

A VISION FOR THE CURTIS ROAD INTERCHANGE AREA

Envision the Opportunity

The new interchange at Curtis Road presents a unique opportunity for the City of Champaign. It will provide improved access for residents and also serve as an attractive gateway to the City and University of Illinois. With any new interchange brings the interest and demand to grow the City. The community has the opportunity to create a vision for the 640 acres surrounding the interchange that all will be proud of and other developments will emulate for generations to come.

Envision What Should Be There

The area will contain a healthy balance of shopping, entertainment, restaurants, offices, employment and living opportunities. The opportunity to live, work, shop and play in the same area will play a major role in the desire for people to be there. A healthy balance of uses is also important to ensure the long-term viability of the area as markets and consumer demands change over time. Uses will be both large and small depending on location and will cater to both the regional and local market.

Envision How It Should Function

All development, no matter the mix of the uses, will be well connected and give a feeling of cohesiveness rather than separation. Larger and busier developments will be properly placed so they do not conflict with those developments that are intended to be less intense and quiet. It will be easy to get in and around the area by all types of transportation including car, bus, bicycle and by walking. An efficient road system will result in minimal congestion. Well-planned bike paths and sidewalks will connect existing and future neighborhoods to the area so people can reasonably consider alternatives to driving if they desire and the trip will be safe and enjoyable. Transit will serve the area as a “hub” and be planned ahead of development rather than being an afterthought. Residents who live in the area will consider using transit, riding a bicycle or walking as a true alternative. Plazas, open spaces and storm water detention features will be designed to be both attractive and functional so people can gather and enjoy the activity area rather than feeling compelled to quickly move on when errands are complete.

Envision How It Should Look

Buildings will have an aesthetically pleasing design using high quality materials and inviting features. They will complement other structures and together will offer a look and feel that is quickly recognized as being part of a special place rather than every other place. Landscaping will be provided to make development more attractive rather than simply meeting minimum requirements. Vegetation will mature over time to make the area increasingly attractive. Lighting will be appropriate yet consider the surrounding neighborhoods. Overall, the appearance of the area will be noted as one of its greatest strengths and subsequent development in the City will look to emulate the Study Area’s success.

Envision How It Will Be Received

Over time, as the Curtis Road Study Area grows, evolves and matures, it will become the place where people want to be rather the place that people have to go.

CURTIS ROAD INTERCHANGE MASTER PLAN GOALS AND LAND USE STRATEGY

Goals

The following goals suggest a policy framework upon which future land use and development decisions should be based.

1. Promote long term sustainable economic development taking best advantage of the opportunity presented by this rare site resource.
2. Encourage a mix of commercial, office, residential, and recreational uses.
3. Emphasize the quality of development over the quantity of development.
4. Maintain a balance between quality of development (both in terms of design and economic benefit) and the pace of change.
5. Maintain a balance between the environmental protection, economic development and neighborhood character/quality of life.
6. Minimize the impact of new development on existing commercial areas within the City of Champaign.
7. Maintain compatibility between adjacent land uses.
8. Establish standards for excellence in site planning, architecture, and the design of landscaping, lighting, and signs in all commercial and residential areas.
9. Pursue annexation agreements that will benefit economic development within the City.
10. Establish a well-balanced transportation system that allows for safe and efficient travel throughout the Curtis Road Interchange Area for a variety of modes of transportation including: motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.
11. Require landscaped buffers between all commercial or office and residential uses.
12. Enhance recreational and open space opportunities.
13. Limit development to areas served by existing or planned utilities and other city services.

Land Use Strategy

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide a strategic approach to guiding the arrangement of land uses according to best practices for high quality development and create a framework to assist decision makers in planning and regulating development. Rather than a traditional land use plan, this section details an approach that provides the City and the market with flexibility regarding the placement of uses, but also with a rational basis for guiding the development of the study area. It will help to reinforce the City's ability to promote orderly, high-quality growth.

This approach is based around land uses that respond to three important development criteria: accessibility, visibility and compatibility. Accessibility – the ease with which a user can enter and exit a site – visibility – the visual prominence of a site, and compatibility – the ability to site two dissimilar land uses on adjacent sites were used to create four general land use groups. Land uses were then assigned to these groups based on the best match between the needs of a type of user and the characteristics of the sites, and the high probability that transitions between uses within these groups can be accommodated onsite without substantial open space separations.

The purpose of using this strategy rather than a traditional land use plan is to allow greater flexibility while still providing guidance for decision-makers and security for property owners. Standard land use categories (e.g. commercial, office, low-density residential) do not adequately address the range of uses that can benefit from this particular location. Given the unique nature of this site and the desire not to create a large number of new land use categories, this strategy provides a means of directing land uses to the most appropriate locations.

Development “Givens:”

- ❖ Meaningful public involvement in the development review process, including requirements of developers to present proposals to neighbors for feedback in advance of public hearings for large-scale proposals.
- ❖ A well landscaped buffer and bike trail along Duncan Road.
- ❖ Land use transitions to the off-site residential uses to the north and south.
- ❖ If uses other than single-family detached homes are developed along the north or south perimeter of the study site, more significant buffers to adjacent residential neighborhoods will be required.
- ❖ Additional travel lanes on Duncan and Staley Road, and intersection improvements at Curtis Road intersections.
- ❖ Streetscape design for Duncan Road, Curtis Road, Staley Road and all internal public streets.
- ❖ Civic Space/Open Space requirements within each development quadrant, including minimum contiguous acreage, interconnections and improvements.
- ❖ Bike and Pedestrian system throughout the development.
- ❖ Transit Hub along a designated bus and trail system routes.
- ❖ Entryway signage for the City of Champaign and the University of Illinois.
- ❖ Agreements for development shall include provisions for annexing into the Champaign – Urbana Mass Transit District where possible.
- ❖ Limitations on business operations in the Neighborhood District, such as prohibitions on 24 hour operations, which protect nearby residences.

