

## **DISTINCT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS**

It is a fundamental assertion of this plan that the overall Curtis Road Interchange Area must be planned so as to establish a unity which is greater than the sum of its parts. This plan urges the development pattern that accommodates community development at three districts. The accompanying design guidelines can be found in Appendix B.

### **Neighborhood District**

Buildings, sites, facilities and activities within the areas designated as a neighborhood district are compatible in scale, function and intensity with the existing adjacent and surrounding residential neighborhoods in Champaign. Buildings are comprised of one or two story elements with visible entries oriented to the street. The street is a neighborhood amenity and attractive focus for the offices, neighborhood retail and homes that face it. A mixture of residential and non-residential uses are anticipated, including a mix of medium density residences, neighborhood-serving offices, convenient retail or service uses near the Curtis Road / Duncan Road intersection and the Curtis Road / Staley Road intersection. Views to open space, yards, building entries and pedestrian pathways should be public and prominent, while views to vehicular parking /garages should be minimized. Non-residential uses may be accommodated within this district where they can compatibly operate in buildings, sites and facilities which evoke this same neighborhood character.



### **Active Mixed-Use District**

The active mixed-use area within the Curtis Road Study Area will accommodate a mix of retail, entertainment, and urban residential uses. Customers from around Champaign and central Illinois will be attracted to the walkable, convenient, mixed-use district; as a center of community activities, entertainment and commerce. These active spaces will not be uniformly similar places: some may accommodate “large format” retailers, while others will focus on the sidewalk oriented “Main Street.” The predominant scale of the district will be set by buildings of two or more stories accommodating a vertical mix of tenants. Though not every building or development will accommodate a mix of uses or activities, the finer grain of a shop-by-shop street-front is preferred to the course grain of auto-oriented “shopping centers”. This is the area of greatest urban intensity within the Curtis Road Study Area, and the greatest potential for mixing home, work, community and relaxation activities. Vehicular parking and circulation must be convenient, attractive and sufficient; however, nothing should reduce the City’s emphasis on assuring a comfortable, attractive, walkable environment. Public plazas and public places remain open for congregation and enjoyment, drawing folks from the greater Champaign community or region.



### **Corporate District**

Buildings of iconic height or bulk can be accommodated within the Curtis Road Study Area only within the Corporate District; but even here, open space, views, and site and building interaction must be planned to assure a high quality character. This is the architecture of corporate and technology parks, where building “synergy” (the interaction and communication between colleagues) is a driving force in urban form and the architecture of buildings. To maximize the attractiveness to corporate and institutional employers, taller buildings and structured parking are common. The corporate scale areas will accommodate employment uses, such as offices, research and technology facilities, and call centers where business locate to take advantage of the region’s skilled workforce, internet backbone, views and activities in the walkable environment of the Curtis Road Study Area. Other business support uses such as hotels, entertainment complexes or sports/fitness clubs which require taller or bulkier buildings, highway visibility and moderate accessibility may also naturally locate within this Corporate District.



### **Public Space / Open Space**

The character and quality of living, working, shopping and entertainment uses are directly affected by a connection to open spaces. Particularly due to the density and intensity of development, relative to other districts in Champaign, the importance of a balance of active uses and passive open and recreation spaces is critical to the successful development of the Curtis Road Study Area. This plan anticipates the establishment, maintenance and enjoyment of several forms of open space, some likely to remain as private property, other spaces dedicated to the public. The trails, pathways, and multi-purpose links to the existing open space and public pathway systems in Champaign should be dedicated to the public as part of the annexation and development process. So too should those spaces which are specifically designed as park spaces serving for active or passive recreation.



As in the case of all contemporary development, a considerable portion of the study area will need to protect the uses and environment from the impact of storm water. There are many forms of effective storm water management facilities: some are more attractive than others. The design standards accompanying this plan will encourage the use of storm water management designs which treat retention and detention facilities (wet and dry bottom areas) as assets, not afterthoughts. Some may be located within individual privately maintained properties; others may aggregate capacity into regional collection serving many properties. The regional storm water facilities can be controlled and maintained by a management association of multiple private benefiting properties, or they may be dedicated to the public (typically to a park district that chooses to accept the dedication) where they are designed to provide public open space and recreational amenities. As such, these areas may or may not be used as parks, but they may still contribute to the overall character of the district.



Even in the more intensely developed portions of the study area, useable, safe and comfortable open space in the form of plazas and courtyards must be integrated into private development to support the residents, customers and employees.

### **Urban Form, Development Scale, and Community Character**

The City of Champaign will need to establish an appropriate balance between specificity and flexibility in setting standards for design of development within the Curtis Road Interchange Area. Specificity is needed to ensure that standard can be easily measured and equitably enforced for all properties and proposed developments, and so that property-owners, developers, residents, business operators and the City can all understand and predict the quality of development. Flexibility is necessary to encourage appropriate development that is responsive to unique and specific conditions of each site, to capitalize on the developer's creativity and ingenuity, and to ensure that the standards are enabling rather than limiting to the potential for achieving the goals and design objectives established by the City. The standards for urban form, scale and character suggested here are not intended to be uniformly applied to all development throughout the City of Champaign, rather, they are intended to applied to the unique Curtis Road Interchange Area through the implementation tools discussed elsewhere in this plan, including annexation agreements, corridor zoning or overlay districts.

The Interstate and Curtis Road (having limited access) on the overall Curtis Road Interchange Area subdivide the area into four quadrants. Each quadrant has distinguishing characteristics which will influence the nature and timing of their development. None of the quadrants, (each being nearly 160 acres in size), should developed as a uniformly single use type across the whole quadrant. It is a fundamental goal of this plan and the vision for Curtis Road that these quadrants each should be developed as mixed use developments: unified in quality, interoperability, symbiosis, and sustainability; but not uniform in use, or design.

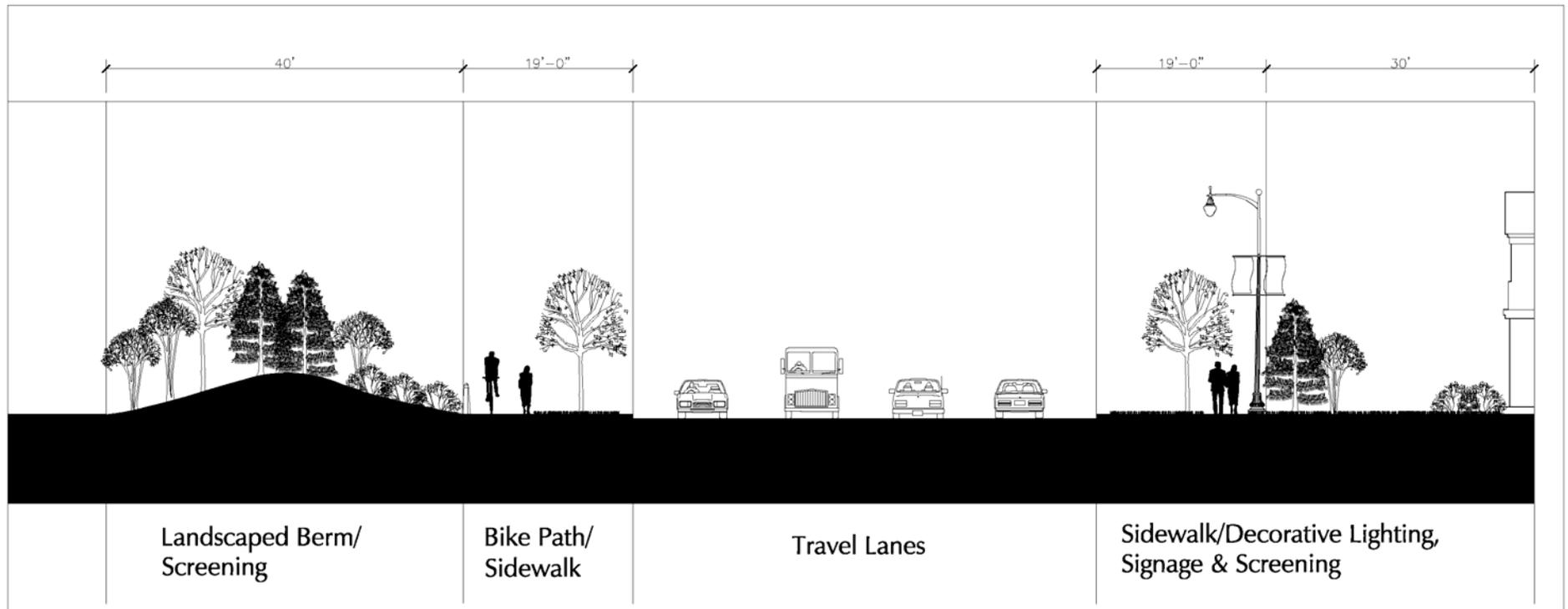
In establishing design guidelines for the development of the Curtis Road area, It would be a considerable mistake to confuse surface appearance (picket fences and traditional architecture) with fundamental principles. Authentic neighborhoods and towns have an integration and balance of uses, public/private synergy, streets as an amenity, and front porches, which encourage "eyes on the street." Many developments claim to be a "hometown" by recreating the look of pre-World War II houses, yet retain the suburban framework of gated entries, rear-view lots, and segregated-use zoning on cul-de-sac roads, disconnected from the surrounding town. These are designed for how they look rather than how people live.



In lieu of a specific detailed land use plan, this plan calls for the establishment of standards for urban form, development scale, and community character to be the guides to public and private investment in the corridor. The public and developers have become reliant on the specificity of land use plans as a means of communicating and documenting the public intent for the use of the site. To give greater comfort to residents, property owners and developers, the standards suggested in the “Givens” are reinforced by the following basic assurances that will be required of any form of development of the Curtis Road Interchange Area.

The following graphics illustrate the cross section of Curtis Road as well as the location of the development districts described in this chapter.

**Cross Section of Curtis Road**



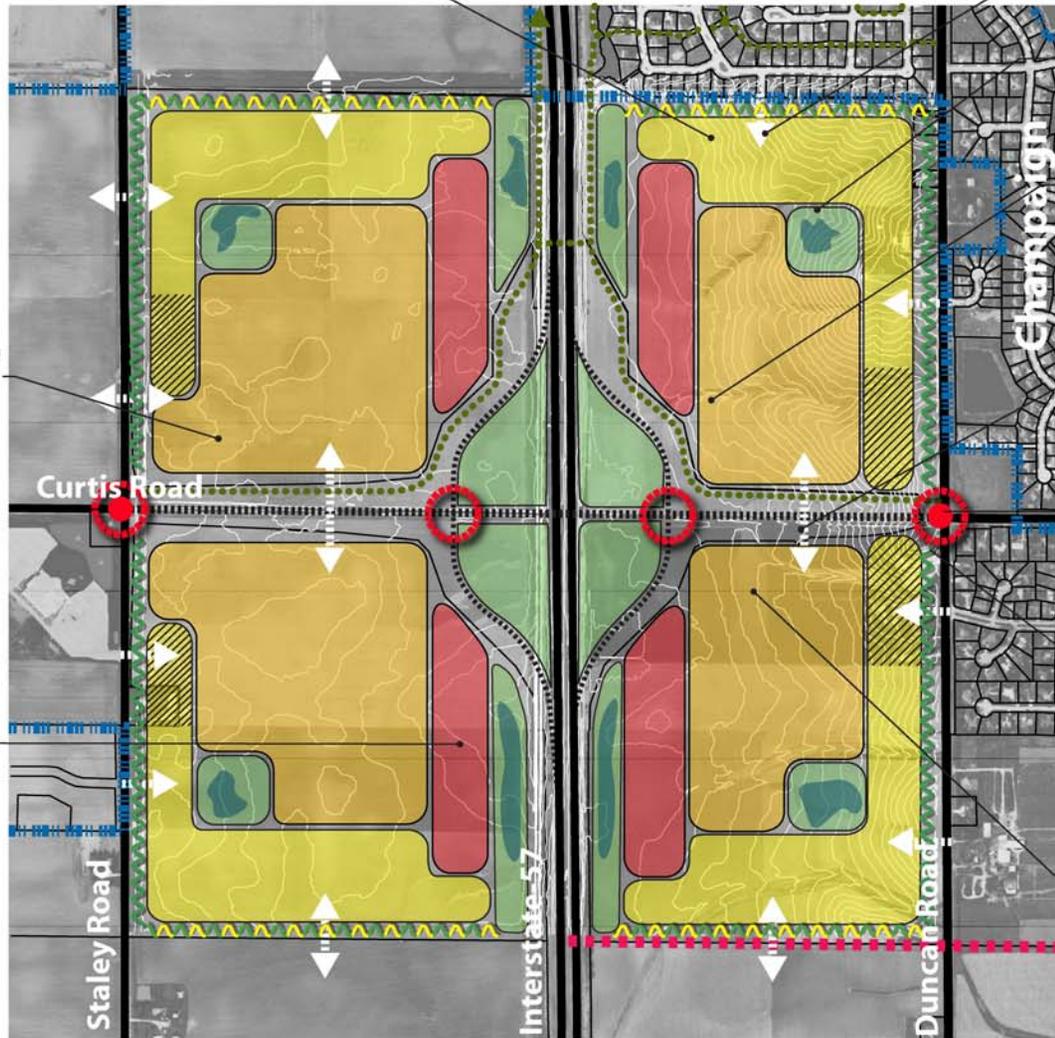
**NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT**  
(Short Height/Low Profile)  
Residential scale buildings are located adjacent to existing and planned residential neighborhoods.



**ACTIVE MIXED-USED DISTRICT**  
(Medium Height/Large Foot Print)  
A compatible mix of commercial, entertainment and multi-family residential buildings.



**CORPORATE DISTRICT**  
(Tall Height/High Profile)  
Tall, narrow Office, Commercial and Institutional buildings are immediately visible from I-57 and frame views into the site.



Site entry road is aligned to promote cross access between existing and new development.

Dedication of open space and landscaped stormwater features will be required as part of annexation and development agreements.

Interconnected regional green spaces and trails follow site drainage ways.



A CUMTD transit hub provides transit access to the planning area and connects to a system of trails.

Streetscape improvements, including entry and directional signage provides a unified appearance for the planning area.

Landscape buffering and trail provides a green face to residential neighborhoods.



Higher intensity Active Mixed-use and Corporate districts incorporate plazas and public places.



Note: The above arrangement of development districts, roadways and open spaces depict one example of the potential future layout of the planning area consistent with the vision and goals for the area. This graphic illustrates key development concepts for the planning area. Actual development plans and boundaries are likely to differ from this concept.

# CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MAP

## LEGEND

### DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

- Neighborhood District
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Active Mixed-use District
- Corporate District
- Landscaped Water Features
- Regional Green Spaces

### TRANSPORTATION & ACCESS

- Planned Curtis Road Interchange
- Existing Roadways
- New Public Streets
- Potential Pedestrian/Bike Trails

### SITE FEATURES

- Entry Feature
- Landscaped Buffer / Trail
- Landscaped Buffer / Transition

# CURTIS ROAD INTERCHANGE STUDY

City of Champaign, Illinois October 2007



