

# Planning Accomplishments Since 2002

## Smart planning results in a better community

Planning is a process that allows a community to proactively respond to the changing needs of its population. Good planning ensures a high quality of life for all residents through the responsible management of financial resources, natural resources and other amenities. A plan uses public input to establish a vision for the future and then combines data analysis with technical expertise to create action items that make the vision a reality. The information included in the Comprehensive Plan and elements are a guidebook for the physical development of the City, addressing new development and redevelopment. The vision extends beyond the Planning Department to all other City departments.

## Accomplishments following the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update

Since the completion of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan update, a number of positive changes have occurred in Champaign as a result of smart planning. Some of the most noticeable improvements can be seen in the City's core, especially Downtown and Campustown. Redevelopment projects, including the Hilton Garden Inn, Burnham 310 and Douglass Square have reclaimed blighted properties, transforming them into neighborhood assets. A new transportation plan establishes a multi-modal system that accommodates vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and transit in addition to locations for activity centers or nodes. Much has been accomplished in a short period of time.

**Downtown:** New construction projects, including the completion of the One Main building and plaza (2004), M2 (2008) and other renovations, have reinvigorated the Downtown market. Downtown is a place to gather with friends at restaurants, pubs, outdoor cafes and theaters. Downtown is also becoming a neighborhood, with the addition of new places to live. The 2006 Downtown Plan offers recommendations that build on the renewed interest in the area to create a fully functioning city center. Many property owners have taken advantage of the Redevelopment Incentive Program to fund business expansions, renovations and upper-level apartment conversions. An executive director has been hired for the Champaign Downtown Association to market the area and assist with festivals and other activities. Infrastructure improvements are also being completed. A municipal parking deck will supply downtown with 600 additional parking spaces in 2008.

**Campustown:** An extensive streetscape improvement project began in 2002 along Green Street, changing to a three-lane cross section that allowed for wider sidewalks to accommodate pedestrian traffic. To date, streetscape improvements have been completed along Green, from Wright Street to Fourth Street, along Sixth Street from Healey to John. Streetscape and infrastructure improvements have resulted in new private development, including the 24-story apartment building at 309 E. Green, the addition of national restaurants and retailers like Chipotle, Noodles, Coldstone Creamery and Urban Outfitters and many other infill projects. The redevelopment of the Burnham Hospital site at Fourth and Springfield is under construction, with the

completion of the Burnham 310 apartment tower and a grocery store. This will be the first full-service grocery store serving Campustown and Downtown in many years.

**Boneyard Creek Project:** A master plan was created for the Boneyard Creek watershed, which includes Campustown and Downtown. The project outlines seven phases to be constructed over the next 20 years, and addresses stormwater management while improving the aesthetics of the Boneyard Creek. Phase One, included the construction of the Healey Street Detention Basin, the channel project and landscaped path along the creek between First and Wright Streets and additional improvements completed by the University of Illinois from Wright Street to Lincoln Avenue. These improvements reduced flooding problems in Campustown and turned the creek into an amenity rather than a liability in this area.

Phase Two, better known as the Second Street Reach Detention Project, will have both water management and recreation goals. The Champaign Park District has completed the Scott Park Master Plan in conjunction with the City's efforts. The improvements will reduce 100-year flooding downstream, enhance the recreational opportunities in the area and provide a green space connection between Downtown and Campustown.

**Douglass Square:** Following the completion of a master plan for the Burch Village public housing complex, the City collaborated with the Champaign County Housing Authority and numerous housing agencies to redevelop the site. The result is the new Douglass Square neighborhood, which offers a combination of subsidized and market rate units in an attractive development featuring front porches and rear alley parking.

**Hilton Garden Inn:** The City's Redevelopment Incentive Program was used to encourage the redevelopment of the former Chancellor Hotel into a Hilton Garden Inn and conference center. The project is located at the corner of Neil Street and Kirby Avenue, a key intersection for University of Illinois athletic stadiums.

**Village at the Crossing:** Village at the Crossing is a neighborhood commercial development located at the southwest corner of Duncan and Windsor Roads. It is a neighborhood shopping asset that residents find useful. The development includes services, offices, a dry cleaner, salons, restaurants, a hardware store and Walgreen's pharmacy. This development also incorporates features like pedestrian friendly design, enhanced streetscape with streetlights, benches and trash bins, smaller landscaped parking lots in the rear of buildings, shops that open onto a center boulevard and upgraded signage and building materials.

**Northwest Growth Area:** The Northwest Growth Area Plan, completed in August 2005, establishes a vision for the undeveloped areas north of Interstate 74. It includes zones for residential, industrial and office development as well as parks. Locating these uses together provides opportunities to live and work in the same area. The plan also identifies a new interchange location on Interstate 74 and future trail locations. This plan is important because it creates the ability to live, work and shop in one area. Most of the plans for Phase 1 are in progress, including residential developments like Ashland Park, 88 West student apartments, and more. The Clearview Development, which is in Phase 2, is also under construction. This development will include a medical office park and residential development.

**Landfill Reuse Park Plan:** A master plan has been completed for the reuse of a former landfill located along Route 150, northwest of the City. The City will partner with the Champaign Park District to implement the plan that includes a radio-controlled aircraft landing/take-off space, BMX bike course, dog park and restored prairie.

**Curtis Road Interchange Area:** A new interchange at Interstate 57 and Curtis Road was completed in early 2008. The interchange and surrounding area will be the southern gateway to the community and the University of Illinois, featuring enhanced landscaping, a pedestrian bridge and upgraded streetscape features. The area surrounding the interchange has been master planned for high quality mixed use development, including retail, employment and residential uses. The plan also calls for the inclusion of public plazas, trails, a transit hub and an integrated stormwater management and green space system.

**Transportation:** The City's Transportation Master Plan sets policies for the development of an inter-modal transportation system that accommodates all users, including vehicles, transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. The plan identifies needs for arterial street improvements, road diets, on-street bike lanes and development nodes or activity centers. Nodes or activity centers support a mix of uses and can be served by transportation infrastructure more efficiently than dispersed development. The plan frames the discussion for funding arterial street improvements. The City has set aside \$750 million in funds for striping bike lanes over the next ten years. Bike lanes have been implemented along First Street, from University Avenue to Gregory Drive, that connect downtown to existing campus bike lanes.

## Plans in Progress

A number of plans are in progress that will address issues that were identified before this process began. When they are finished, these plans will become elements of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

**Trails Master Plan:** This document determines the location of trails throughout the city to ensure trailways are preserved when development occurs. Trails are divided into three categories; greenways, multi-use paths and amenity connector paths.

**Staley/Rising Road Corridor Study:** Development in west Champaign will add traffic to Staley and Rising Road. This study considers the implications of different development patterns and the impact those choices will have on the corridor.

**Infill Opportunities Study:** This effort will produce a comprehensive analysis of the available infill properties in the City. Staff will use this information to investigate policies that encourage infill development.

**Country Fair Master Plan:** The Country Fair Shopping Center is an auto-oriented shopping plaza completed in 1958. In recent years, it has fallen into disrepair. Planning Staff are working with consultants on a market analysis for the site that will determine future redevelopment potential.