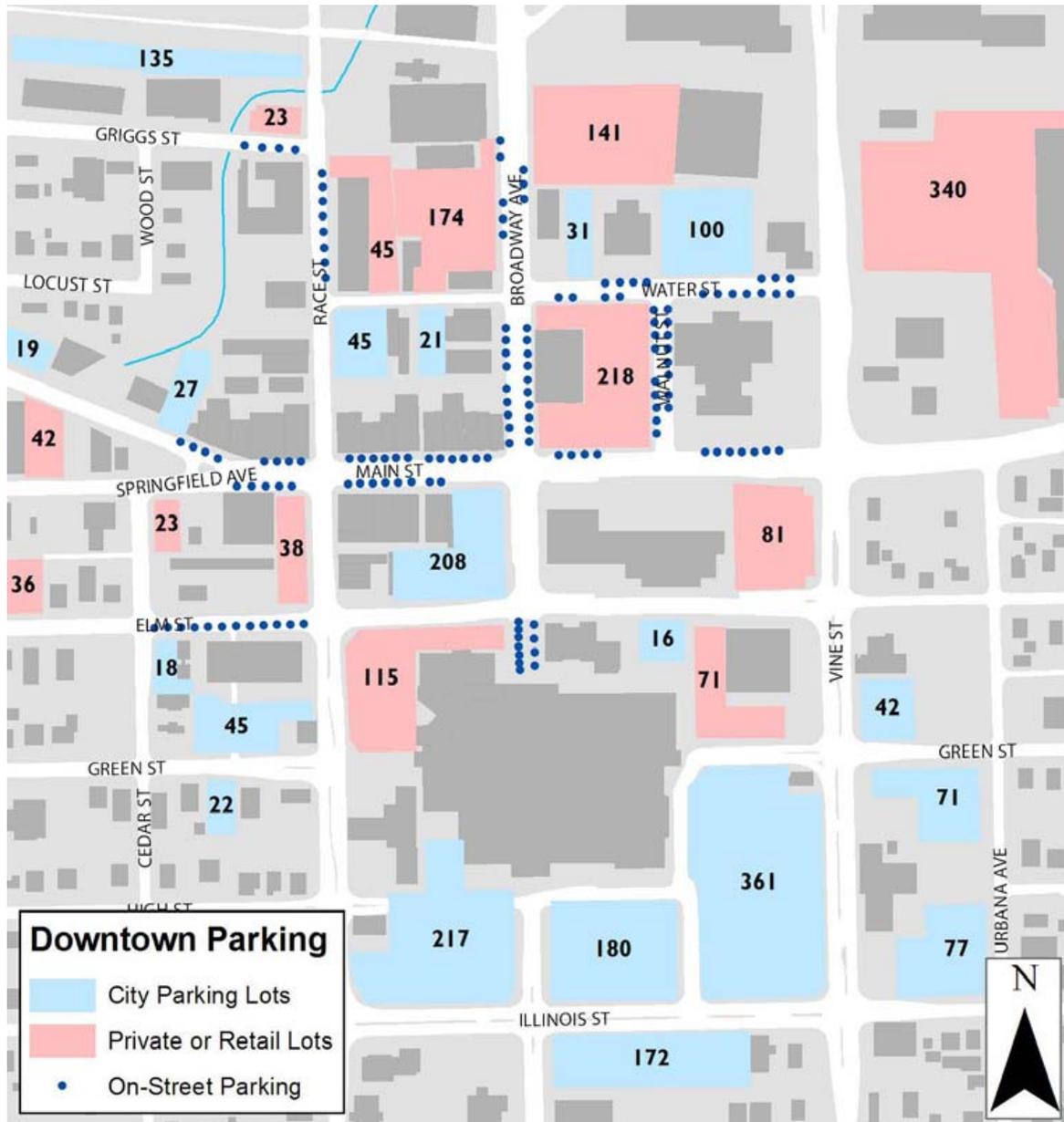
For the majority who drive, downtown parking is generally inexpensive and easy to find. The City operates and maintains public parking lots throughout downtown as shown in the map on the next page. In addition to surface parking lots, the City operates a 218-space public parking deck in the core of downtown. On-street parking is also provided along key downtown streets. Street parking and most public parking lots have a two-hour time limit. This encourages turnover for parking spaces near stores and restaurants. Downtown employees have the opportunity for long-term parking at the parking deck and in private rental lots. The cost of public parking for downtown Urbana is lower than that of downtown Champaign and the University of Illinois campus.



Downtown Bus Routes Map (Courtesy of CUMTD)



Downtown Urbana Zip Car Station (Courtesy Don Schlorff)



When asked if Downtown needs more parking lots, 84% of respondents to a City online survey either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This response is reinforced by the 2008 Downtown Parking Study, which showed that except in a few key locations, parking supply currently exceeds demand. The City anticipates that parking demand will eventually justify constructing new structured parking as occupancy rates rise and existing parking lots are developed into mixed-use buildings. The Downtown Parking Study recommends possible locations for new and/or expanded structured public parking. When originally built, the existing parking deck was designed to accommodate new infill commercial space added to the ground floor along Broadway Avenue. Although the parking garage was originally designed to support adding one or more stories, subsequent building code changes would necessitate expensive retrofitting for seismic and other safety reasons. This issue will need to be addressed in the coming years as additional development and related demand for parking in the downtown increases.



Infrastructure

Over the last decade, the City of Urbana has continued to invest in public infrastructure for the Downtown area. The 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan called for streetscape upgrades, and the City has installed new street signs, street lights, benches, trash and recycling cans, and brick sidewalk accents. A major upgrade was recently completed to eliminate flooding at the Vine Street viaduct. Upcoming infrastructure projects include a reconfiguration of Broadway Avenue with installation of new streetscape elements such as wider sidewalks and bio-swales, a “road diet” for Main Street to add bicycle lanes and make intersections safer, and resurfacing of Race Street. Additionally, the Boneyard Creek Master Plan will be implemented, with construction of the first phase slated to begin in 2012. This \$8.2 million project will help transform the creek into a major natural amenity with engaging public spaces.

*Streetscape
Plan for
Broadway
Avenue*



Streetscape elements installed since the 2002 Plan. (Courtesy Urbana Public Works)

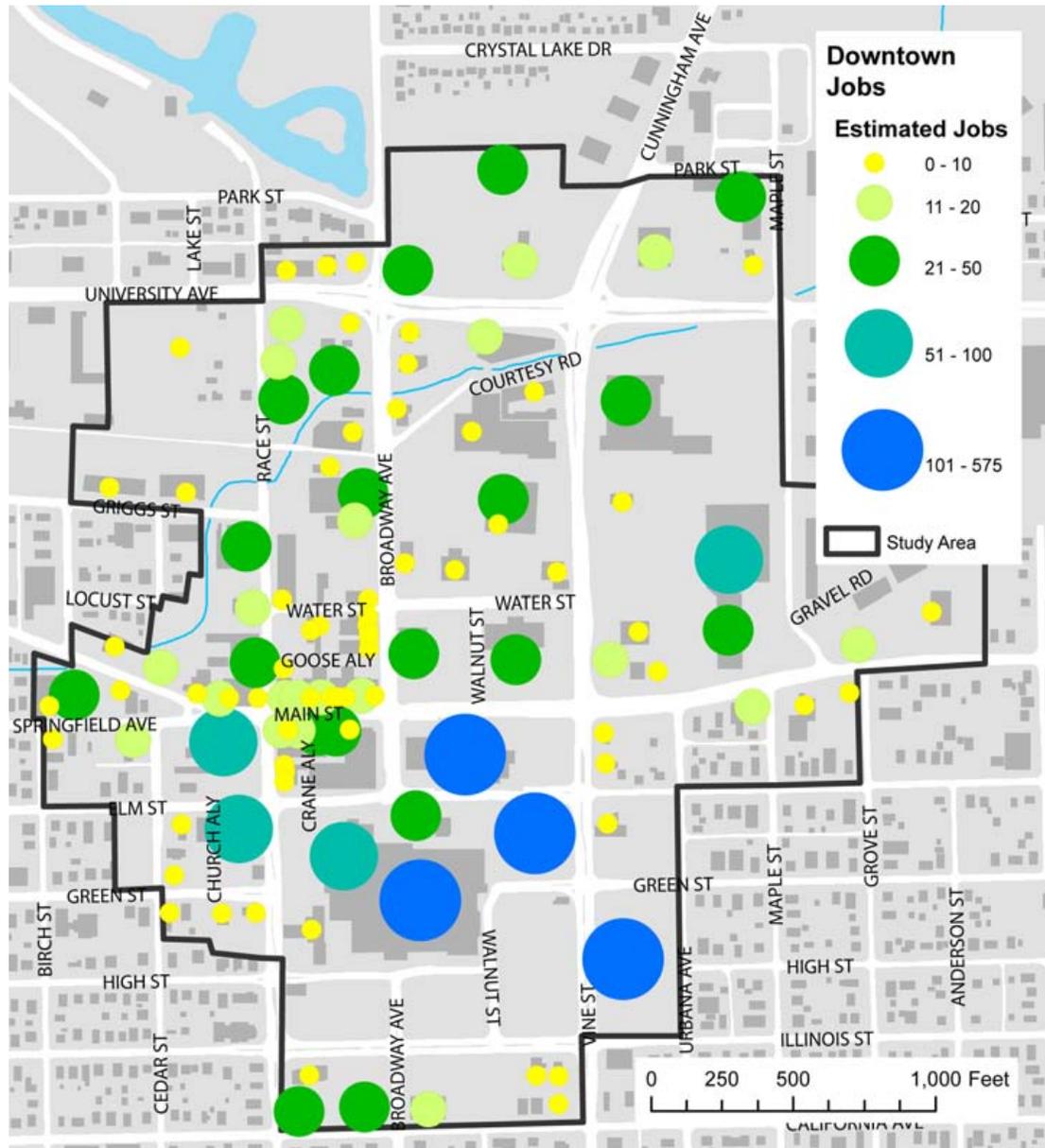


Job Distribution & Economic Climate

Downtown Urbana is home to well over 2,500 jobs, making it an important employment center for the region. Collectively, downtown is the third largest employer in Urbana after the University of Illinois and Carle Hospital. Major employers located downtown include Health Alliance, Champaign County, and the City of Urbana. Almost half of downtown jobs are located in Lincoln Square Village. Most of the remainder of jobs are spread evenly throughout downtown, with some clusters in the courthouses and at Schnucks and the Urbana Free Library.

Despite the general national and local decline in the economy since 2008, vacancy rates in downtown Urbana have remained constant or even declined in some areas. First floor retail space along Main Street and elsewhere has increased due to the initiation of TIF-funded rent subsidy programs for targeted small businesses such as art galleries and restaurants. The Gallery District Incentive Program alone has helped attract 14 businesses since the end of 2006. Lincoln Square currently

Downtown Employers as estimated by a 2010 city internal study



enjoys its highest level of occupancy in over eight years. The Urbana Business Association has played an important role in organizing and promoting long-time and new downtown businesses and events.

New construction in the downtown area has increased the number of residents and patrons for downtown businesses as well as increasing the number and variety of goods and services. The Stratford Residence is a \$5 million mixed-use project near the core of downtown that added over 40 units of high-end apartments and retail space in 2005. Five Points Commerce Centre and Gateway Shoppes have added restaurants, retail shops, services and a grocery store at a prime retail corner that is convenient to downtown residents and employees.

The 2011 Downtown Market Study prepared by Business Districts, Inc. outlines strategies to revitalize the economic climate of downtown. These strategies include targeting incentive programs to attract key sectors to downtown (such as restaurants, specialty foods, and upscale rental housing), retaining and expanding successful businesses, and redeveloping key downtown sites.



The Stratford Residences

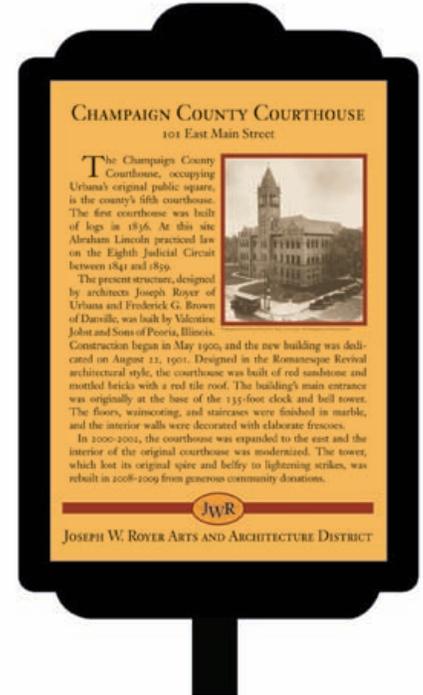


Character and Historic Architecture

Public input gathered throughout the downtown planning process indicates that its traditional design character is one of the favorite aspects of downtown for area residents. Residents appreciate the historic architecture, the pedestrian scale of buildings, and the walkable nature of the downtown core.

One of the most distinctive aspects of downtown Urbana is its historic architecture. Many buildings along Main Street, Race Street, and Broadway Avenue were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Joseph Royer, a notable local architect, designed many of the buildings that survive today, including the Urbana Free Library, the Urbana Landmark Hotel (formerly known as the Urbana Lincoln Hotel), many of the older commercial buildings on Main Street, and some residences in West Urbana. Royer also designed the Champaign County courthouse, which recently had the clock tower restored to its original height thanks to a community fundraising effort. These historic structures are commemorated by the City's Joseph Royer Arts & Architecture District.

Several of these properties are designated as local landmarks. Landmark designation offers protection for Urbana's historic buildings through review of proposed alterations. If a landmark is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Federal tax incentives are available for rehabilitation. Additional landmarking of civic and historic buildings is recommended.



Other efforts to celebrate our local history include the Lincoln exhibit at the County Courthouse and a podcast/walking tour of historic sites from Lincoln’s time. Founder’s Park, an open space along the Boneyard Creek, is another significant site in Urbana’s history as the approximate site of the first European-American settlement in Urbana. Along East Main Street is a site where Lincoln spoke in 1856. Finally, Urbana has begun a process to recognize important structures through a listing of the City’s 100 most significant historic buildings.

Plaques are being installed to mark buildings in the Royer District.



Concept for commemorative marker at the site of a historic elm tree where Lincoln spoke in 1856. (Courtesy Dennis Roberts)

Key Issues & Strengths

Through the public input process several challenges affecting downtown Urbana have been identified. Some of these issues have carried over from the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan and the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Many of these challenges are inter-related. They include:

- Interconnectivity
- Critical Mass
- Non-retail Uses in Retail Spaces
- Number of Residences
- Public Open Space
- Gaps in Building Façades
- Key Vacancies Remain

Downtown needs better **interconnectivity**. Individual institutions and businesses serve as hubs of activity, but there is a lack of synergy and cohesiveness. Many, if not most, of the trips to downtown result in a single visit to one location. For example, on an average Saturday morning some 6,000 patrons come to the Market at the Square, but the success of the Market has not always translated into a noticeable increase of patronage for shops on Main Street. The Market is located to the southeast of Lincoln Square, which itself is separated from Main Street by the parking deck and the County Courthouse. These barriers could be addressed by making the streets between Lincoln Square and Main Street more walkable, with vibrant public spaces and buildings that address the street. Another disconnected area is the Urbana Crossing shopping center and Starbuck's block. There are many successful businesses on this block, but few visitors to the cafés and restaurants here are enticed to walk the two blocks to/from Main Street shops. Other downtown activity generators such as the Urbana Free Library, Strawberry Fields, and Busey Bank could be better integrated with the rest of downtown. Overcoming these challenges will involve a better system of wayfinding, which is currently underway, as well as creating inviting pedestrian ways through creative use of public art and public space. Densification and redevelopment at key locations can also improve connectivity.

A related issue affecting downtown is a **lack of critical mass**. There are many destinations downtown, but the downtown is not always considered a destination on its own. This is partly due to the lack of connectivity, but also due to the nature of current uses located downtown. Many prime retail spaces are occupied with professional offices. These offices draw some visitors during the weekdays, but are not open after normal business hours. Surface parking lots and the lack of connectivity also disrupt the formation of critical mass downtown. One strategy to enhance downtown's critical mass is to stimulate infill development and to redevelop existing surface parking lots with buildings that have a strong street presence.

Another factor that detracts from critical mass is the **lack of housing** units within downtown proper. While there are many homes close to downtown, relatively few apartments and condominiums exist within downtown proper. Construction of additional residences within the core would add demand for more retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses, creating a more vibrant atmosphere in the evenings and on weekends.

Downtown Urbana also could benefit from more **vibrant public spaces**. While streetscape benches and outdoor seating are dispersed throughout downtown, there are few inviting public squares and gathering places. Existing public spaces include the mini park at Race and Elm Streets (connected to the Iron Post Tavern), the plaza in front of the County Courthouse, and Cherry Alley adjacent to the Urbana Free Library. Adding an additional public square at a key location such as in front of the Independent Media Center (former Post Office) would help to increase vibrancy downtown and foster connections between Lincoln Square and Main Street (though this is not feasible while the Post Office remains at this location). Completion of the Boneyard Creek Improvement Project will provide a quality public space to the north of Main Street along Race Street. While downtown is home to some of the most highly-regarded restaurants, bars, sidewalk cafés and performance spaces in Champaign-Urbana, more are needed to create the critical mass necessary to reach the level of success envisioned by the public. Additionally, the City should continue to promote use of public spaces for events, including festivals and markets to draw visitors downtown. The success of Market at the Square could be added to by having more events, such as an outdoor swap meet adjacent to Main Street.

Additionally, there is a **lack of continuity in the building façades** downtown. Main Street between Race and Broadway is the most highly regarded block for pedestrians with one- to four-story buildings built right up to the sidewalk and large display windows on the first floor sidewalk edge. Moving away from this block reveals building gaps, such as surface parking lots, or blank walls along sidewalks which discourage pedestrian flows and create uninviting spaces. Some properties are built in a suburban style, with large parking lots in front of the principal building. Filling in these gaps with buildings that properly address the street is critical to creating an interconnected downtown which invites walking outdoors between destinations. **Key vacancies** are a related issue which must be overcome. Finding users for a few long-term vacant storefronts along Main Street is a priority, as is increasing the activity level at some underutilized downtown office buildings. The Downtown Market Study identified some of the reasons for and solutions to these key vacancies. Property owner involvement and proper business practices have been lacking in some cases. The City and the Urbana Business Association should continue to work with property owners to monitor vacancies, identify reinvestment opportunities, and recruit tenants most likely to succeed. The City and UBA can also help new businesses by ensuring they are trained in best operating practices.

Key Strengths

Despite the difficulty of the key challenges described above, there are reasons to be optimistic about downtown's future. Several positive factors provide a foundation to build upon as the City begins to implement the Downtown Plan.

First, downtown is a **center for government and employment**. Downtown Urbana provides over 2,500 jobs downtown, including many professionals in government, law, and health care. Capitalizing on the spending power of these employees helps to support local businesses and increase vitality downtown. Downtown also contains several successful, independent businesses that have become regional favorites for natural foods, dining, unique gifts, photo studios, art galleries, and yoga studios.

The **historic character** of downtown is another strength to build on. While some historic buildings have been lost over the years, several remain, including unique works by Joseph Royer, a noted local architect.

Downtown's **focus on the arts** continues to grow, as Urbana hosts several art galleries, and plays a major part in the Boneyard Arts Festival. The City's Public Arts Program has increased the presence of art throughout the city, including several installations downtown, as well as planned art features for the Boneyard Creek Improvement Project.

Community initiatives are important to downtown as well. Downtown has great infrastructure and resources for community events. Several community groups and volunteer opportunities are based at the Independent Media Center, which also hosts a local radio station and provides performance space. The Station Theatre presents high-quality theater productions. The Urbana Free Library also hosts many community events. There are co-ops where you can shop for groceries and fix your bicycle. Urbana's Market at the Square is a great place to catch up with neighbors and get to know your local farmers.

Finally, **proximity to the University of Illinois** is another strength that can be built upon. University students and faculty represent a large group or potential customers and residents. Efforts should be made to connect campus to downtown through gateways and wayfinding signage, as well as reaching out to attract students to downtown events.

VISION & GOALS

The vision statement for the 2012 Downtown Plan is based on ideas from public input as refined by the Downtown Plan Steering Committee. After reviewing visions collected during the Visioning Workshop, the Downtown Plan Steering Committee formed small groups to draft alternative vision statements for the 2012 Plan. These small group vision statements were combined into the following vision statement. This vision statement describes what downtown is and what it aspires to be in the future. Similarly, goals and objectives for the 2012 Downtown Plan were based on public input received throughout the planning process. The Downtown Plan Steering Committee reviewed, modified, and approved the Goals and Objectives in March and April, 2011. The goals and objectives can be seen as key mileposts on the road to achieving the vision. Similarly, the implementation projects and strategies in the final section of this plan are designed to achieve the goals and objectives.

Vision Statement

Downtown Urbana is the heart of our city. It is built at a human scale and embraces the historic urban fabric, while also promoting a high quality of compatible new building development in appropriate locations. It is an economically vibrant environment with welcoming public spaces and an active arts and culture scene. Downtown is accessible to all and well connected to surrounding neighborhoods and to the University. The mix of businesses, residences and other attractions in our downtown helps to promote sustainable, healthy lifestyles.

Goals & Objectives



A Strengthen economic activity in downtown Urbana.

- A1 Attract a greater number of and more diverse commercial uses downtown, including businesses for everyday needs, food and beverage shops, and niche apparel stores.
- A2 Promote and market downtown through coordination with the Urbana Business Association and downtown businesses.
- A3 Fill key vacancies including underutilized lots and empty storefronts.
- A4 Make best use of existing downtown buildings; encourage retail and restaurant uses for first floor locations.
- A5 Create incentive programs for targeted business types as identified in the Downtown Market Study.
- A6 Promote the continued rejuvenation of Lincoln Square and Urbana Landmark Hotel.
- A7 Proactively recruit successful downtown businesses from other metro areas to expand into downtown Urbana.
- A8 Identify, retain and support existing downtown businesses ready for expansion.



B Promote context-appropriate urban-style infill development to extend downtown's core character.

- B1 Promote infill developments that relate to the street and are compatible with surrounding buildings.
- B2 Promote compact, walkable development near the downtown core and transit corridors.
- B3 Encourage public/private partnerships to foster new development in the downtown area.
- B4 Use tax increment financing to promote new development and redevelopment opportunities and public spaces.
- B5 Encourage ground-floor retail and restaurant uses in new development, especially in City-assisted projects.
- B6 Proactively identify underutilized properties and engage their owners to envision and realize redevelopment opportunities.
- B7 Pursue redevelopment of North Broadway, Race, and University Avenue corridors.

C Increase downtown’s vitality by attracting more residents and visitors.

- C1 Increase the quantity and variety of housing options downtown and encourage upper-story residential uses, especially in City-supported developments.
- C2 Create and cultivate a positive, distinctive, and unified image of downtown to promote its place as a unique destination in the Champaign-Urbana market.
- C3 Promote visible, outdoor activity in downtown during nights and weekends.
- C4 Bring more University of Illinois students downtown to shop, dine, and live.
- C5 Encourage a variety of entertainment options to attract downtown visitors.
- C6 Support downtown as a destination by bringing in new restaurants and cafés and encouraging expansion of existing establishments.



D Develop engaging public spaces and streetscapes.

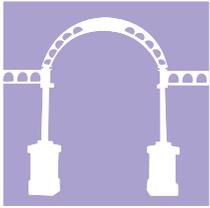
- D1 Pursue the development of one or more permanent outdoor public square and performance/event spaces, along with more child-friendly spaces.
- D2 Enhance existing public spaces through addition of landscaping and amenity features.
- D3 Promote public arts to enhance streetscapes and public spaces.
- D4 Implement the Boneyard Creek Master Plan.
- D5 Promote the use of Lincoln Square Village center court as indoor public space.
- D6 Partner with community groups to organize and sustain vibrant uses of public spaces such as festivals, markets and performances



E Improve mobility to and within downtown.

- E1 Install wayfinding signage to direct the public from other areas of the city to downtown.
- E2 Add directional signage to direct pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles to destinations throughout downtown.
- E3 Enhance connections from nearby neighborhoods into downtown.
- E4 Develop Green Street as a primary corridor from the University to downtown with use of gateway features and banners.
- E5 Improve usability of streets for pedestrians, bicycles, transit and vehicles.
- E6 Improve sidewalks, intersections and lighting to ensure accessibility and improve pedestrian safety.
- E7 Maintain a sufficient supply of parking in easy-to-find lots and structures per the Downtown Parking Study.
- E8 Enhance pedestrian connections between different areas of downtown to create a positive pedestrian experience.





F Protect and enhance the character of downtown.

- F1 Protect downtown's historic architecture and civic buildings through preservation tools.
- F2 Promote downtown's historic character with programs such as historic markers.
- F3 Adopt design guidelines to expand downtown's walkable core.
- F4 Promote downtown's amenities such as the Boneyard Creek.
- F5 Continue to invest in key public improvements which support downtown as a destination, including streetscape.
- F6 Establish unique identity for downtown through signage & marketing.
- F7 Assess building stock and proactively repair deteriorated buildings.

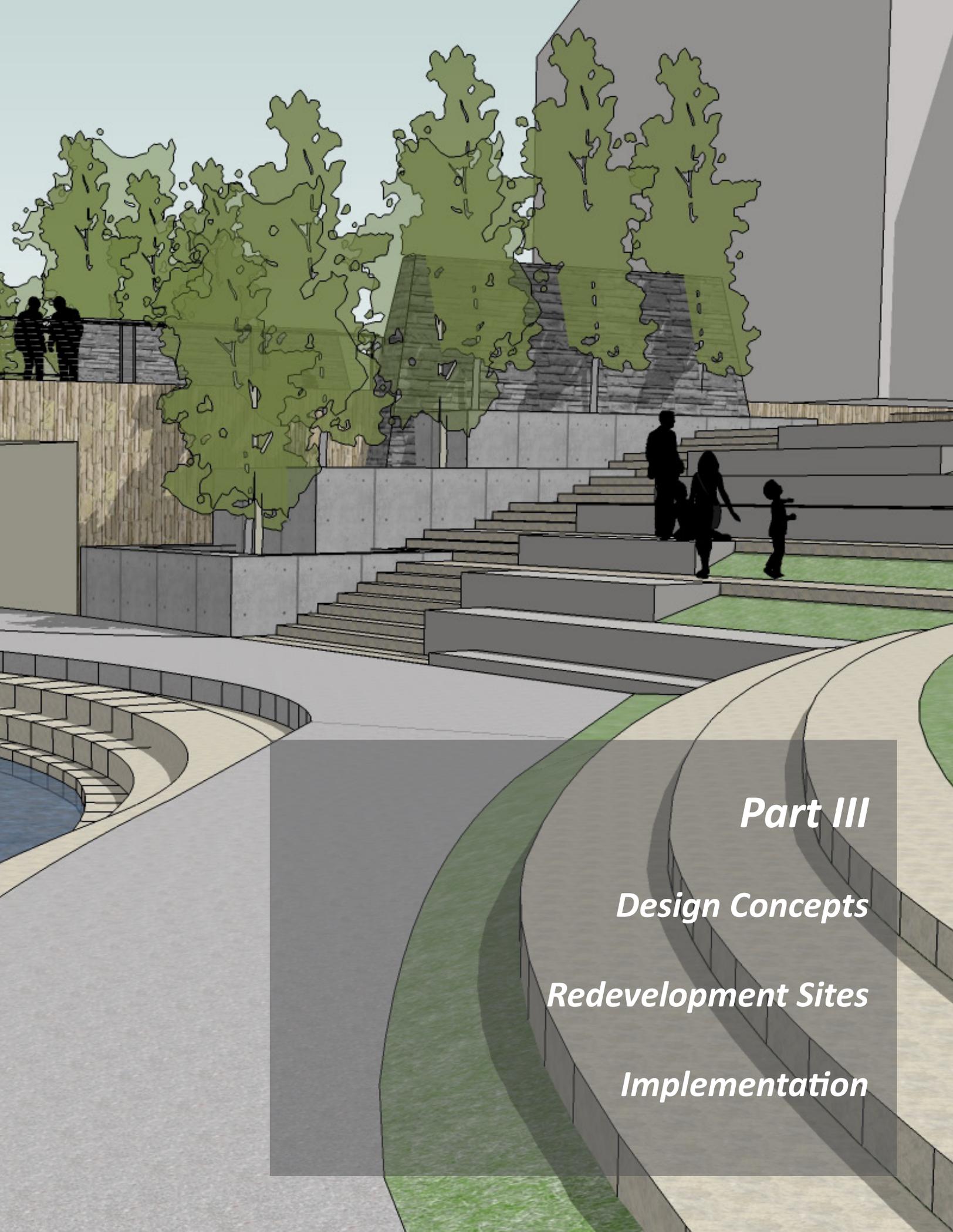


G Reduce downtown Urbana's environmental impact.

- G1 Promote energy-efficient construction and rehabilitation of downtown buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- G2 Establish a local foods initiative to promote consumption of local foods in homes and restaurants.
- G3 Implement green infrastructure solutions including efficient lighting and best management practices for storm water runoff.
- G4 Increase the amount of green space to promote active lifestyles and reduce storm water runoff and heat island effects.
- G5 Attract green businesses and promote business practices that reduce environmental impacts.
- G6 Implement Climate Action Plan strategies related to downtown.



*Boneyard Creek
Improvements Project*

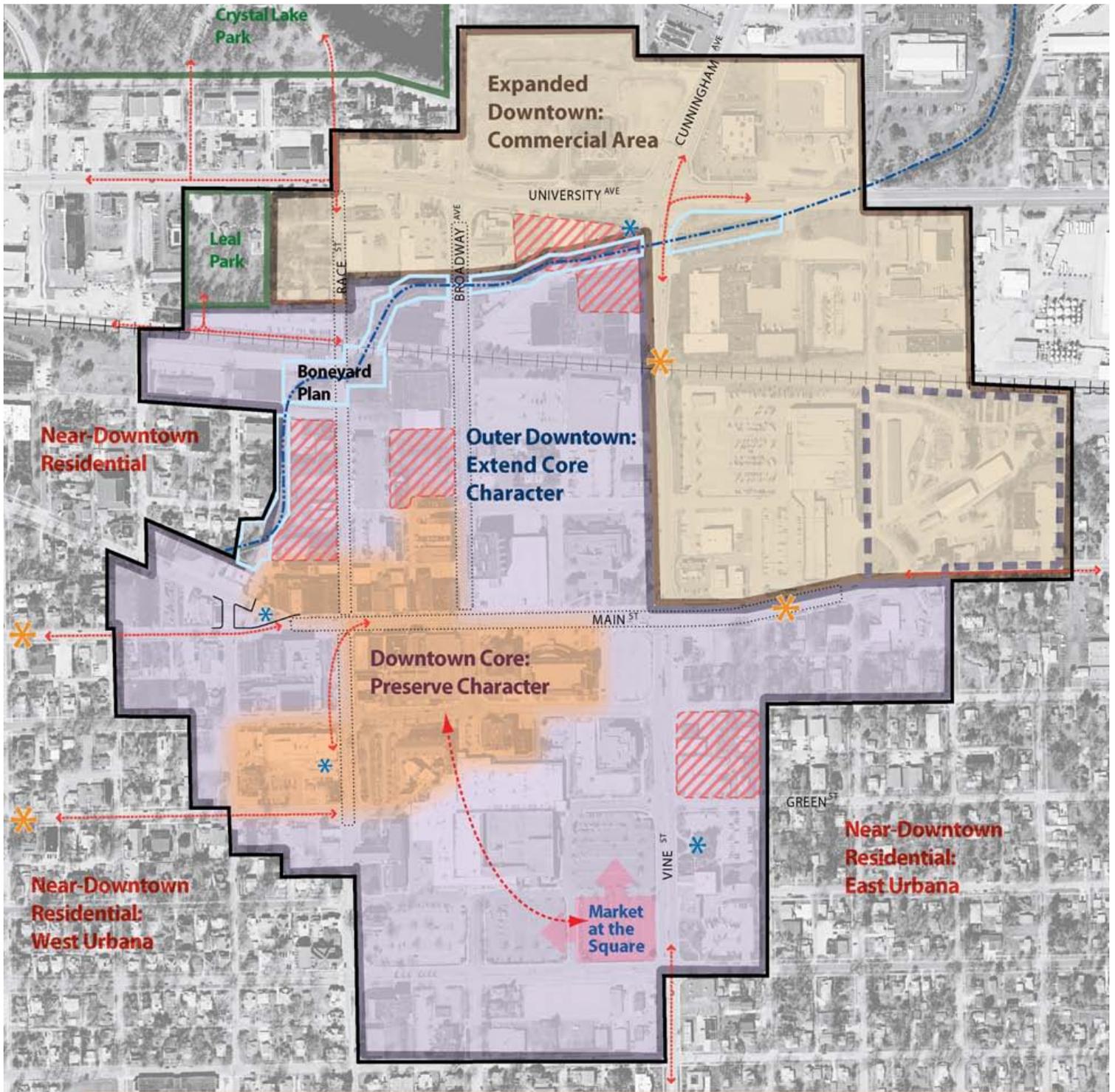


Part III

Design Concepts

Redevelopment Sites

Implementation



Downtown Concept Plan Map



 **Downtown Core: Preserve Character**

 **Outer Downtown: Extend Core Character**

 **Expanded Downtown: Commercial Area**

 **Boneyard Creek Master Plan**

 **Key Redevelopment Site**

 **Gateway Feature**

 **Key Connection**

 **Streetscape / Add Bike Lanes**

 **New Visual Feature**



DESIGN CONCEPTS

Concept Plan

The following pages contain the Concept Plan Maps which graphically summarize future proposed changes for achieving the community’s vision for Downtown. The first map (opposite page) provides an overview context with subsequent maps providing more detailed notations for sub-areas.

The Concept Plan Map defines four areas, each with a distinct framework for future development:

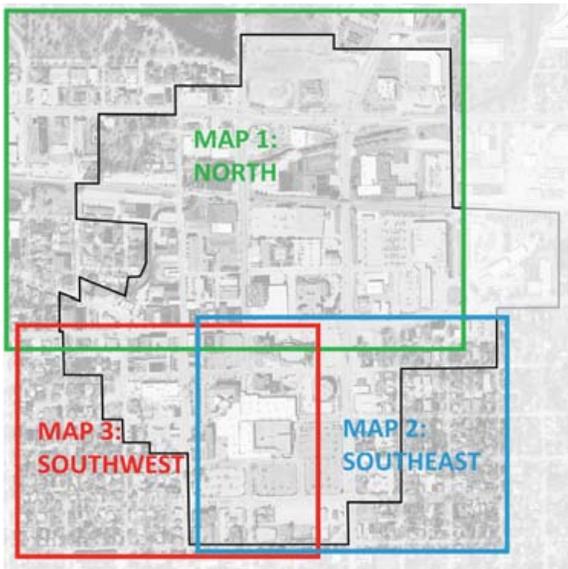
The **Downtown Core** (shaded orange) represents Downtown’s solid core of traditional urban style of development. Buildings are one to four stories in height and are generally built at the sidewalk edge. The streets support a positive pedestrian experience with wide sidewalks, benches, and street trees. Buildings have large first-floor display windows that invite browsing. Many structures in this area are historic or important civic buildings that should be protected through preservation tools. The walkable, traditional urban character of this district should be enhanced and expanded.

The **Outer Downtown** (shaded purple) consists of the areas immediately surrounding the core. Although traffic in this area is dispersed on a traditional grid street pattern, the area lacks a positive pedestrian experience by the introduction of surface parking lots, a few blank walls along sidewalks, and suburban-style development. In order to expand the walkable core, these areas should be redeveloped in a more traditional urban style as opportunities for redevelopment occur. Potentially infill development, incentive programs and adoption of basic design standards can help expand the Downtown Core into the

Outer Downtown. A design overlay district would create standards to insure that new development that would allow for the walkable character of the core to expand over time. These standards could include build-to lines, prohibition of parking in front of buildings, minimum amounts of window space on the ground floor, and a separation of allowable uses for the ground floor versus upper floors. The scope of the design standards and exact location of its boundaries need to be studied further.

The **Expanded Downtown Commercial** areas (shaded brown) are within the downtown study area, but are not comfortably accessible to pedestrians. Commercial Areas are along arterial roads, which make them important regional shopping destinations, easy to access by vehicle. It is recognized that arterial roads such as University Avenue and Vine Street present a barrier for pedestrians, and that these areas are unlikely to redevelop with traditional urban style architecture. These commercial corridors should be beautified in accordance with the University Avenue Corridor Study and the Cunningham Avenue Beatification Study.

Near-Downtown Residential areas (shaded gray) provide downtown with a large population of potential customers and employees. Many of the residences in the areas immediately surrounding downtown are more affordable than newer houses on the periphery of town. Being close to downtown, many residents in these areas can walk to work, or walk to the main transit hub downtown which connects them to the rest of the City. The existing pattern of small residential lots on a well-connected grid should remain, and should be stabilized or improved upon where needed.



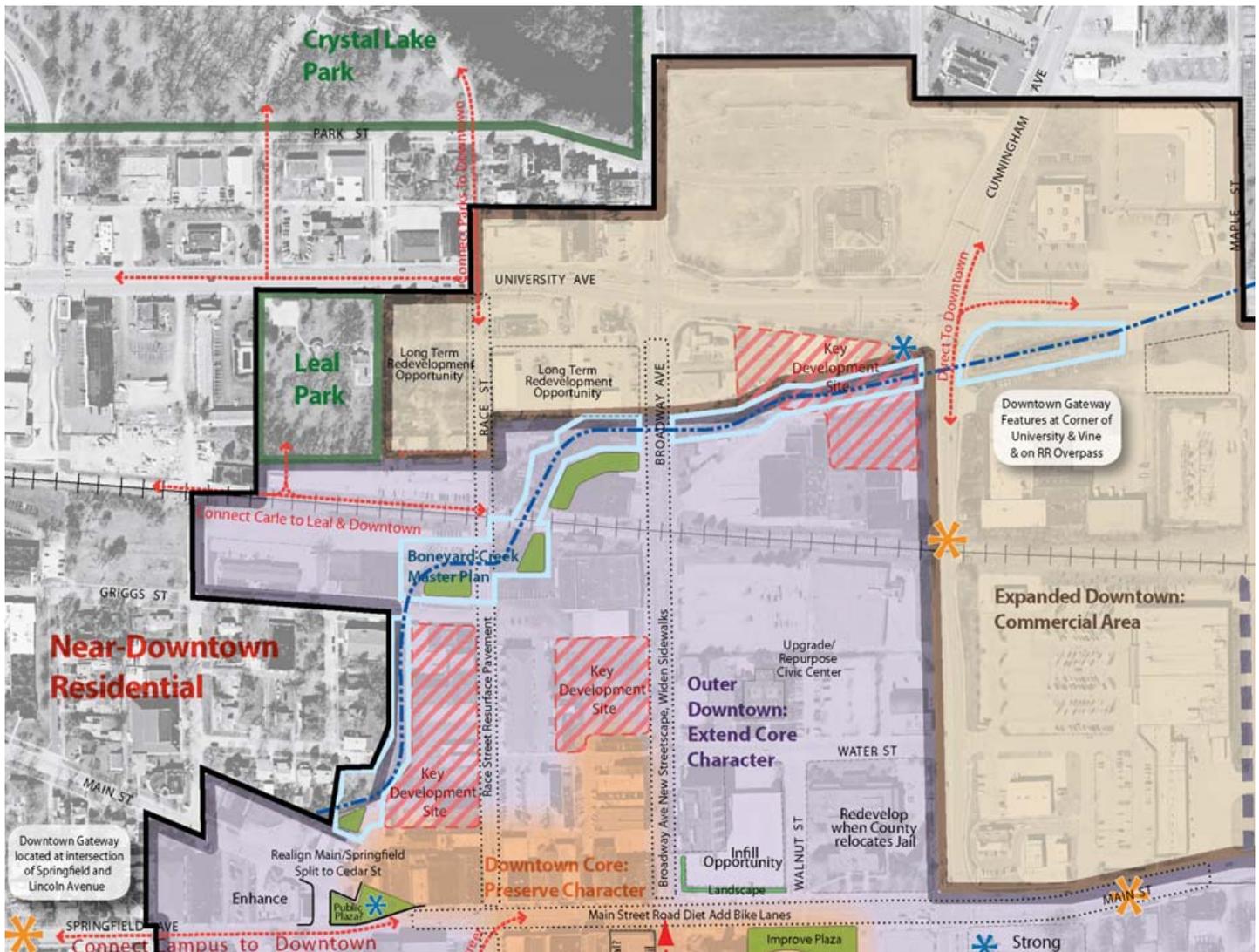
Detailed Concept Plan Maps

Map 1: North

- The concept plan map shows that the Downtown Core (in orange), with its character of walkable streets and urban-style developments should be extended north along Broadway Avenue and Race Street. This is to be accomplished with streetscape and encouragement of urban-style redevelopments at the key redevelopment sites (in red). Streetscape improvements are shown with dotted lines.
- In the area of downtown north of Main Street, three redevelopment sites (cross-hatched red) shown in the north part of downtown are identified as key

redevelopment sites and discussed in detail in the next section. Based on the Downtown Market Study, conceptual redevelopment scenarios were created for these three sites, as shown in Appendix B. Two other sites are identified for long-term redevelopment at the southeast and southwest corners of University Avenue and Race Street.

*Detailed
Concept Plan
Map Key*



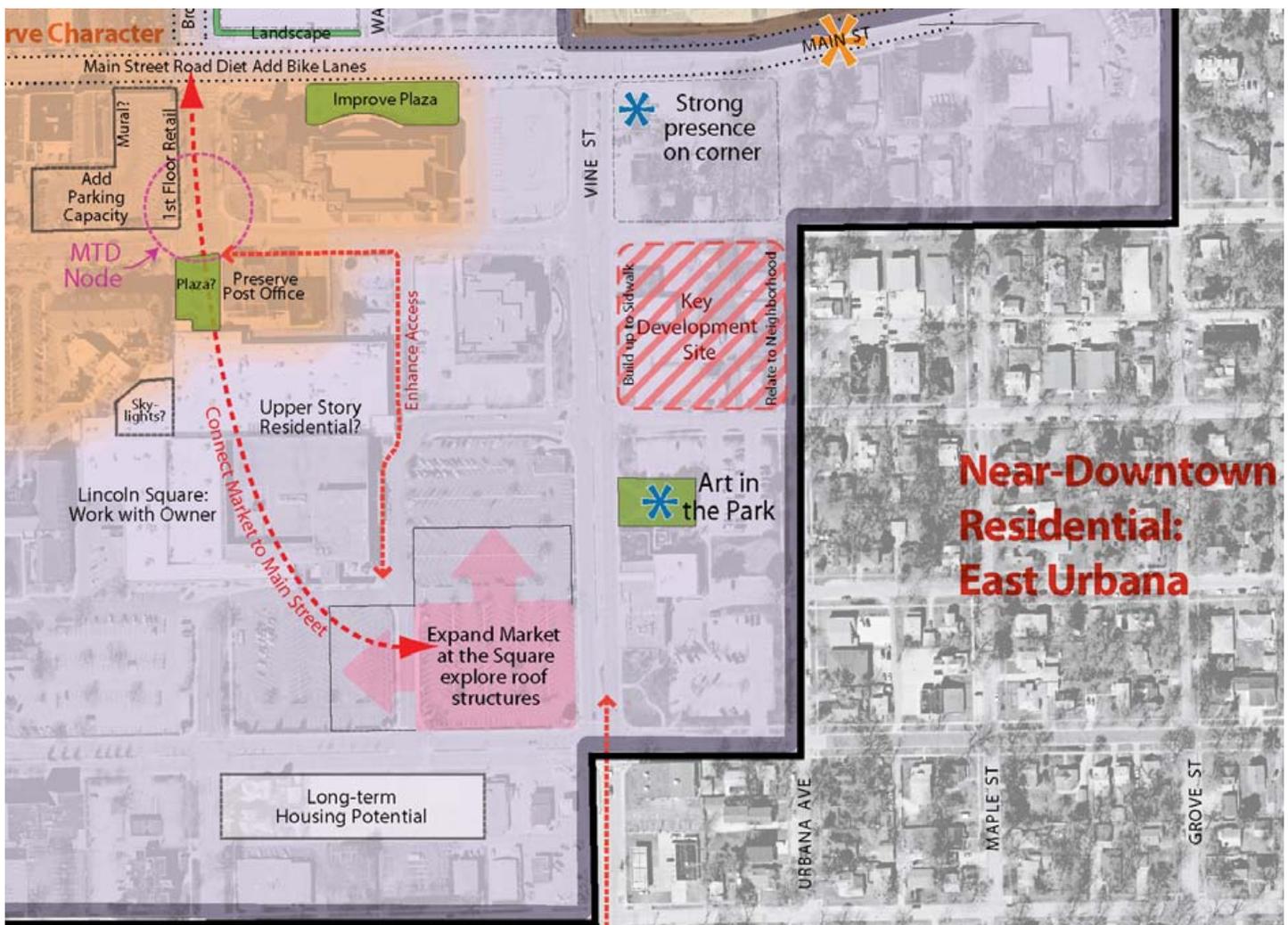
- The intersection of Cunningham Avenue and University Avenue serves as the main gateway into downtown Urbana. This intersection has one of the highest traffic counts in Champaign County. This node has seen new developments on the northwest and northeast corners over the last decade, as well as improvement to the furniture store on the southeast corner. The 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan called for a gateway feature to be installed at the southwest corner of this intersection. Placement of a visual feature at this location is currently under consideration by the property owner. Another feature proposed for this entrance to downtown is placement of gateway signage along the railroad overpass at Vine Street, to better define the edge of downtown and give a sense of arrival, as detailed in the Signage and Wayfinding Study.
- Key linkages shown on the map include potential connections from downtown to Crystal Lake Park, and to Carle Hospital, via a path along the railroad right-of-way.
- The Boneyard Creek Improvement Project is a key component of the Downtown Plan. These improvements are scheduled to begin at the corner of Race and Griggs with a plaza and a creekside path, as well as a new bridge where Race Street spans the creek. The proposed improvements are shown in more detail in the Implementation section of this plan.

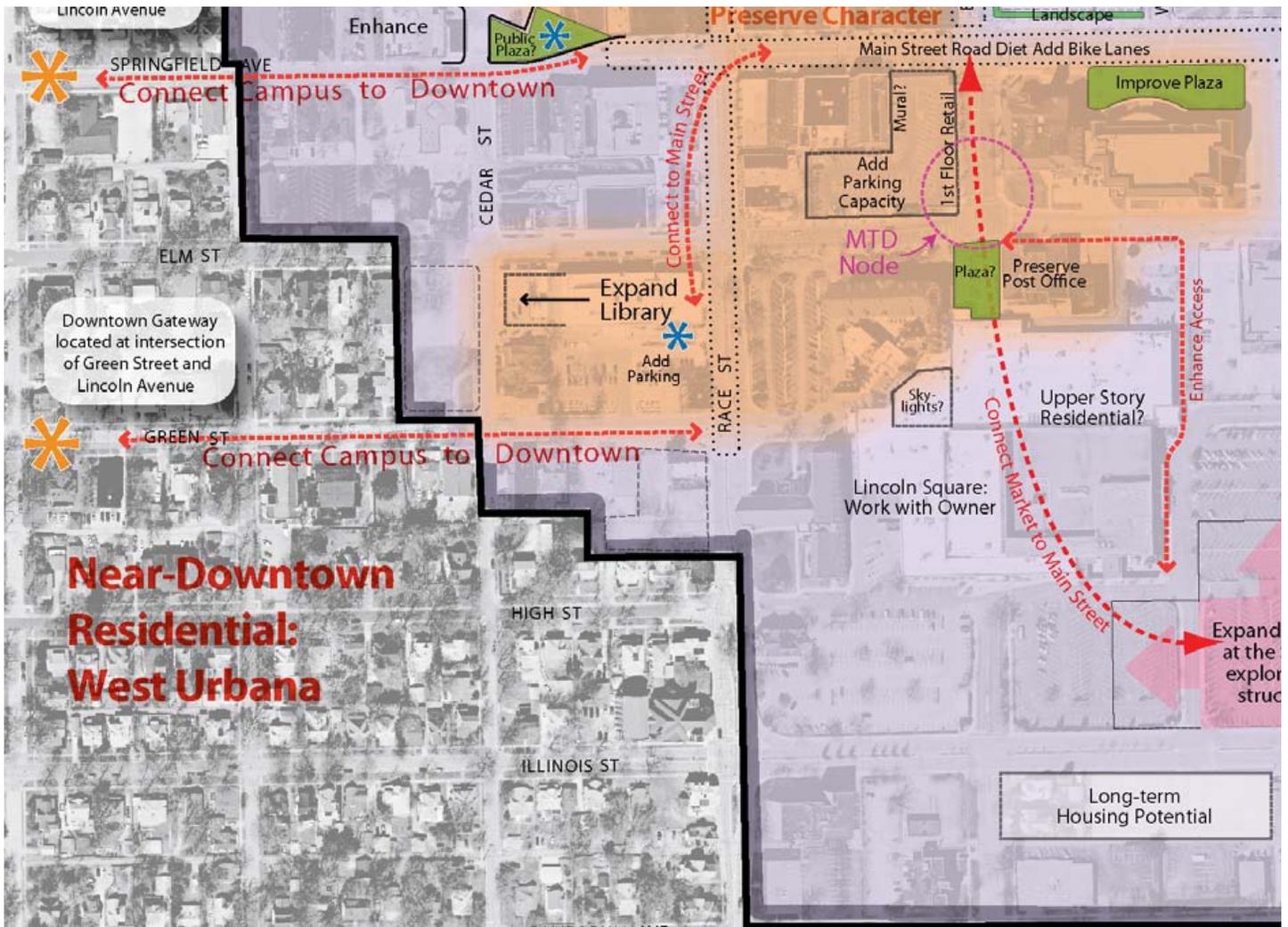
Concept Plan for north side of Downtown

Map 2: Southeast

- The Southeast area represents a transition from the walkable, historic core to the Historic East Urbana Neighborhood.
- The Market at the Square farmer's market should be improved as outlined in the Market Strategic Plan, and the potential for expansion of the Market should continue to be studied. It is also important to connect the Market with the core of downtown, through enhanced access outside of and through Lincoln Square Village.
- Main Street will undergo a "road diet" and addition of bike lanes in 2012.
- One opportunity for additional open space is to add a public plaza to the area in front of the Independent Media Center. This plaza was identified in the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan, to be developed should the U.S. Post Office vacate the building. Since then the building has been sold to the Independent Media Center, but the Post Office continues to operate from this location. Keeping a branch of the Post Office open somewhere downtown is also key.
- The block north of the City Building has been purchased by the City, and is being offered for redevelopment as a mixed-use site. The site should be developed to address Vine Street as well as the residential neighborhood to the east.

*Concept Plan
for southeast
Downtown*

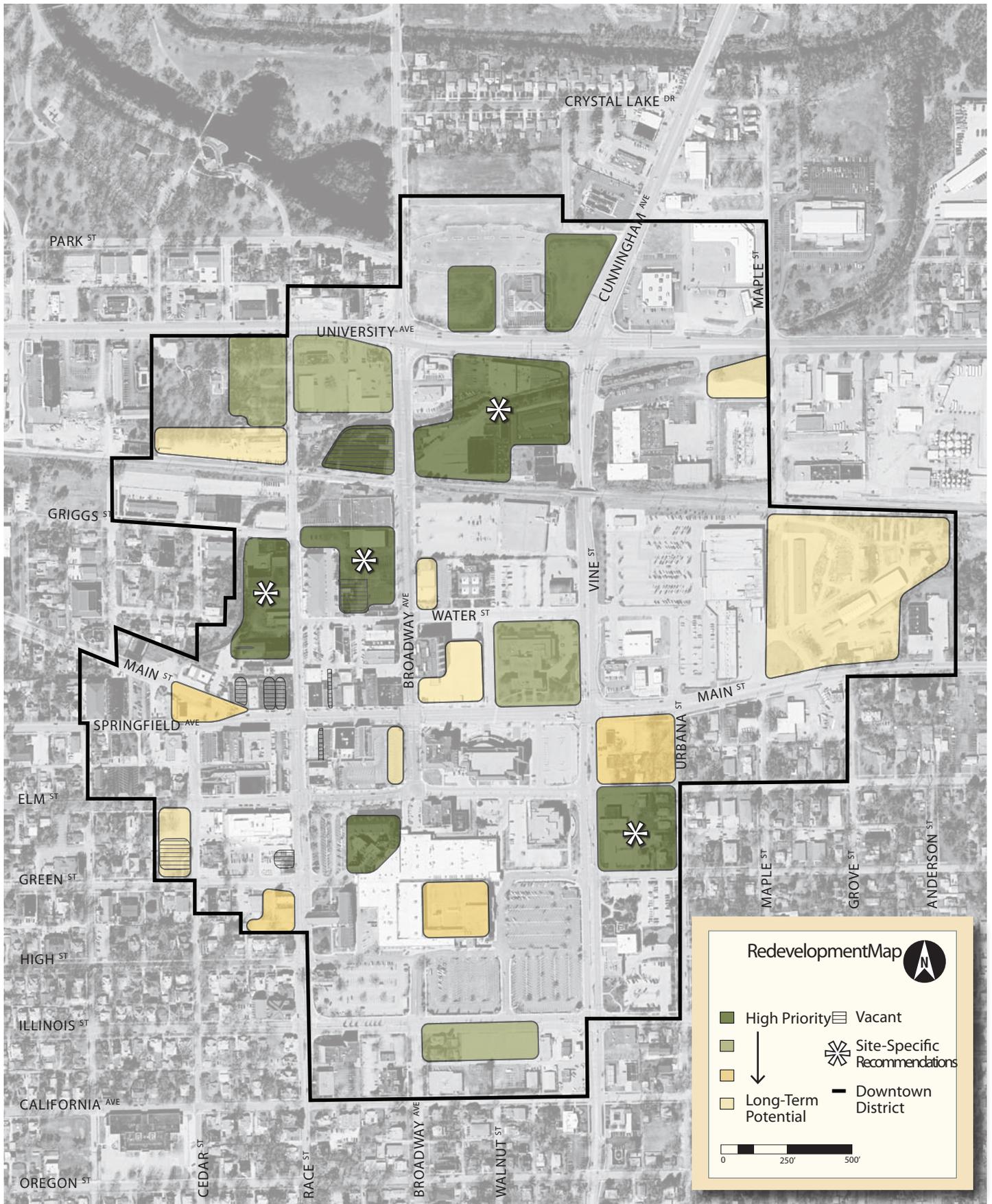




Map 3: Southwest

Concept Plan for southwest Downtown

- The Southwest area represents a transition from the walkable, historic core to the residential neighborhood of West Urbana.
- The concept plan map recognizes the need for Library expansion and increased Library parking.
- Key connections to the University of Illinois should be enhanced along Green Street and Springfield Avenue. A gateway feature is proposed to be located at the corner of Green Street and Lincoln Avenue, as discussed in the Signage and Wayfinding Study. Banners and wayfinding signage would also enhance the connection.
- The downtown parking deck should be redeveloped with retail on the first floor along Broadway Avenue to better connect Main Street to Lincoln Square Village. As parking demand increases downtown, new levels of parking should be added (if feasible), or a new deck should be constructed at a suitable location.
- The corner of Main Street and Springfield Avenue has been identified as a possible location for a public plaza. However, significant site constraints must be overcome in order to develop a plaza or other development at this location. As part of the plaza the intersection of Main and Springfield would be realigned to follow Cedar Street.



Redevelopment Opportunities Map

Downtown Urbana 2012

Urbana, Illinois

REDEVELOPMENT SITES

Multiple sites throughout downtown Urbana stand ready for redevelopment. The map on the facing page shows an overall view of potential redevelopment sites in downtown, color-coded according to development potential. Some sites, such as the County Jail, are still in use, but may become available for redevelopment in the next few years. Other sites are already vacant and ready for redevelopment. Four of these sites (marked by stars on the map), profiled in the 2011 Downtown Market Study, are discussed in this section. The market and site analysis was carried out jointly by Business Districts, Inc. of Evanston, Illinois and Hitchcock Design Group of Naperville, Illinois. Further planning will largely depend on:

- the goals and objectives of the primary land owners;
- the ability to assemble additional land as it becomes available;
- the ability to obtain additional City financial support;
- decisions relative to investments along the Boneyard Creek;
- the need for public parking; and,
- the positive response of the marketplace.



Rendering of downtown with redevelopment sites shown in red and orange.

Redeveloping the four key sites in line with the Downtown Market Study would help fill in some of the gaps in downtown’s urban fabric. Streets would be more pleasant to walk along, as they would be lined with mixed-use buildings instead of parking lots. The Google SketchUp rendering on the following page gives an overall view of downtown as it would look with the redevelopment sites built out. The buildings in red and orange are the infill buildings.

Key Sites

Broadway Avenue

Redevelopment of the unoccupied Jolly Roger building and adjacent parking lots, along with streetscape improvement to North Broadway Avenue, could greatly revitalize the area. This could be accomplished by developing a mixed-use, higher density building that relates to the street in ways to support extension of the “walkable core” north from Main Street. Recommended use configurations include first-floor space for commercial businesses with residential units above to increase downtown residences.

Any redevelopment concept for the site should assume the following:

- the current parking lot to the north of the Stratford Residences will require reconfiguration as part of the site development and the proposed Boneyard Creek Master Plan enhancements;
- the success of the Black Dog Smoke & Ale House suggests a possible “restaurant row” on this site taking advantage of the traffic on Broadway; and,
- the City may determine that additional public parking is required in this area as the current public parking will be absorbed by the needs of the proposed new uses.

The concept shown on the next page suggests mixed uses on the site and allows for construction of a public parking deck to the west of the new building. Prospectively, if the City determines that more public parking is needed in the area a 250+ car parking deck could meet both the needs for the general public and adjacent uses, including 34,000 square feet of commercial space and 38 apartments. If needed, the addition of a public parking deck to the site would significantly add to the City’s cost (\$6.9 million) as part of the development of the site. Some of this cost (\$1.4 million) would be offset by the charge to the developer for the 57 covered residential parking spaces in the parking deck. However, the deck would allow for greater development density on the site while providing the benefit of public parking.

*Broadway Avenue Redevelopment
Concept Illustration, looking
southwest from the railroad tracks
(Courtesy Hitchcock Design Group)*





Goodyear Block

An entire block of lots, just north of the City Building, was recently acquired by the City of Urbana to assemble and offer for private redevelopment. With the goal of transforming the entire block with an attractive, higher density mixed commercial/office/residential development, the City has issued a Request for Proposals to prospective developers.

The concept plan for the block north of City Hall begins with the following principles:

- to the east of the block is a primarily residential neighborhood which should be accounted for in the design;
- the traffic counts on Vine are outstanding and some commercial uses are appropriate along this frontage;
- the residential environment surrounding the site suggests that this may be one of the few opportunities for limited number of appropriately priced townhomes; and
- grade changes on the site will require creative land use options.

The BDI and Hitchcock concept for this site would add 39,600 square feet of commercial space on Vine Street to take advantage of the visibility and high traffic counts. Two three-story buildings are contemplated. The parking lot to the east of the buildings should be very well landscaped in order to create an attractive buffer between the buildings on Vine Street and the residential buildings on the east side of Urbana Avenue. Townhouse development would be along the Urbana Avenue frontage of the property, providing for a transition to the residential neighborhood to the east.

*Goodyear Block
Redevelopment
Concept
Illustration
(Courtesy Gary
Olsen)*

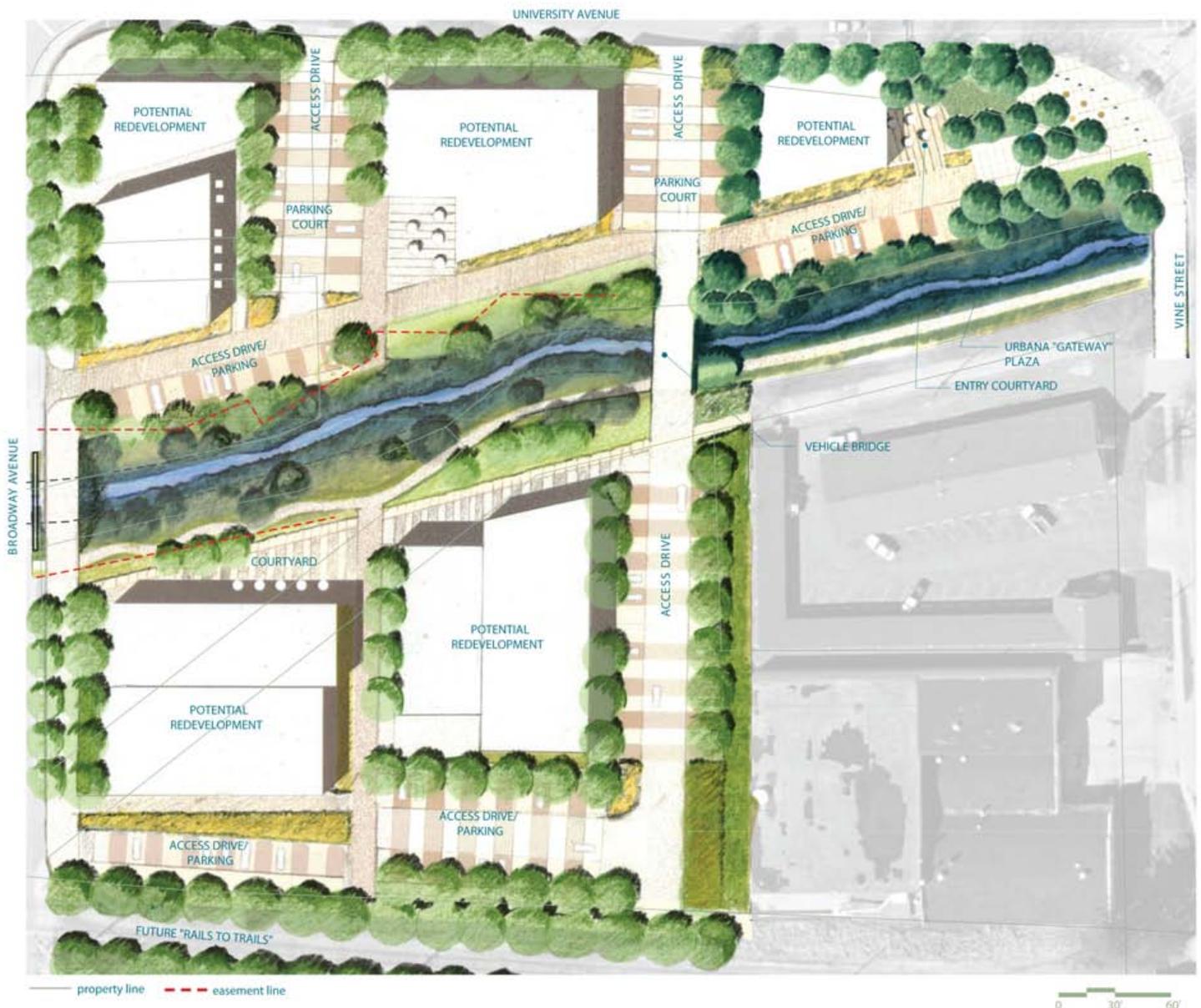


A more recent proposal for this site is shown at the bottom of page 82. It consists of a six-story building along Vine Street with commercial on the ground floor, offices on the next three floors, and residential units on the top two floors. Parking for the entire site would be below ground. There would also be a row of townhouses along Urbana Avenue.

University Avenue & Vine Street

This intersection ranks among the highest in Champaign County for vehicle traffic counts. The northwest and northeast quadrants have recently been developed with the Gateway Shoppes and Five Points Commerce Centre shopping plazas and the Carters Furniture Store on the southeast quadrant has been improved and expanded over the years. The southwest quadrant could be redeveloped to meet the needs of modern retailers. The site plan depicted above shows a potential layout for the site, based on current market needs.

University and Vine Street Conceptual Site Plan (From the 2008 Boneyard Creek Plan)



Any development concept for redevelopment of the University Avenue/Vine Street site should assume the following:

- this may be the most valuable commercial site as it is on the “100%” corner of University Avenue and Vine Street, and therefore, maximizing commercial space is a primary goal;
- the motel site to the south of the Boneyard Creek will also need to be acquired to maximize the potential commercial value of this site;
- one development concept suggests acquiring even more land to the southwest of the former Blockbuster Video site farther away from the traffic counts of University Avenue and Vine Street. Apartments are suggested at this location; and
- the relationship of the Boneyard Creek to the configuration of the site allows for the Boneyard Creek to be an amenity.

The concept shown here allows for the most attractive use of the Boneyard Creek at this location. Three buildings are shown containing 17,800 square feet of commercial space and 69 parking spaces. Since the parking is placed behind the buildings, the full presence of the Boneyard Creek at the corner of University Avenue and Vine Street creates a very attractive vista into the commercial use and an equally attractive gateway into the downtown.

*Concept for plaza
at the former
Denny’s Site
along Race Street
(Courtesy Dennis
Roberts)*





Race Street

The block from Griggs Street south to the former Denny’s site (just north of Courier Café) is identified as a potential redevelopment site to take advantage of the frontage along Race Street as well as the Boneyard Creek Master Plan, as shown in the illustration.

The development concept shown for the Race Street block begins with the principal that, due to lower vehicle traffic counts along Race Street, commercial/retail business will only be successful at this site if it is highly attractive and destination oriented. Accordingly, this site appears to be a good potential location for market rate apartments, as identified in the analysis done by Business Districts, Inc. Finally, any development in this area will want to take advantage of municipal parking to the east.

The concept shown proposes 33 apartment units with 50 dedicated parking for the apartments. The site plan also includes the addition of 56 municipal parking spaces, which are intended to serve the parking needs of the area as well as some of the apartments through cross access. The municipal parking lot to the east provides further parking flexibility for the area. The existing 4,750 square-foot Concept College of Cosmetology building remains and the additional parking added to the site should benefit the parking needs of that building.

*Race Street
Redevelopment
Concept Illustration
Showing Boneyard
Creek Plaza, looking
southwest (Courtesy
Hitchcock Design
Group)*

SketchUp model
of Boneyard Creek
Improvements
(looking
southwest)



IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the 2011 Downtown Plan will be an ongoing process. Achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this plan will require coordination among the City, property owners, businesses, developers, and other stakeholders. In order to make progress towards the vision articulated in this plan, several action items have been identified. The tables on the next few pages outline these action items, and provide details on timelines, priorities, and the lead entity in implementing each action item.

The list is arranged by how the action items relate to the Goals and Objectives. Each action item has a primary goal or objective associated with it. Some items contribute toward more than one goal or objective. The action items are sorted by primary objective, in the order of the Goals and Objectives list. Every goal or objective is addressed either as a primary or secondary objective of one or more action items.

Priorities and timelines for many items are dependent upon Tax Increment Finance district cash flows. In anticipation of TIF district expirations (TIF 1 expires in 2016, and TIF 2 expires in 2022), the City will have to prioritize projects to receive TIF funding. The implementation list ranks the priority for each action item based on the number and importance of goals that it addresses.

Key Projects and Programs

Each implementation table includes a few high priority projects or programs that the City is already working to implement. The following projects deserve special consideration in the Downtown Plan:

- Boneyard Creek Redevelopment Project
- A Road Diet to add bicycle lanes to Main Street and Broadway Avenue
- Redevelopment of the block north of the City Building
- Business Programs & Incentives (TIF/RIP)
- Design Review Overlay District
- Designation of historic or civic buildings
- Partnerships
- Public gathering place locations

Boneyard Creek Improvements Site Layout

The first phase of the **Boneyard Creek Improvement Project** is currently undergoing final design, with construction set to begin in 2012. This project will be a major catalyst for downtown revitalization, and it is expected to increase foot traffic and





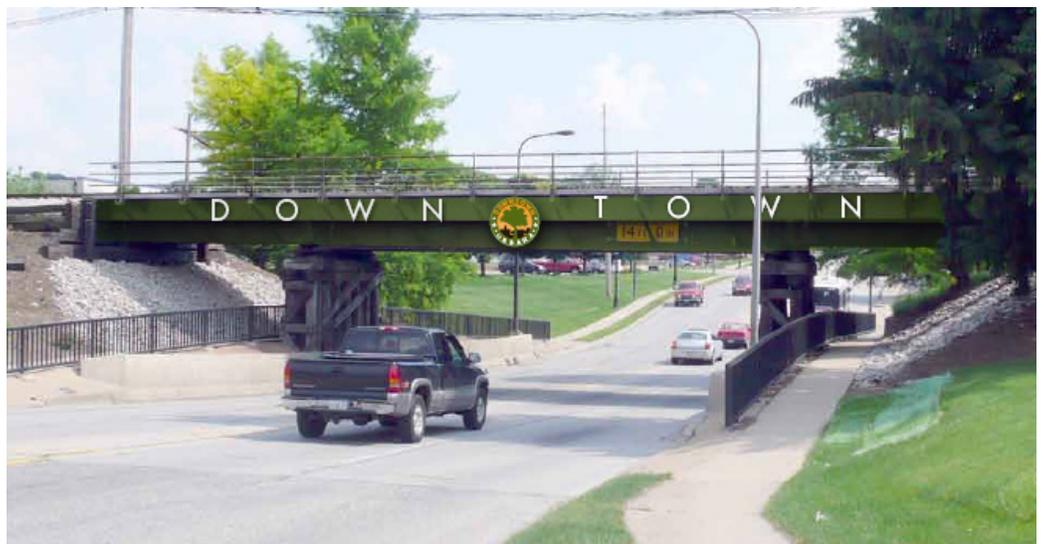
Boneyard Creek Improvements Rendering from 2008 Plan

property values in the area. The first phase calls for a public plazas at the northwest and northeast corners of Race Street and Griggs Street, along with a reconstructed Race Street bridge, and a multi-use path along the creek itself. The plazas will have terrace seating leading down from street level to the creek, and there will be ample green space for passive recreation. This project will happen at the same time as a **Road Diet** for Main Street and Broadway Avenue. This will allow for the installation of bicycle lanes along these streets, which will help interconnect various parts of downtown. The road diet will also include wider sidewalks long Broadway Avenue to allow for sidewalk cafes and bioswales.

Another major upcoming project is the redevelopment of the **Block North** of the City Building. The development potential for this site was discussed in the previous section. The City has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for redevelopment of the site, and will be partnering with a developer to work on building a mixed-use development.

In order to help achieve the vision for downtown captured in workshops and surveys, the City should establish **Programs & Incentives** for retail uses. To redevelop upstairs locations for office or residential use, The Downtown Market Study recommends City adoption of an incentive program. This would free up prime ground-floor space for retail stores and restaurants. Such programs could use Tax Increment Financing. New incentives could also target spe-

Proposed Downtown Identity Signage



cific sectors as noted in the Downtown Market Study. Current TIF redevelopment incentive programs such as the Gallery District Incentive and facade improvement program should be evaluated and continued or improved if found to be effective.

One tool the City can institute that would directly affect built form in downtown would be to adopt Design Standards for future development within a specified area. This could be achieved, for instance, for adopting design guidelines through an overlay zoning district, or possibly by adopting Form Based Codes. Such guidelines could include items such as:

- “build-to” lines for new construction instead of minimum building setbacks
- location of parking behind or within buildings
- minimum amounts of window area on ground floors
- separation of allowable uses for the ground floor versus upper floors

Designating important **Civic Buildings and Historic Districts** is another strategy the City can use to protect our heritage and the built fabric of downtown. Recognizing the history of our downtown buildings with informative plaques could also be a way to promote the unique character of Downtown Urbana. The City’s current effort to recognize Urbana’s 100 most significant structures provides a starting list of properties that may be suitable for landmark protection.

The Urbana Free Library is an important historic civic structure



Partnerships will be essential in revitalizing downtown. The City will continue to work closely with the Urbana Business Association to promote downtown businesses and events. As downtown continues to become more vibrant, the City will partner with property owners and developers to facilitate redevelopment of key sites downtown. These partnerships could include help with assembling properties, negotiating agreements to help bring in businesses, or other incentives to spur development. The city should also engage in partnerships with community groups to better utilize public spaces for events such as festivals, markets, and

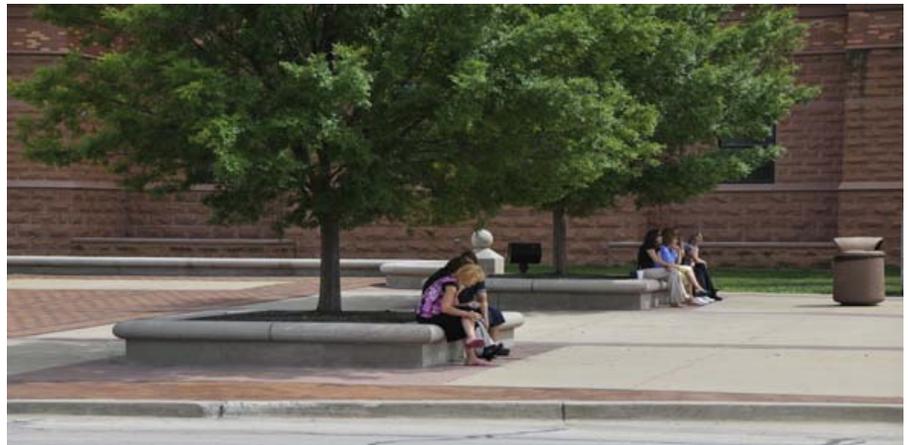


performances. The adjacent image shows a potential swap meet use for underutilized open space downtown.

Rendering of a proposed flea market use at County Plaza (Image courtesy Dennis Roberts)

One theme addressed throughout this plan is the need for additional **Public gathering places** and open spaces in the downtown. Providing public space in a plaza would help create a more vibrant downtown environment. It would give workers and visitors a place to socialize, or to sit down outside to enjoy a take-out meal, or just to take a break. A plaza could also be useful for special events, such as street theater, concerts, or rallies.

Some open space and plaza areas already exist downtown. The Champaign County Courthouse public plaza is most often used by courthouse workers and visitors and on some occa-



Workers taking a break at the Courthouse Plaza



An event at Cherry Alley



Seating Plaza near the Civic Center

sions, the plaza is used for special ceremonies or events, such as on Veteran’s Day. Cherry Alley, located adjacent to the Urbana Free Library, hosts events such as the Cherry Jam, a weekly concert hosted by the Urbana Business Association. In addition, there are some smaller seating areas downtown, one by the Civic Center, and one at the corner of Race and Elm Streets. These open spaces provide areas for individuals or small groups to gather, but lack the larger footprint of a traditional downtown square.

There are a few additional locations that have been studied for a potential plaza. One location is in front of the Post Office building and another location is at the Main Street/Springfield Avenue split. The circle drive and parking area in front of the Post Office was first identified as a potential plaza site in the 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan. This site would accommodate a plaza of about 9,000 square feet. However, the 2002 Plan noted that maintaining a downtown branch of the Post Office is important for the vitality of downtown, and suggested that development of a plaza be postponed until such time as a new location for the Post Office could be found. Recent input from residents and downtown businesses has reinforced the decision to postpone using this location as a public gathering space until a new location for the Post Office is solidified.

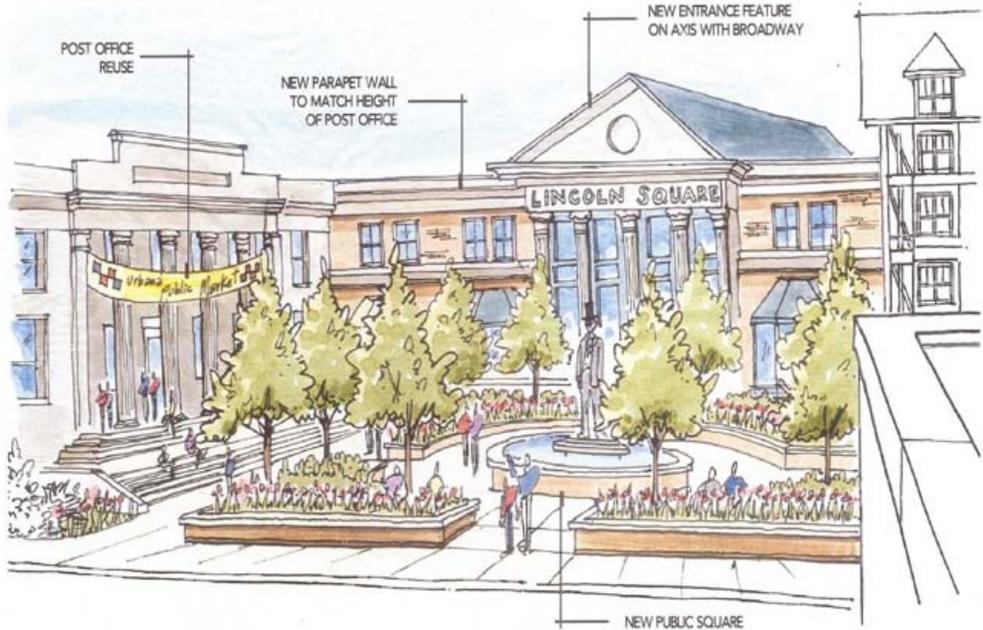


Illustration from 2002 Downtown Strategic Plan showing a public plaza in front of the former Post Office



Conceptual Illustration of public plaza at Main Street split, looking northeast (Hitchcock Design Group)

A plaza located in the public right-of-way at the intersection of Main Street and Springfield Avenue has been studied. This plaza, shown in the adjacent illustration, would provide gathering space and a visual feature such as a fountain or statue. With a total plaza area reaching up to 10,000 square feet, ample space for sidewalk cafés for adjacent buildings could be provided. Unfortunately, significant site challenges at that location makes redevelopment difficult. In order for this location to succeed, streets would also have to be re-aligned, and Cedar Street would need to be extended north to Main Street.

In the short-term, the proposed park areas along the Boneyard Creek on either side of Race Street will provide significant new opportunities for public green space in the downtown. It is hoped that this area can be used for both passive recreation and active gatherings and performances. Future improvements to Founder’s Park along the southern stretch of the Boneyard Creek will also enhance open space opportunities in the downtown.

Implementation Table

Action Item
Goal A: Strengthen economic activity in downtown Urbana.
Fill key vacancies through incentives and outreach to potential tenants
Enhance grant incentives for TIF RIP incentives to encourage retail and restaurant uses on first floor
Conduct regular retention visits in the downtown area
Target incentive programs to attract or expand uses identified in Downtown Market Study, such as niche apparel, dining and entertainment
Market downtown Urbana to successful businesses from other cities and local entrepreneurs
Support UBA marketing efforts and events that promote downtown businesses
Support Urbana Landmark Hotel remodeling and promote upon opening
Promote and assist businesses in Lincoln Square Village
Survey existing businesses to better identify those interested in expanding or relocating downtown
Utilize National Trust Main Street Network resources
Promote appropriate pedestrian-oriented business signage
Consider creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for downtown
Recruit businesses to enhance downtown as a hub for natural foods and healthy lifestyles
Goal B: Promote context-appropriate urban-style infill development to extend Downtown's core character.
Redevelop vacant and underutilized lots and parking lots
Redevelop Goodyear block
Redevelop Denny's block
Draft and Adopt Design Overlay District for Downtown
Redevelop Jolly Roger block
Redevelop Blockbuster block
Redevelop County Jail block

* Responsible parties abbreviated as follows:

ED = Economic Development (City of Urbana)	PW = Public Works Department (City of Urbana)
PL = Planning Division (City of Urbana)	BSD = Building Safety Division (City of Urbana)
UBA = Urbana Business Association	UPAC = Urbana Public Arts Commission

Priority	Related Objectives (pp 64-66)	Timeframe (Years)	Responsible Party*	Related Plan
1	A4, B5	0-3	ED	
1	A4, B5	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
1	A8	Ongoing	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
1	A1, A7	Ongoing	ED	Downtown Market Study
1	A1, A7	Ongoing	ED	Downtown Market Study
1	A2	Ongoing	ED, UBA	
1	A6	0-3	ED, PL	
2	A6	Ongoing	ED	
2	A8, C5	Ongoing	ED	
3	A2	0-3	UBA	
2	A2	0-3	ED, PL	
2	A2	0-3	ED	Downtown Market Study
2	A1, A7, G2	Ongoing	ED	
1	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B7	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
1	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B7	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
1	B3, B7	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
2	F3, B1, B5	0-3	PL	
2	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B7	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
2	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B7	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan
2	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B7	0-3	ED	TIF Redevelopment Plan

Action Item
Goal C: Increase downtown’s vitality by attracting more residents and visitors.
Adopt incentive program to encourage remodeling of upper story spaces for residential use
Consider adjusting building code standards to facilitate the reuse of old buildings
Adopt incentive program to encourage more residential development within downtown area
Promote downtown festivals as regional attractions
Develop marketing tools to attract out-of-town visitors to downtown
Implement Market at the Square Strategic Plan
Ensure Post Office stays open in downtown
Promote downtown to students through the Campus Community Connection and UBA
Work with UBA to encourage special events programming
Target new housing for key groups such as young professionals and retirees
Work with Lincoln Square Village to promote use of the center court as indoor public space
Goal D: Develop engaging public spaces and streetscapes.
Construct Boneyard Creek Improvement Project Phase 1 Trail and Open Space
Consider installing plaza in front of the downtown post office
Widen sidewalks to promote outdoor dining options
Promote public arts programs in downtown
Replace Race Street bridge over Boneyard Creek
Complete plans for Phase 2 of the Boneyard Creek Master Plan
Enhance landscaping and amenity features of existing public spaces
Assess viability of rerouting Main/Springfield intersection and building plaza
Possibly acquire 401 N. Broadway for redevelopment or use as open space to tie into the Boneyard project

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Priority	Related Objectives (pp 64-66)	Timeframe (Years)	Responsible Party*	Related Plan
1	C1	0-3	ED, PL	TIF Redevelopment Plan
1	F1	0-3	BSD, PL	
1	C1	0-3	ED, PL	
1	C4	Ongoing	UBA	
1	C4	0-3	ED, UBA	
1	C4	Ongoing	ED	Market at the Square Strategic Plan
1				
2	C3	Ongoing	ED, UBA	
2	C2	0-3	ED, UBA	
2	C1	0-3	ED, PL	
2	C2	0-3	ED, UBA	
1	F4, E8, G3, G4	0-3	PW, UPAC	Boneyard Creek Master Plan
1	D1	0-3	ED, PL, PW	
1			ED, PW	
1	D3	Ongoing	ED, UPAC	
1	D4	0-3	PW	Boneyard Creek Master Plan
2	F4, E8, G3, G4	0-3	PW	Boneyard Creek Master Plan
2	D2	0-3	PW, PL	
2	D1	Ongoing	ED, PW, PL	
3	D1	0-3	ED, PW, PL	

Action Item
Goal E: Improve mobility to and within downtown.
Install spanning gateways and identity signs at entrances to downtown per Signage and Wayfinding Study
Install directional signage within downtown per Signage and Wayfinding Study
Add bicycle lanes and designate bike routes throughout downtown as noted in Bicycle Plan
Construct Broadway streetscape improvements, widen sidewalks, and add bike lanes
Replace Parking lot signage throughout downtown
Adopt Parking Study recommendations regarding hours, fees, and enforcement policies to make downtown parking more efficient.
Consider adopting Mobility Enhanced Development district and design standards along Springfield Ave as outlined in CUUATS Mobility Implementation Plan
Add vehicle directional signs and trail markers outside of downtown
Install and maintain information kiosks
Install banners, improve pedestrian safety along Green Street to direct students to downtown.
Resurface Race Street from University Avenue to California Avenue
Construct multi-use path from Carle hospital to downtown
Construct Rail-to-Trail from downtown towards Danville
Add levels to parking deck or build new parking facility to accommodate future demand.
Goal F: Protect and enhance the character of downtown.
Install Street Identity Signs per the Signage and Wayfinding Study
Create a historic marker/plaque program to identify key historic and civic buildings and Lincoln sites
Proactively survey and repair unreinforced masonry buildings downtown
Designate downtown historic district or landmark significant civic and historic buildings
Promote the Royer Historic District and Lincoln exhibits
Market Boneyard Creek project during construction and upon completion to raise public awareness
Upgrade Civic Center and/or explore new uses
Install streetscape elements as outlined in the University Avenue Corridor Study
Goal G: Reduce downtown Urbana's environmental impact.
Complete Climate Action Plan and implement items related to downtown
Adopt zoning and building code incentives for green development
Work with local groups to establish a Local Foods initiative
Adopt development incentives for green development

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PL = Planning Division (City of Urbana)

UBA = Urbana Business Association

PW = Public Works Department (City of Urbana)

BSD = Building Safety Division (City of Urbana)

UPAC = Urbana Public Arts Commission

Priority	Related Objectives (pp 64-66)	Timeframe (Years)	Responsible Party*	Related Plan
1	E1, E3	0-3	PW	Signage & Wayfinding
1	E2	0-3	PW	Signage & Wayfinding
1	E3, E5	0-6	PW	Bicycle Master Plan
1	E5, E6, G3	0-3	PW	Bicycle Master Plan
1	E7	0-3	PW	Signage & Wayfinding
1	E7	0-3	PW	Parking Study
2	E3, F1, F3	0-3	PL	miPLAN Springfield & White Corridor Study
2	E1	3-6	PW	Signage & Wayfinding
2	E2	0-3	PW, UBA	Signage & Wayfinding
2	E4	0-3	UBA	
2	E5	0-3	PW	Capital Improvement Plan
3	E3	3-6	PW, Carle	
3	E3, E5	0-10+		
3	E7	3-6	PW	Parking Study
1	F6	0-3	PW	Signage & Wayfinding
1	F2	0-3	PL	
2	F1	0-3	BSD	
2	F1	Ongoing	PL	Comprehensive Plan
2	F2	Ongoing	ED, PL, UBA	
2	F4	0-3, 3-6	ED, PW	Boneyard Creek Master Plan
3	F5	3-6	PW	
3	F5	3-6	PW	
1	G1, G3, G5, G6	0-3	PW, PL, ED	Climate Action Plan
2	G1	0-3	PL	
2	G2	0-3	ED	
2	G5	0-3	ED	

Referenced Documents

Urbana 2005 Comprehensive Plan

<http://www.urbanaininois.us/businesses/urbana-comprehensive-plan>

Downtown Strategic Plan (2002)

<http://urbanaininois.us/residents/downtown-plan/background/2002-downtown-plan>

Downtown Urbana Market Study

<http://urbanaininois.us/node/1701>

Market at the Square Strategic Plan

<http://www.urbanaininois.us/market>

Downtown Signage and Wayfinding Study

<http://urbanaininois.us/posts/2010/08/urbana-signage-and-wayfinding-concepts>

Downtown Parking Study

http://urbanaininois.us/sites/default/files/attachments/Downtown_Parking_Study.pdf

Tax Increment Finance District Documents

<http://www.urbanaininois.us/businesses/business-incentive-programs/tif-redevelopment-incentive-program>

Capital Improvement Plan

<http://urbanaininois.us/departments/public-works/about-public-works/engineering/capital-improvement-plan>

Urbana Bicycle Master Plan

<http://urbanaininois.us/bicycle-master-plan>

Long Range Transportation Plan

<http://www.ccrpc.org/transportation/lrtp2/index.html>

Boneyard Creek Master Plan

<http://urbanaininois.us/departments/public-works/about-public-works/engineering/boneyard-creek-master-plan>

Champaign County Greenways Plan

<http://www.ccrpc.org/greenways/index.php>

Cunningham Avenue Beautification Plan

<http://urbanaininois.us/sites/default/files/attachments/cunningham-final-report.pdf>

University Avenue Corridor Plan

<http://www.ccrpc.org/transportation/university/documents.php>

White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridor Analysis

<http://www.cnt.org/repository/White-Springfield.Corridor.Analysis.pdf>