

1. INTRODUCTION

Peoria Medical and Technology District

This report sets forth a vision and the comprehensive master plan with corresponding implementation strategies for the 770-acre Peoria Medical and Technology District (Med-Tech District) just west of downtown Peoria (See map in 1.3).

Included in the document are:

- Vision
- Executive Summary
- Background for the Master Plan, and role of agencies involved
- Plan for each area of the District, and links between them
- Design guidelines and recommendations
- Implementing the Plan
- Appendices

After review and modifications to the vision and the master plan draft, a final comprehensive master plan was prepared with recommendations on who should be involved in implementation, identification of priority projects and a timetable for meeting specific objectives.

Connection to the Greater Peoria Region's Vision

In 2000, approximately 40 community leaders began a steering committee under the direction of the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria (UICOMP) Regional Dean to discuss the potential role of Peoria in the 21st century knowledge economy. The Battelle Memorial Institute was engaged to perform an assessment of the community's assets and resources. Results of that study led to the formation of what is now known as Peoria NEXT. Peoria NEXT's vision is:

*By 2015, we will be the preferred Midwestern region in support of the culture of **discovery**, the creation of **innovation** and the implementation of **commercialization** in the areas of life science, material science, and engineering science.*

Its goal is to facilitate the talents of scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs to assist the development of start up companies that potentially could lead to strong economic growth in the Greater Peoria Region.

As Peoria NEXT began to generate tremendous interest and start up companies, it became clear that our community needs a technology incubator and an environment that creates the energy and quality of life that scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs, and especially those known as the creative class, would enjoy. It is generally believed that these individuals are looking primarily for quality of life and that the jobs of the future and technologies of the future will follow where these talented individuals reside.

Accordingly, as a result of the commitment the community and key organizations have to Peoria NEXT and its importance to the future of the Greater Peoria Region, in May 2003 the Mayor and City Council passed Ordinance 15,473, creating the Peoria Medical and Technology District and the Peoria Medical and Technology District Commission. One of the stated purposes is to create the environment where Peoria NEXT and other entrepreneurial enterprises can be successful.

Concurrent with the development of Peoria NEXT, the Peoria Civic Federation, a group of approximately 40 of the Greater Peoria Region's largest employers and community leaders, engaged with the Mayor to begin planning the future of Peoria through Greater Peoria Vision 2020. The Vision for the future of the Greater Peoria Region is as follows:

The Greater Peoria Region is a growing and highly desirable place to live with great natural beauty and resources, a proud history and heritage, and an abundance of leisure-time things to do. Our well-educated population has a strong work ethic and wide range of businesses and jobs from which to choose. We are a region that is proud of our diverse people and ideas, and we accomplish great things together.

It is clear the Med-Tech District is an integral part of the future of the Greater Peoria Region. In particular, the Med-Tech District will significantly impact the following regional economic development goals, as set forth in Vision 2020:

- A growing and sustainable regional economy
- Home of Caterpillar and other thriving businesses
- World-class technology center: research to application
- Major medical and health sciences center
- Inclusive community culture

All of these goals are also objectives forth in the Ordinance which created the Med-Tech District.



Figure 1: West Main Street, existing conditions



Figure 2: West Main Street Vision

1.1 Vision for the Peoria Medical and Technology District

Visitors to West Main Street in the spring of 2015 will experience a very different environment than the underdeveloped area which exists today. Visitors will know they are in a place that is different and unique. People will know they are in the “Med-Tech District”. A sense of energy and excitement pervades the atmosphere. Employees of the new research-oriented businesses will lunch on outdoor patios watching busy pedestrian traffic along the tree-lined street. The second phase of the technology incubator – Peoria NEXT Innovation Center II – has been completed and two new tenant buildings are focused on a widened sidewalk plaza which serves as outdoor dining for ground floor cafes.

An information center serves as a welcome to visitors who can learn about the institutions and businesses involved in the Peoria Medical and Technology District and the benefits of locating in the Med-Tech District. Bradley University (Bradley), Methodist Medical Center (Methodist), National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research (NCAUR), OSF Saint Francis Medical Center (OSF) and UICOMP are all represented in the Peoria NEXT Innovation Center. Caterpillar also has an exhibit in the center which lists to date research projects that have developed into new businesses.

Just west of the Technology Node is the new Bradley University Foster College of Business Administration, which offers assistance to start-up businesses nearby and is linked by shuttle to the main campus. Most students prefer, however, to walk along the revitalized West Main Street,

which has new stores facing the street with student housing above. Two hundred new residential units have been built since 2005, including the redeveloped “Campustown” center which includes shops with apartments above.

A new medical office building has been constructed between the Med-Tech District and Downtown. This building is part of the coordinated strategy which promotes growing research companies to move from smaller headquarters on West Main Street to larger buildings below the bluff.

The neighborhoods of Olde Towne North, Glen Oak and East Bluff United have seen significant investment in new and renovated housing since the “Employer-Assisted Housing” program was started by the institutions. Many of the vacant lots in Olde Towne North have been developed for new housing and many residents find that walking to work is enjoyable and much more convenient than looking for parking. As a result, the District has seen significant increase in home ownership. The property values in the District have risen as well.

The construction of new student housing apartments in the Med-Tech District has spurred the conversion of rooming houses back to single-family homes. The District is beginning to see those young professional and entrepreneurs move out of their affordable lofts and condos into single family homes as they are now starting their families. They do not want to give up the quality of life and ability to walk to work, school or Downtown. This is especially true in University East, Orchard District, Armstrong Ellis and

Columbia Terrace North. While many doctors, scientists and researchers have moved to the Randolph-Roanoke and High Wine neighborhoods, some of the large mansions have been converted to duplex condominium residences for employees in the new research companies. The Med-Tech District has become a destination for families who have moved to the neighborhoods. They find that the new pedestrian lighting has helped build a more secure neighborhood. The Medical and Technology Special Services District helps in keeping the area clean and safe.

Construction of the new technology-driven, state-of-the-art White Middle School has just been completed to replace the 100-year old building. The new school prepares students who enter Peoria High School, a nationally recognized science and technology magnet school, for technology-oriented students. The institutions and Caterpillar help shape the curriculum and teach students to prepare them for technology, science and math courses in high school. There is a waiting list of people who wish to move into the District because of the high achievement of the elementary, middle and high schools in the District.

Meeting rooms in the nearby hotels are used by the institutions and the Bradley Inn is always busy, especially during graduation and District events. The hotels provide extended visits by research interests from over 4,000 technology companies located within a three-hour drive.

Auto traffic on West Main Street in 2015 is slower because of the streetscape,

parking and sidewalk-widening program which took place in the first five years of redevelopment. Maintenance of the new street is the responsibility of the Medical and Technology Special Services District which also provides advertisement for events. Each spring West Main Street is closed on a weekend day for the “Peoria Medical and Technology District Research Fair”. During the fair, visitors are treated to family-oriented events including offerings from the new restaurants on West Main Street. The first fair held in 2006 drew over 50,000 people. In 2015, it is one of the most popular events in Central Illinois.

Visitors and families take advantage of the opportunity to walk down beautiful West Main Street from the Med-Tech District past the medical complex and on down to the Riverfront. Visitors who are spending the day at the Civic Center or Museum Square can leisurely walk through the Med-Tech District. Residents of the Med-Tech District safely walk downtown to enjoy the Riverfront activities at any time of the day or night. As a result of its current activities, the uniqueness of the Med-Tech District, the revitalized West Main Street and Riverfront area, with its bustling economy and 24/7 lifestyle, Peoria has been named an All-American City for the third consecutive year.

1.2 Key Terms

“*Bradley*” means Bradley University.

“*CAT Tech Center*” means the Caterpillar Technology Center located in Mossville which is a contributing research partner within Peoria NEXT.

“*City*” means City of Peoria, Illinois.

“*Commission*” means the Peoria Medical and Technology District Commission.

“*Council*” means City Council of Peoria, Illinois.

“*District*” means Peoria Medical and Technology District.

“*Downtown*” means downtown Peoria.

“*Hospitals*” means Methodist Medical Center and OSF Saint Francis Medical Center.

“*Institutions*” means Bradley University, Methodist Medical Center, National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center and University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria.

“*Medical Complex*” means Methodist Medical Center, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center and University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria.

“*Medical Node*” means the 1/4 mile on West Main Street located near the Medical Complex between Sheridan Road and North Street.

“*Med-Tech Corridor*” means one mile corridor of West Main Street from Perry Avenue to University Street.

“*Med-Tech District*” means Peoria Medical and Technology District.

“*Methodist*” means Methodist Medical Center.

“*NCAUR*” means National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research.

“*Neighborhoods*” means the nine neighborhoods included in the Med-Tech District, which are: Armstrong Ellis, Columbia Terrace North, Glen Oak, High Wine, Olde Towne North, Orchard District (formerly Flora-Ellis), Randolph-Roanoke, United East Bluff and University East.

“*Ordinance*” means City Ordinance No. 15,473, which created the Peoria Medical and Technology District, the Peoria Medical and Technology District Commission, and the Neighborhood Advisory Council.

“*OSF*” means OSF Saint Francis Medical Center.

“*Technology Node*” means the 1/4 mile on West Main Street between Sheridan Road and Bourland Avenue, between the Medical Node and University Node.

“*University Node*” means the 1/4 mile on West Main Street between Bourland Avenue and University Street near Bradley University.

“*UICOMP*” means University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria.

1.3 Overview of the Med-Tech District



