

# Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals

## Draft 9

The City of Urbana recognizes that stewardship of the city means not only addressing the needs of today's residents but planning for the future -- short and long term -- in a cohesive, coherent way. These City Council and Mayoral Goals represent the core principles we will apply over our term in office as we help guide Urbana on the path forward. They form a common point of understanding from which the planning and government of Urbana proceeds.

Our specific goals include enhancing public safety, achieving financial sustainability, promoting economic development, maintaining a vibrant, innovative downtown, working toward environmental sustainability and improving the quality of life in Urbana.

**Public safety:** Our top goal always must be to provide for the safety of our residents by maintaining sufficiently staffed and well-trained police, fire and public works departments and providing modern facilities for them to work in.

**Financial sustainability:** Our goal is to have a financially stable city, with sufficient reserves to cover periodic downturns in the economy. Longer-term, the city should investigate securing new sources of revenue that don't burden taxpayers through city ownership of public utilities, such as broadband, water and electricity/energy.

**Economic development:** To minimize the tax burden on residents, Urbana must continue to grow and attract new jobs. The city should pursue infill development whenever possible, work to enhance new development corridors to the north and east and work to attract new high-tech jobs. The city should also strive to make sure new projects are as attractive and environmentally sustainable as possible.

**A vibrant, innovative downtown:** The heart of a city is its downtown, and Urbana must continue to maintain its downtown as a vibrant, attractive place to live, work and shop. The city will strive to retain existing businesses, to attract new businesses and to fill vacant buildings and sites. The city also will begin implementing the Boneyard Creek Master Plan to transform Boneyard Creek into a downtown amenity.

**Environmental sustainability:** The city must implement and encourage environmental sustainability, including evaluating all city projects for sustainability and incorporating energy-savings systems. The city should establish partnerships and develop programs to encourage residents and businesses to adopt sustainable practices. The city council will adopt a climate action plan and work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a variety of measures, including making the city more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

**Quality of life:** The city must take the steps necessary to ensure a high quality of life for its residents. Those steps include promoting historic preservation, diversity in the city work force and intergovernmental cooperation. The city should also work to provide affordable housing, promote public art and implement modern zoning concepts.

## 1.) Goal: Public safety

- A. Strategy:** Provide police and fire service staffing at levels needed for all neighborhoods..
- Review staffing annually during budget preparations to determine needs and available resources.
  - Monitor development and population density for future fire station and personnel needs as well as exploring partnerships and financial planning for construction needs.
- B. Strategy:** Continue to identify problem properties and work to solve problems.
- Work with the ownership of problem properties and apartment complexes to reduce crime.
  - Work with Lierman Avenue and Washington Street residents to address neighborhood issues.
  - Continue systematic rental inspection and code enforcement, particularly with problem properties.
  - Adopt an Aggravated Public Nuisance ordinance. [Spring 2010]
- C. Strategy:** Review and update ordinances.
- Review liquor ordinance. Consider tiered license fees based on occupancy.
  - Develop an early warning system to identify potential problem properties.
  - Investigate motel and hotel code safety issues when rooms are rented by the month.
- D. Strategy:** Address building security needs at City Facilities.

## 2.) Goal: Financial sustainability

- A. Strategy:** Secure new long-term reliable sources of city revenue. Investigate what other cities have done regarding broadband, ambulance, water and electricity/energy.
- Hire consultant to help city determine whether broadband grant proposal will pay for itself, as is, and to look at potential business models for expanding fiber to the home in Urbana. [Fall 2009]
  - If the \$28 million federal broadband grant is awarded, using consultant's and other input, council will determine whether to accept or reject. [Feb 2010]
  - If grant is awarded and accepted, build out of backbone network and fiber to the home in underserved areas by 2011 and determine if the City builds out to other on a partial or complete basis. There would be a cost savings of about 5 percent with continuing construction without a stop, so an initial decision in early 2011 should be considered.
  - Investigate the feasibility and potential profitability of operating a city ambulance service.
  - Continue to work with city of Champaign, UI and Savoy and possibly other parties to consider buying the water system and operating it as a municipal utility.
  - Consider implementing a storm water utility fee; employ a consultant to perform a feasibility study and implementation plan.
- B. Strategy:** Successfully negotiate new contracts with police, fire and AFSCME unions in 2010 that the city can afford.

**C. Strategy:** Evaluate costs and benefits of development projects before implementation and follow up to see if actual results achieved.

**D. Strategy:** Work to maintain a healthy general corporate fund balance, eventually raising reserves to \$3 million, or about 10 percent of general fund spending.

- Consider implementing new fees, such as vehicle impoundment fee, towing fee, pavement degradation fee that have already been implemented or are under consideration in other cities.
- Analyze expenditures and improve efficiency to help eliminate current budget deficit.

### 3.) Goal: Economic development

**A. Strategy:** Regularly conduct a business climate survey and include all area Realtors and developers.

**B. Strategy:** Begin implementing Cunningham Avenue corridor beautification plan.

**C. Strategy:** Work to attract infill development

- Target vacant or underutilized buildings and sites, such as Jerry's IGA, former Walgreens, and Pay Less Shoes.
- Target desired uses such as a cinema, a new book store, boutiques, specialty stores, copy shop, and ice cream parlor.

**D. Strategy:** Complete and execute development agreement with Menards.

- Set timetables for road improvements and construction of store tied to state funding.
- Residential and other commercial development to follow in future years.

**E. Strategy:** Work with University of Illinois and the UI Foundation on properties of mutual interest.

- Seek active involvement of neighborhood associations and residents in the planning and design process of Orchard Downs and Pomology (Pell Farm) Tract redevelopments.
- Continue discussions on North Campus and Krannert Center District developments.

**F. Strategy:** Complete University Avenue corridor plan by spring 2010.

**G. Strategy:** Continue to pursue funding for Olympian Drive (from Apollo Drive to US 45) and extending Lincoln Avenue along its proposed alignment to Olympian Drive.

- Continue to work with neighboring property owners on proposed Olympian Drive route land use concerns.
- Examine potential connectivity of Airport Road to Lincoln Avenue for public safety and industrial development.
- Explore locations for additional industrial parks

**H. Strategy:** Continue to pursue development along Cunningham Avenue north of Interstate 74

- Market Pickrell Farm, Frasca properties, and Farm & Fleet out lots.

**I. Strategy:** Continue to administer and improve business development programs to meet business needs such as TIF Redevelopment Incentive Program and Enterprise Zone Designation.

**J. Strategy:** Continue to work with Urbana Business Association to market Urbana “as a dynamic place to live, work and do business.”

- Support efforts of grass-roots community development or neighborhood organizations.

**K. Strategy:** Continue to promote expansion and diversity of the city’s tax base.

- Explore possible annexations, including existing residential neighborhoods, and use cost/benefit ratio analysis.
- Work with the University and not-for-profit entities to limit the growth of non-taxable properties.

## 4.) Goal: A vibrant, innovative downtown

**A. Strategy:** Update the 2002 downtown strategic plan. [May 2010]

- Work with stakeholders on visioning for downtown and a goal-setting process.
- Hire design firm to obtain updated visualizations of downtown.
- Create an overarching downtown vision statement and executive summary of existing plans.
- Assign priorities and timelines to existing plans for downtown and develop several scenarios based on potential redevelopments.

**B. Strategy:** Complete a professional market share study of downtown business sectors to determine marketing strategies and what types of businesses will succeed downtown.

- Draft request for proposals and complete study by spring 2010.

**C. Strategy:** Develop downtown as a destination through traditional and cutting-edge technologies.

- Study use of interactive downtown kiosks, new information technologies, and podcast walking tours.
- Bring “museum without walls” concept to downtown by marking historic buildings including the Royer Arts and Architecture District (plaques and markers).
- Install “Looking for Lincoln” wayside markers where appropriate, and identify and mark sites associated with distinguished Urbana citizens.
- Encourage University faculty and students to develop interactive or innovative technology in downtown businesses or in uses that would extend the concept of the gallery district.

**D. Strategy:** Complete a “way-finding” design to improve downtown signage and other materials that help residents find parking and other downtown attractions and businesses.

- Request for proposals to be issued and report completed. [Spring 2010]
- Develop connectivity across and to downtown with an emphasis on walking and biking.

**E. Strategy:** Continue implementation of the Boneyard Creek Master Plan.

- Coordinate with private property owners who own redevelopment properties.
- Focus on Segment 3 between Griggs Street and Broadway Avenue for first construction phase including Race Street Bridge.
- Finalize necessary easements agreements, including old railroad trestle bridge for pedestrians and Norfolk Southern railroad approvals.
- Consider additional segments as feasible and/or as prompted by redevelopment activity.
- Initiate planning, acquisition, site engineering for Boneyard beautification plan west of Main Street to Lincoln Avenue.
- Study/consider private fund-raising campaign tied to specific Boneyard phases.

**F. Strategy:** Work to complete major downtown redevelopment and infill projects.

- Restore Historic Lincoln Hotel as a viable hotel and conference center while respecting its historic character. Work with developers to promote revitalization through available initiatives, fee waivers and tax credits for local and national landmark buildings.
- Consider acquisition and environmental cleanup (seek IEPA Brownfield Site Funds) of downtown sites for potential redevelopments.
- Work with owner of Gateway Shoppes to start construction of shopping center and additional out lot development.
- Complete property acquisitions and options of city block just north of Urbana City Building and issue RFP for mixed-use redevelopment.
- Pursue/continue redevelopment of Lincoln Square Village.
- Consult with owner of County Plaza on developing new uses and applications for this space.
- Work with property owners of the blocks south of University Avenue between Race and Vine streets, to pursue redevelopment.
- Work to increase downtown housing, including both apartments and condos.

**G. Strategy:** Promote reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings

- Consider having the city become its own developer: buy empty buildings or properties and partner redevelopment and renovation projects.
- Continue/enhance start-up grant and rent incentives for galleries and businesses in Royer Arts & Architectural District.
- Consider offering city grants to any commercial business in the Royer district to clean or repair existing facades.
- Promote the Royer Arts and Architecture District as a travel destination enhancing tourism, entertainment and development.
- Consider incentive program to encourage downtown law firms to move offices into the second floor, freeing first floor for retail.

**H. Strategy:** Complete Phase 7 of downtown streetscape along Broadway Avenue to the north.

- Hire firm to complete design.

**I. Strategy:** Implement parking plan recommendations.

- Make parking deck more attractive and easier to find.
- Prepare printed material.
- Uniform parking enforcement and modernized equipment.
- Work with the downtown business community on traffic calming measures, safe and user friendly parking, and potentially testing back-in angle parking.

## 5.) Goal: Environmental sustainability.

**A. Strategy:** Adopt principles to provide overall guidance on sustainability issues including air, water, and energy.

- Evaluate all city projects with respect to sustainability, such as waste water, street lighting, energy usage, storm water runoff, and similar issues.
- Incorporate energy-saving systems, including renewable energy sources, storm water best management practices, bicycle and pedestrian facility upgrades.
- Develop innovative programs and regional partnerships to support energy efficiency of private homes, businesses and municipal buildings.

**B. Strategy:** Adopt a climate action plan [May]

- Set significant and achievable targets for greenhouse gas emissions.
- Adopt a timetable and track progress.

**C. Strategy:** Provide adequate staffing and resources to develop and implement sustainability plans and programs. Develop a green team with representatives from all city departments.

**D. Strategy:** Identify opportunities to provide incentives and promote “green construction.

- Research updating city code to promote green building.
- Seek changes in state plumbing codes to allow waterless urinals and energy-efficient plumbing vents.

**E. Strategy:** Develop financing models to fund energy efficiency programs and renewable energy projects, such as contract assessments, revolving loans or grants.

**F. Strategy:** Support proposed studies of climate change, land use and economic development projections consistent with the cost being broadly shared across interest groups in Champaign County. [Fall 2010]

- Work with Champaign County Climate Change Task Force on studies such as solar canopies.

**G. Strategy:** Develop and implement a formal energy policy for city operations.

- include conservation, identification of non-fossil fuel sources, and potential implementation timelines.
- Continue to increase energy efficiency in all city buildings..Support energy efficiency in residential and commercial sectors by developing innovative programs and regional partnerships.

**H. Strategy:** Develop and implement a water conservation policy for city operations.

- Include conservation steps and alternatives to using potable water, such as for landscape watering. Include costs and implementation guidelines.
- Work with other cities on a regional basis on water planning issues and legislation.

**I. Strategy:** Expand recycling to include commercial recycling, construction and demolition debris recycling, explore hazardous and electronic recycling, and find a long-term solution to battery recycling.

- Adopt a zero waste city goal and action plan.

**J. Strategy:** Promote production, accessibility and affordability of local farm and artisan products.

- Conduct a strategic planning process to explore the future vision, program goals and implementation steps for Market at the Square (Winter, 09-10)
- Consider creation of an advisory board for the Urbana Market composed of representatives from the city of Urbana, vendors, consumers, the Urbana Business Association and others as deemed appropriate.
- Implement use of Electronic Benefits Transfer cards at the Urbana Market.
- Encourage establishment of “Friends of the Urbana Market” not-for-profit organization to provide fundraising for educational and artistic events, infrastructure and other needs.
- Grow the Urbana Market by establishing a year-round operation on a permanent location with commercial kitchen space that can be rented by vendors.
- Leverage the Urbana Market as an economic engine to drive development of a portion of downtown Urbana as a “food district.”

**K. Strategy:** Encourage Sustainable Landscaping and Gardening.

- Establish a heritage tree program.
- Encourage the use of native species in landscaping and for pollinator well being.
- Record and mark trees of significant height and growth.
- Study providing notice when a significant tree is to be removed.
- Update city parkway tree inventory.
- Develop property owner guidelines and recommendations for use of native species in landscaping and tree plantings.
- Control the removal of topsoil from residential developments.
- Consider installation of a model community rain garden at the city building.

**L. Strategy:** Become a multimodal, bike and pedestrian- friendly community that supports sustainable transportation.

- Work with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission to implement the Bicycle Master Plan by implementing current recommendations and by continuing to plan for bicycle facilities as the city expands or redevelops.
- Work with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission to develop ongoing, communitywide bicycle safety education programs such as the bicycle safety video being prepared jointly by Champaign and Urbana, or working with Drivers’ Education curricula.
- Make sure the police and public works departments and bicycle commission provide appropriate enforcement, education and signage for bicyclists and pedestrians.

- Apply for and receive Bicycle Friendly Community designation by 2010-11.
- Launch a bicycle parking retrofit program to help existing businesses add appropriate bicycle parking hardware. Need a funding source.
- Support public transportation, including CUMTD improvements and high-speed passenger rail.
- Continue to enact Safe Routes to School improvements as funds become available.
- Adopt a complete streets policy. Include alternative roadway configurations, such as bike boulevards, that give priority to pedestrian, bicycle and public transit modes. For intersection projects, include roundabouts, and other technologies among the alternatives considered.
- Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at Windsor Road and Race Street.
- Continue identifying and prioritizing improvements at problematic intersections.
- Continue to work with other agencies on regional bike facilities such as the Rails to Trails path between Urbana and Danville.

## 6. Goal: Quality of Life

### A. Strategy: Enhance historic preservation and preserve older housing stock

- Encourage creation of a historic district on Elm Street between Buena Vista and Cedar Street.
- Encourage creation of historic corridors with national designations.
- Create incentives to convert grandfathered boarding houses back to single-family houses.
- Work to conserve single-family homes and neighborhoods through measures that encourage owner occupancy and reinvestment in current housing stock.

### B. Strategy: Zoning/comprehensive plan or ordinance changes.

- Consider ordinance amendment reducing the number of parking spaces required for commercial developments.
- Modify development regulations to encourage bioswales and alternatives to detention basins.
- Develop and enact an industrial noise ordinance that limits noise generated after normal business hours from industries and commercial businesses.
- Consider enacting city impact fees for development to help pay for new roads, park-land dedication, and school sites.
- Consider enacting form-based zoning (ie. where development is dictated by desired building forms rather than by minimum regulations) in downtown and commercial areas.
- Reduce impact of off-street parking in single-family neighborhoods through improved backyard green space requirements, including establishment and enforcement of no-gravel,



no paved-over backyard requirements for grandfathered properties with single-family (R-1, R-2, R-3) underlying zoning.

- Improve cross-department coordination of code enforcement efforts.

**C. Strategy:** Promoting diversity.

- Continue to work to improve effectiveness of city Equal Employment Opportunity contract compliance program.
- Participate in multi-jurisdictional efforts to increase minority contractor hiring and business growth.
- Continue to work toward increasing diversity within the city workforce to more closely mirror the city's demographics.
- Continue to work toward creating a city work culture more conducive to diversity.
- Publish an annual report for the City Council with metrics on the work force including diversity issues, affirmative action, training, retirements, staff changes, and similar issues.

**D. Strategy:** Promote continued intergovernmental cooperation

- Continued cooperation with Urbana School District (Safe Routes to Schools, technology, energy efficiency grants, green schools, etc.).
- Continued cooperation with Urbana Park District.
- Complete design of new city website and related staff training. [February 2010]
- After official 2010 Census results are received and new county precincts are determined, use a transparent process to draw a new Urbana ward map so that wards are contiguous and balanced fairly for population per Federal and State requirements.
- Adopt the Mayor's Action Challenge for Children and Families sponsored by the National League of Cities <http://www.mayorsforkids.org/principles.php>.
- Conduct annual training for council, boards, and commissions.
- Continue to seek intergovernmental cooperation with Champaign, Savoy, Champaign County and other entities to pursue economic development opportunities.
- Work with park district and school district to make sure recreational facilities are available to Lierman/Washington and King Park area youth.
- Explore the use of neighborhood community centers to serve the needs of youths and adults related to education, training, guided activities and communication technologies in target areas of Urbana, including the possibility of working with the school district at Prairie and King Schools.
- Improve programs to give youth hands-on exposure to the building trades and other vocational training opportunities.

**E. Strategy:** Support greater community programs of interaction between Urbana and our sister city international partner, Zomba, Malawi, Africa.

- Work with local schools, churches and community groups
- Determine if an additional program should be developed in Brazil

**F. Strategy:** Continue to promote public art.

- Support placement of public art throughout the city.
- Continue to support the Public Arts Commission and their programs
- Complete “Art in the Park” project north of the city building.

**G. Strategy:** Continue to promote additional affordable housing opportunities

- Work with Housing Authority of Champaign County on redevelopment plans for Dunbar Court.
- Identify partners for the Kerr Avenue energy- efficient housing project and move forward with construction.
- Complete housing needs study and reflect results in updated Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plans for use of CDBG and HOME consortium funds.
- Examine capacity of homeless shelters, family shelters and SRO’s and promote resources to meet shelter needs.
- Continue to address the issues of tenant relocations resulting from nonpayment and/or condemnations.

**H. Strategy:** Address space needs deficit at City Facilities.

- Complete a space needs study and master plan.
- Identify funding source for plan improvements.
- Consider interim storage facility to address immediate need for space.