



Character & Style Survey Response Summary

Question 1

The first question asked Steering Committee members to envision how they wish the corridor to look in the future, using reference images of varying building typologies, materials, and layouts. Respondents circled the images that best described their vision for the corridor. The following images were circled with the number of selections listed below the image:



x8



x6



x5



x5



x5



x5



x4



x4



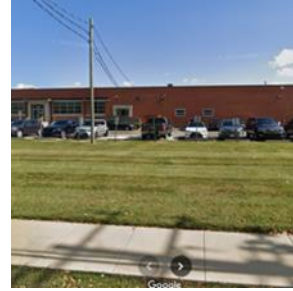
x3



X3



x2



X1



X1

Question 2

The second question asked which aspects the respondent liked about images they circled. The following responses were recorded:

- I like the buildings with modern-style architecture.
- I like structures that are closer to the streets.
- I like buildings and spaces open to anyone.
- I like areas that feel inviting.
- I like the historic look and similarity to the rest of Urbana.
- I like walkable areas with sidewalks, as well as plenty of parking options.
- I like a more updated, modern feel.
- I like newly designed buildings, with modern, clean finishes.
- I like clean, happy, and attractive spaces. These distinct spaces are eye-catching.
- I like the buildings that blend in with the rest of the city.
- I like building layouts suitable for business, such as grocery or retail.
- I like housing options that look less institutional.
- I like quick service restaurants with a modern and fresh design. This brings visitors to the area and filled a need in the community.
- I like mixed-use retail/residential buildings with brick design. These structures would allow the city to grow vertically while also addressing the need for more multi-family housing. Also looks inviting to travelers.
- I like residential land uses that are oriented toward the street and take on a more traditional form.
- I like vertical mixed-use retail/residential buildings.
- I like more traditional building materials, such as standard brick and vinyl siding.
- I like buildings with a lot of windows, constructed of primarily brick, and a minimum of two stories.
- I like buildings with a new and modern look, especially in sit-down dining.

- I would like to see a gas station on that side of town.
- I would like to see more housing to accommodate more residents in Urbana.
- I would like to see new retail for shopping.
- I like fresh, modern mixed-use designs.
- I like screening from traffic.
- I like that there is some allowance for multi-family residential (i.e. apartments).
- I like grass, sidewalks, nice curbing, landscaping rather than all asphalt or concrete.
- I like parking that's adequate and not excessive.
- I like buildings with brick or brick-accented construction.
- I like that the buildings are built up to the street and there is no parking lots in front of the buildings.
- I like a mix of uses and multi-story buildings.

Question 3

The third question asked respondents if they have other ideas related to the look and feel of North Main Street. The following responses were recorded:

- The main road sees a lot of traffic, especially truck traffic.
- Residential doesn't feel right.
- The area should look like it was developed over time and not like it was all at once. I don't want to see everything match too closely.
- The corridor should not feel like, or replicate, a "downtown" environment.
- It should make the best use of what is currently established and make improvements in those areas.
- I recommend that business and residential structures should complement each other for a more streamlined look through the corridor.
- The survey is missing imagery for commercial/business park, I would like to see further feedback on that concept.
- I would like to see more imagery of the interplay of existing uses (auto sales, car repair, etc.).
- There should be increased visibility of street signs, as well as the addition of ornamental vegetation such as trees and shrubs.
- I would like to see substantive tree lawns, where feasible and practical, to allow for proper planting of street trees. There should be a focus on the trees being planted outside the right of way.
- There should be a limited number of curb cuts/drive approaches. However, they should be oversized where they do occur to allow ease of ingress/egress.
- Slow traffic by reducing the speed limit and adding traffic calming measures.
- Add parallel parking on the street.
- Increase the density of uses in the area.
- Avoid parking lots in front of buildings.

Action Step Worksheet Response Summary

Overview

The first question of the action step worksheet asked Steering Committee members to review draft goals and provide suggestions for potential action steps to achieve the goals. The worksheet also provided a list of example action steps and descriptions as a potential starting point for brainstorming. Participants were able to circle action steps from the list they agreed with. Below is a summary of the feedback received for draft action steps.

Draft Goals provided to participants to review:

1. Establish a mix of uses appropriate for the area including retail shops, restaurants, professional services (medical offices, accountants, etc.), offices, manufacturing, and a variety of housing.
2. Attract and retain a variety of shops and services for residents and visitors.
3. Create an environment that is inviting and welcoming to residents and visitors.
4. Welcome both visitors and residents by establishing the corridor as the northern “gateway” to the City of Urbana.
5. Encourage redevelopment or reuse of vacant parcels, buildings, and underutilized parking lots to attract new businesses and residents.
6. Create a walkable and bikeable community that is accessible and easy to navigate for all people and transportation modes including, walking, biking, and driving.

Community Feedback

Ideas for Action Steps:

- Goal one can be achieved by moving forward with current planning strategies and with an increase in development.
- Goal two can be achieved by attracting more people to the community.
- Goal three can be achieved by making the city look like a good place to visit.
- Goal four can be achieved by making the area more attractive to visitors.
- Combine Action Steps 12 and 13 (Walkable and Bikeable Community Action Steps).
- Expand upon variety of housing types beyond single-family and apartments. Duplexes and Triplexes could add additional dwelling units.
- The City should consider the creation of a façade grant program to facilitate property owner reinvestment and beautification.
- Showcase how major anchor employers (manufacturers, etc.) can further catalyze businesses in the area. For example, the former Siemens employed over 100 people when operational.
- Right now, the north end does not feel or look like the rest of the town.
- Business & residential buy-in could help achieve goals.
- Explore funding sources for general city improvements.
- Goals can be achieved if a few land/business owners were to start the process.
- Goals can be achieved if the airport visitors had activities, restaurants, and attractions that are pedestrian friendly, and connected to the bike path.
- Plan should emphasize code enforcement and clean-up of existing properties.
- The City should reassess zoning to match land-use.

- Develop a list of grants to be realized and hire a grant writer to assist with funds acquisition.
- Grants and/or tax incentives to businesses that want visual improvements.
- Install sidewalks and/or shared use paths along all of North Main Street.
- Encourage the use of vacant lots including consideration of parks.
- Address drainage issues along West Twain Street.
- Add new decorative lighting as seen on Scioto Street.
- Clean-up/repair curbs and move parking back from the street.
- New use for the trailer park.

All action steps were selected at least twice by Steering Committee members, indicating a level of support for all the example action steps. Example action steps numbered 7 and 8 received the most support, but there was support for many of the other examples too. Below is a summary of the number of selections by example action step number and topic.

- #1: Mix of Uses **x2**
- #2: Mix of Uses **x4**
- #3: Support Businesses **x5**
- #4: Support Businesses **x5**
- #5: Housing **x2**
- #6: Housing **x4**
- #7: Gateway to the City of Urbana **x9**
- #8: Character and Community **x8**
- #9: Character and Community **x3**
- #10: Character and Community **x5**
- #11: Character and Community **x5**
- #12: Walkable & Bikeable Community **x5**
- #13: Walkable & Bikeable Community **x5**

The following example action steps were provided to participants. The number of participants that selected an individual action step is shown in green beside the action step:

1. Mix of Uses – Consider new zoning district to allow mixed use development and reduced minimum setbacks, increased maximum FAR, reduced parking, on properties on North Main Street. **x2**
2. Mix of Uses – Develop strategies to support a variety of food and drink establishments, for instance sit-down restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries, donut stores, and fast-food restaurants. **x4**
3. Support Businesses – Support and encourage new and existing businesses to locate, expand, or invest in the area, including small businesses and local businesses. **x5**
4. Support Businesses – Capitalize on economic development opportunities from the traffic and visitors at Grimes Field Municipal Airport. **x5**
5. Housing – Add housing at a variety of price points to attract and retain residents in the area. **x2**
6. Housing – Work with Champaign County to create a county land bank in order to help stabilize the property tax base, assist in reducing vacancies, and support redevelopment of neighborhoods. **x4**

7. Gateway to the City of Urbana – Install landscaping and street trees to enhance the appearance of the area. **x9**
8. Character and Community – Explore using the existing Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) designation to encourage residential and commercial development and new investment within the area. (A CRA is a tax exemption program benefitting property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings. The City of Urbana previously established a CRA and it includes a majority of this plan area.) **x8**
9. Character and Community – Implementing the Urbana Corridor Development Standards (corridor overlay) for new development or major redevelopment that occurs in the plan area, for instance, placing parking behind buildings, requiring windows to face the street, and smaller setbacks between the building and street. **x3**
10. Character and Community – Create a sense of community in the area by developing public/private partnerships to support activities like community gardens, community events, and campaigns to support local businesses. **x5**
11. Character and Community – Recommend the City of Urbana consider strategic land acquisition to assist in catalyst reuse or redevelopment of vacant property and underutilized parking lots. **x5**
12. Walkable & Bikeable Community – Provide facilities for pedestrians and people riding bicycles to travel from the Simon-Kenton Trail connection on North Main Street to the Grimes Field Municipal Airport. **x5**
13. Walkable & Bikeable Community – Recommend the City of Urbana apply for funding (ex: Transportation Alternatives Program funding) to add pedestrian facilities, relocate private lighting and signs in the right-of-way, and close unnecessary points along the corridor. **x5**

Small Group Summary

Overview

After participants completed the action step worksheet, they broke into two small groups to share their ideas and discuss any additional ideas related to action steps.

Small Group One:

1. General preference for the more traditional built form and style with brick as a preferred material. However, the built form should not mimic a traditional downtown area.
1. Prefer a variety of businesses, including fresh groceries. One participant mentioned Gruntz IGA that occupied the Restore building at one time.
2. Support existing businesses by encouraging more collaboration and marketing among existing businesses in the corridor (similar to a business association). Many successful businesses are present in the corridor today.
3. A facade grant program was mentioned to encourage private owner reinvestment.
4. Walkability from Grimes Field was also noted as pilots or visitors may patronize businesses in the area if the area is more walkable/more accessible from the airport.
5. Redevelopment can focus on a catalyst project that spurs other redevelopment along the corridor. The redevelopment of the Q3 JMC property on Miami Street by the city and private developers or the planned redevelopment of the Willman property in the

200 Block of North Main Street were mentioned as local examples of similar projects.

6. A market analysis may be necessary to determine the types of businesses that are needed in the community. As an aside, a market analysis was included as part of the South Main Street Corridor Plan.
7. Major employers in the area or growth of employment in the area can benefit employers in the area. For example, the former Siemens plant employed 174 people at the time of its closure in 2009.
8. Housing variety of all types and price points was highlighted. Only 60 new housing units were built in the entire city from 2010-2020. Possibly focus on medium density such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes.
9. Lodging in the area in support of the airport was mentioned. If another hotel was developed over time to meet local lodging demand, consider the airport area as a potential site. Another idea was to renovate Motel 19 as a modern lodging option in the area.
10. Beautification, improving the city's northern gateway, and providing a welcoming atmosphere were highlighted by the group.
11. Redevelopment requires for the economics of a real estate deal to work with willing existing property owners and developers who have an interest in pursuing redevelopment projects.
12. A general reduction of impervious areas was highlighted, including broken and underutilized parking areas and the concept of reducing parking minimums.
13. Requiring sidewalks to be constructed was highlighted as an example of an existing city policy that was seen favorably. As a recent example, the new Dollar General was required to build new public sidewalks on North Main Street and Dellinger Road as part of their redevelopment.
14. Sidewalk gaps in the corridor were noted with the city's successful TAP project on US Route 36 East between Berwick Avenue and Lippencott Lane being cited as an example project.

Small Group Two:

1. There is a desire to see a variety of architectural styles instead of one style or large buildings without any relief in architectural styles. The idea is to have the corridor look like it was developed over time, and not all at once.
2. The group supported the concept of adding additional trees in the area, especially street trees; encouraging new and existing businesses to locate in the area; establishing a land bank; enhancing the idea of the corridor being a gateway to the city; and aligning existing zoning with existing uses.
3. Design standards should be updated to reflect the vision and goals of the plan.
4. Ensure that codified standards are enforceable and use code enforcement to assist in property upkeep.
5. Noise from the airport may impact new residential in the area if it's within the flight path. A noise contour map could assist with determining locations for new residential development.
6. Street signs should be designed for better visibility.

7. The plan should be capitalized on and used to market the area to developers. Additionally, the City should consider providing incentives to property owners to assist in redevelopment of their properties.
8. The community may need additional education in the future as to the City's ability to limit very specific types of uses. For example, if commercial uses are recommended or permitted by the existing zoning district, the City is unable to prevent a coffee shop even if the community doesn't want a new coffee shop.
9. A market analysis may be necessary to inventory all uses in the City of Urbana and look at overall need and demand.
10. Look for ways to incentivize businesses to operate/open for more hours during the day or week as many small businesses are open for very limited hours.