

Urbana North Main Street Corridor Plan
Steering Committee Meeting #3
2/27/2024



Meeting Summary

Overview

A presentation was given to committee members providing an overview of the project timeline and scope, the Community Open House and Survey results, and plan recommendations based on community input. Committee members had a discussion related to proposed draft land use and zoning recommendations for the plan area.

The first category of recommendations discussed by the committee were draft future land use policy recommendations (Figure 1). The presentation included a description of each of the draft recommendations and an explanation that the land use recommendations are intended to support the community’s vision and goals for the area. It was also noted that land use recommendations do not change existing zoning but may be used by the city and community to support requests to rezone property to other districts in the future.

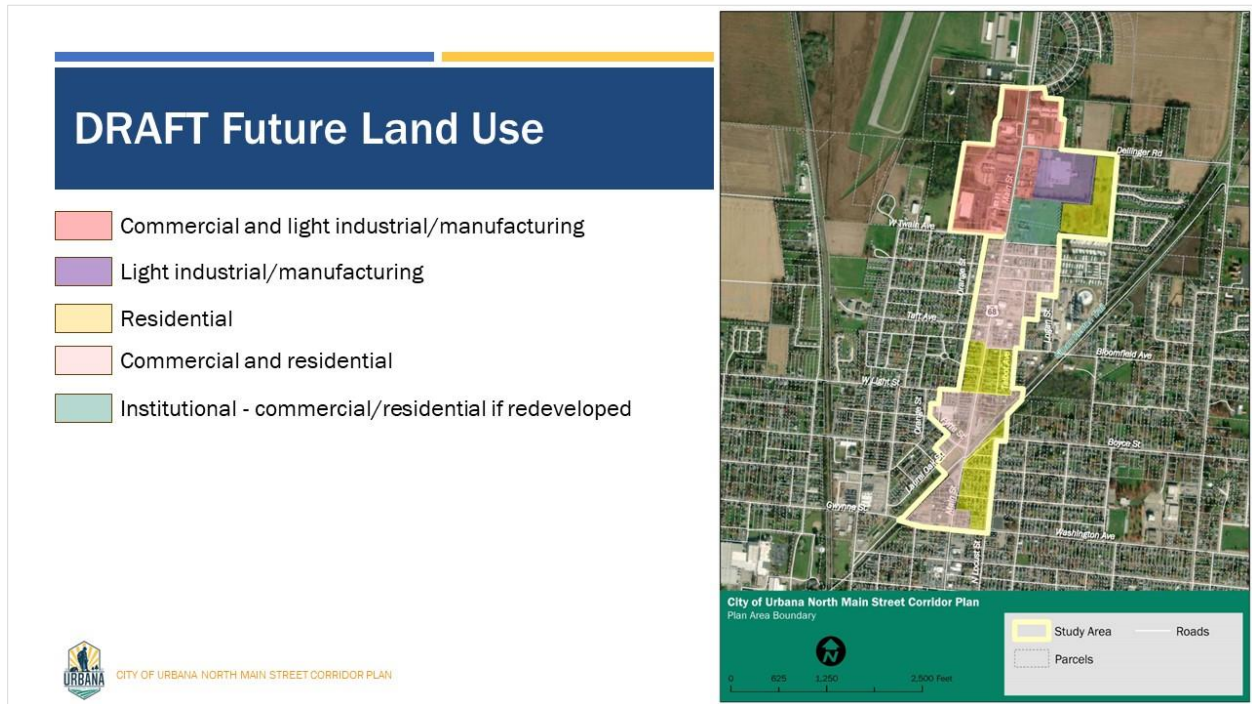


Figure 1 - Draft Future Land Use Map

Commercial and Light Industrial/Manufacturing Land Use Recommendation

The presentation described the commercial and light industrial/manufacturing land use recommendation and explained it supports a variety of uses that are classified as commercial, light industrial, or manufacturing in the City of Urbana Zoning code. It is recommended for areas in the northern portion of the plan area due to the existing development patterns, land uses, and existing zoning permissions in this area. The area is already predominantly commercial and light industrial and as the northern gateway to the city, adding appropriately designed commercial uses is appropriate to draw visitors from the airport and provide services to people just entering the city. Use of the existing corridor overlay standards is important to improve the overall look of the area.

Steering committee members supported this recommendation and provided the following comments about this draft land use:

1. It does not seem controversial as commercial and light industrial uses already exist in the area.
2. There are concerns about the aesthetics of the area if developed this way.
3. There is a desire for additional light manufacturing in an industrial park type setting.
4. It makes sense to avoid residential in this area due to the airport's proximity.

Light Industrial/Manufacturing Land Use Recommendation

The light industrial/manufacturing land use recommendation was described as intended for the former Siemens Energy and Automation site. The recommendation includes support for indoor industrial or manufacturing uses, with appropriate screening and landscaping between these uses and adjacent residential uses to mitigate any impacts of the site on residential properties.

Steering committee members supported this recommendation and noted that the site is equipped with robust utilities which make it a good site for future industrial uses if an appropriate use is identified for the site.

Residential Land Use Recommendation

The presenter explained the residential land use recommendation is proposed between Light Street and Bloomfield Avenue and south of the railroad tracks east of North Main Street. These areas are established residential neighborhoods with limited or no commercial uses present and existing residential zoning. In these areas, the land use recommendation supports single-, two-, and three-family dwellings. Additionally, residential uses are recommended on the vacant land in the northeast plan area with support for single-, two-, three-, and four or greater family dwellings. Appropriate landscaping and screening is recommended between residential and light industrial/manufacturing uses to mitigate the impacts of the industrial type uses on residential properties.

Steering committee members supported this recommendation and asked if it would be appropriate to expand the commercial/residential mixed use land use recommendation to the

residential land use areas and if it is appropriate to expand the industrial/manufacturing land use recommendation to the vacant northeast parcel recommended for residential. After discussion with the group, it was decided to not expand the commercial recommendation into the established neighborhood areas as there is already a sufficient area recommended for retail in the plan area. The group did decide it is appropriate to add language to the land use recommendation for the northeast vacant property to support additional uses, including light industrial/manufacturing if it is to assist in development of the former Siemens Energy and Automation site.

Commercial and Residential Land Use Recommendation

The commercial and residential land use recommendation was described as areas that may support a variety of commercial and/or residential uses on the same or separate parcels. It was explained that a mixed-use recommendation for commercial and residential does not require a developer or property owner to include both commercial and residential uses within a single development, but instead, the recommendation supports a range of uses within the designated area. This recommendation was proposed for the areas between Bloomfield Avenue and Twain Avenue, south of Light Street to the railroad tracks, south of the railroad tracks on the west side of North Main Street, and the northeast corner of North Main Street and Washington Avenue.

Steering committee members supported this recommendation and provided the following comments about this draft land use:

1. The mix of residential and commercial uses may provide additional foot traffic in the area which helps support local businesses.
2. New commercial development should have a careful review of the entrances and exits from the parking lots to ensure traffic issues are not impacting residential areas. City staff noted the existing overlay corridor standards require new auto-oriented development proposals (e.g. car washes, ATMs, drive throughs, gas stations, etc.) to demonstrate adequate stacking requirements. Additionally, the corridor overlay includes access management standards, including distance between curb cuts and the number of curb cuts permitted for a site or within an area.
3. It was requested that the northeast corner of North Main Street and Washington Avenue be recommended for residential uses to maintain consistency with the existing neighborhood. (The existing zoning permits personal services, and therefore, some commercial uses may still occur at this location.)
4. It was requested that any properties owned by Ultra-met be recommended for light industrial/manufacturing to be consistent with the existing land use, however, the plan should recommend that future development in these areas be designed appropriately to mitigate any impacts (e.g. light, noise, traffic, etc.) on adjacent residential uses.

Institutional Land Use Recommendation

The presenter described the institutional land use recommendation as being located on the site of the existing United Church of Christ in Christian Union. This recommendation supports

the existing institutional use and includes support for future development of the site if proposed by the property owner. If development is proposed, the commercial and residential land use recommendation applies to the site.

The steering committee members supported this recommendation.

Zoning Recommendation: Remedy Zoning and Land Use Inconsistencies

The presenter explained three options to remedy the existing inconsistencies between some residential uses in the plan area that are zoned for commercial type uses (B-2 General Business District). The steering committee discussed the three options and there was general support for the concept of rezoning residential properties that are zoned B-2 General Business to the BR-1 zoning district to remedy the inconsistency between use and zoning. It was also noted in the presentation the residential properties can alternatively be rezoned to a residential zoning district to remedy the inconsistency between use and zoning.

Zoning Recommendation: Expand the Overlay District Boundaries

The presentation included a recommendation to include the former Siemens Energy and Automation site in the existing overlay district in order to apply appropriate design standards to the site in alignment with the Plan's vision. Examples of overlay standards that may be appropriate to apply to an industrial or warehouse type use include landscaping, parking lot screening, and appropriate lighting. There was general agreement with this recommendation.

Zoning Recommendation: Support for Parking Variances

A recommendation was presented to the committee to have the plan include language to support requests for parking variances when requested in the development review process. Support should be based on an application's alignment with the plan's land use recommendations and design standards. Additionally, each development should include documentation their demand for parking to illustrate the variance is appropriate for the site and use. Appropriate amounts of parking (or "right-sized" parking) encourages compact development patterns, supports parking to the rear or side of the building, reduces the number of underutilized or vacant parking lots in the plan area, and encourages redevelopment of sites by lowering development costs. The steering committee members agreed with this recommendation.