

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present a comprehensive master plan for the 770-acre Peoria Medical and Technology District, consisting of nine neighborhoods and five major institutions. The nine neighborhoods 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. The five institutions are: Bradley, Methodist, NCAUR, OSF, and UICOMP.

Previous studies by the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice and the Heart of Peoria Plan have built community support for an urban research park in the West Main Street Corridor from Bradley to the medical complex. This study is focused more on how to implement a realistic plan including a market analysis of the demand for new research oriented business and policies of the major institutions which may help revitalize adjacent neighborhoods. The long range plan presents a physical image which includes a redeveloped West Main Street, new development between the medical complex and downtown and reinvestment in homes nearby.

To determine the long range goals for the master plan, a series of neighborhood meetings were held to ask what strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats existed in each of the nine neighborhoods. While some neighborhoods voiced different concerns, nearly all in attendance were in agreement that absentee owners, crime and lack of community marketing had hurt their neighborhoods. Every neighborhood also showed a remarkable community spirit and a willingness to work to improve the existing conditions.

Representatives from the major institutions, private businesses, City officials and leadership of key non-profit organizations, including Peoria NEXT, were interviewed in confidential sessions. Results of the interviews were summarized in the preliminary findings and are included in this report. The combination of the neighborhood meetings and the private interviews resulted in a series of key issues which need to be addressed to implement the long range plan.

Successful research parks in Birmingham, AL; Louisville, KY; Richmond, VA; Winston-Salem, NC; and Worcester, MA were examined to define the overall objectives, strategies and keys to success as a model for Peoria. In all examples new research oriented business was attracted to the research park, building on existing research programs underway in the community.

The City of Peoria had a population of 112,936 people in the year 2000. The Metropolitan Statistical Area today has a population of over 350,000. The region is the headquarters of Caterpillar Inc., an international leader in the manufacture of earth moving equipment. The manufacturing base of the region has continued to decline over the past few decades and, like so many other communities in the Midwest, Peoria was faced with the need to diversify. In the Spring of 2001, many of the largest organizations in Central Illinois came together to form Peoria NEXT whose vision is to lead in "discovery, innovation and commercialization" in life sciences, engineering sciences and material sciences.

Building on the results of the Battelle report, the City of Peoria through its Mayor and City Council passed an Ordinance, in 2003, creating the Med-Tech District, the Med-Tech Commission, and the Neighborhood Advisory Council.

The Heart of Peoria Plan Vision for West Main Street

The “Heart of Peoria” Planning process generated a great deal of enthusiasm among the citizens of Peoria. This plan was conducted by DPZ Associates in 2002. One of the recommendations of the plan was to create an urban medical research center on the West Main Street Corridor. The vision presented was primarily new construction with nearly 2 million sf for new research oriented businesses. Large parking decks lined both sides of West Main Street with active retail on the ground floor.

While most urban research centers have succeeded to attract many new businesses, the annual private absorption is only an average of about 13-14,000 square feet per year. A more realistic plan would result in a West Main Street corridor with a mixture of uses including housing over stores, medical complex expansion and Bradley expansion as well as new research oriented companies.

A description of a long range plan for the West Main Street Corridor is included in *Section 4* of this report.

The Neighborhoods

There are nine neighborhoods included in the study area. Some include large mansions constructed on the bluff such as High Wine and Randolph-Roanoke. Other neighborhoods including East Bluff, Glen Oak and Olde Towne North are directly adjacent to the hospitals. They are concerned with traffic and hospital expansion but could house many hospital employees. University East, Orchard District, Columbia Terrace North and Armstrong Ellis have benefited from the student housing construction by Bradley which has moved many students from rooming houses in their neighborhoods into campus housing. All neighborhoods share a concern about the high percentage of absentee landlords and crime. The long range plan for all neighborhoods includes programs by the institutions which assist their employees in finding housing near their place of employment. Area hospitals employ 8,200 employees.

An improved West Main Street will benefit the nine neighborhoods if new stores offer neighborhood services as well as services for the institutions and new businesses. A description of the vision and plan for each neighborhood is included in *Section 4* of this report.

The Med-Tech Corridor and Downtown

Many development opportunities exist in the area between the medical complex and downtown. The vision for this area includes new construction of

medical related buildings, such as doctor's offices, employee housing, mixed-use office and parking. A description of the plan for this area is included in *Section 4* of this report.

Key Linkage

Today West Main Street serves as a automobile corridor between Bradley and Downtown. Traffic statistics show, however, that Average Daily Trips (ADT) at the intersection of University Street and West Main Street are 25,000 and only 12,300 at the intersection of North Street and West Main Street. The vision presented in the "Heart of Peoria" plan and this report both see much more pedestrian activity on West Main Street. In contrast to the "Neighborhood Centers" concept in the "Heart of Peoria" plan, however, this vision shows West Main Street as a community serving corridor which mixes needs of adjacent neighborhoods, institutions and new businesses. Streets which link the neighborhoods to West Main Street would be improved with pedestrian lighting and signage which introduces the neighborhood. The same is true of each institution which needs "gateway" entrances.

While each institution will have its own private campus, the Med-Tech Corridor will have facilities and open space shared by all. The linkage between the NCAUR and Bradley and the linkage between the medical complex and Bradley could include a shuttle system which allows researchers to access the new incubator as well. This shuttle could serve the neighborhood also. A

description of the long range plan for key linkages is included in *Section 4* of this report.

The Med-Tech Corridor in 2015

The capacity for growth in the Med-Tech Corridor includes new construction of buildings designed for new start-up business, institutional buildings and related offices. The plan identifies the University Node, Technology Node and the Medical Node. Each node is a five minute walk in diameter. The minimum long range program for each node is listed here:

University Node:

- New academic space for Bradley
- Residential apartments over retail and university services
 - 150 new apartments
 - 30,000 square feet of retail space
- University oriented motel
- Office space near Technology Node
 - 50,000 square feet of office space
 - 15,000 square feet of retail space
- Redeveloped Campustown Center including residential over retail and University Athletic fields.

Technology Node:

- Technology Incubator (Peoria NEXT Innovation Center)
48,000 sq. ft.
- Technology Incubator expansion
38,000 sq. ft.
- Multi-tenant space in two buildings
88,000 sq. ft.
40,000 sq. ft. retail
- Residential apartments over retail
100 new apartments
80,000 sq. ft. retail
- Adaptive reuse for retail space
40,000 sq. ft. one story retail

Medical Node:

- Residential over retail
50 units
20,000 sq. ft. retail
- Professional offices
16,000 sq. ft.

This program is based on an absorption of 7,500 sf of new research oriented business per year. The residential and retail development is based on an absorption of 30-40 units and 20,000-25,000 sf of retail per year, respectively.

The vision for the Med-Tech Corridor will continue to include students and many will be housed in new apartments along West Main Street. Faculty and families will own homes converted to single or duplex use in nearby neighborhoods. Most of the conversions will occur in University East, Orchard District, Armstrong Ellis and Columbia Terrace North.

A target for 2015 should exceed the home-ownership ratio of the City of Peoria (60% owner – 40% renter). The result will be a more balanced community with more single family homeowners and renters living in new apartments rather than converted rooming houses. The percentage of young people in the area will decrease and the number of educated professionals will increase.

An increase in community services should occur on West Main Street to encourage employees to live near where they work. Child care, health clubs, convenience stores and other facilities could be within walking distance of employers. This is critical for start up businesses in the technology node who need access to business, accounting, graphics, medical supplies and legal services.

The Role of Education

Education will be an important element in community building. The Franklin School is well regarded today; however, many employers recommend suburban homes outside District 150 for new employees. The vision for 2015 includes a special technology focus for the Med-Tech District. This could include special programs at the high school level and possibly a new technology-oriented middle school.

In September 2006, seven hundred students in the Philadelphia School District will enter an innovative learning environment when Microsoft and the School District team up to complete a new high school that will be embedded in technology from the ground up. The estimated \$46 million project will expand beyond the classroom to deliver a holistic view of what the learning environment can be. Students will encounter a curriculum optimized to facilitate any time, anywhere learning and systems that will help teachers better establish the pace of instruction and evaluate student progress. Administrative functions will be streamlined from attendance, school supplies, teacher training and tracking progress will use Microsoft technologies.

The program is being designed by a team including the Education Solutions Group at Microsoft and School District planners. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is one of many education oriented foundations focused on the inequities in public education, especially for African-American and Hispanic youth.

The White Middle School, built in 1903, had an enrollment of 339 in 2003. The percentage of low income students was 99.3%. A technology magnet school with follow-up programs at Peoria High School could attract higher income families. Continuation of the present status, where only 15.8% of the 8th grade meet ISAT standards in math, will assure that higher income families will not consider enrolling their children. In contrast, the Franklin-Edison Primary School has shown great progress in achieving good academic performance. In 2003, 78% of the 3rd grade students met or exceeded the ISAT standard in math.

The White Middle School in Peoria is 88% African-American and ranks near the bottom in 8th grade achievement. The school building is over 100 years old and laboratories are inadequate to meet the needs of the educational program. Many other problems are documented in the "Peoria Public Schools District 150 Educational Facility Needs Study Years 2002-2003". A program is needed which would link the technology focus on the Med-Tech District with the school. Such a program might be supported by Corporate sponsorship at Caterpillar and faculty assistance from the UICOMP and Bradley.

Bradley already has played an important role in assisting the adjacent community with programs, such as Jump Start which teaches computer drafting skills to high school juniors and seniors. The Heartland Illinois Technology Enterprise Center assists start up companies with development of their business skills. Urban universities can be a major force in community

2000

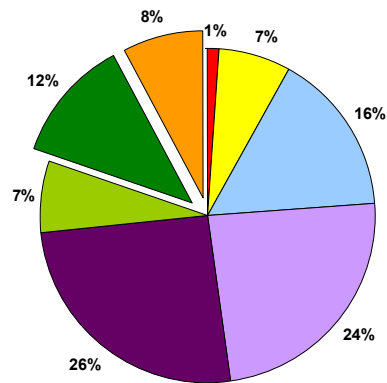
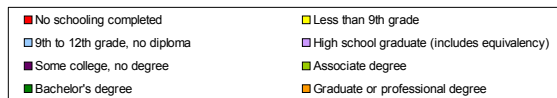


Chart 1: Educational Attainment in the study area year 2000. Source: US census data.
Only 8% of the population in the study area holds a graduate or professional degree compared to 10% Citywide



Projected Goals
by 2015

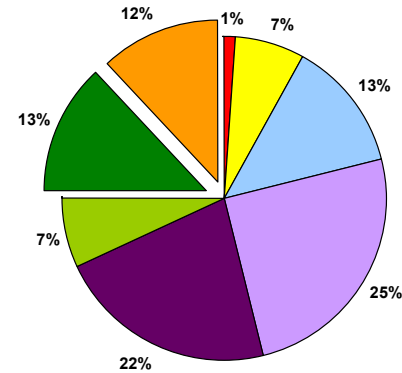


Chart 3: Educational Attainment in the study area year 2015. Source: Forecast
An increase of 5% on the population in the study area that holds a graduate or professional degree is expected.

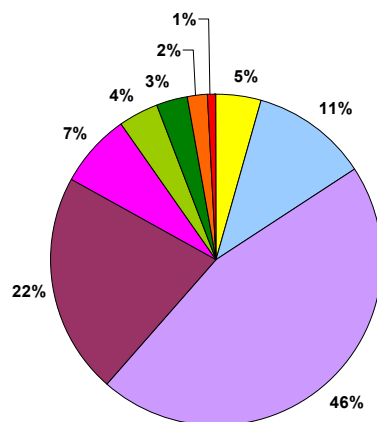
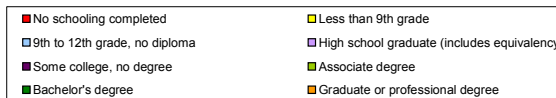


Chart 2: Age Distribution in the study area year 2000. Source US census data.
46% of the population in the study area are in between 18 and 24 years old.

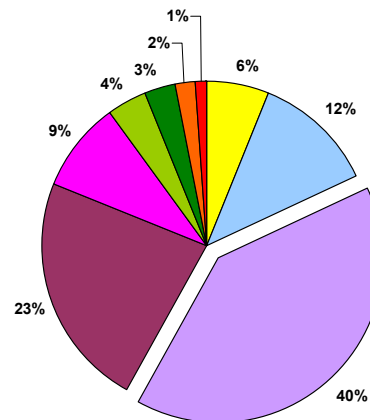
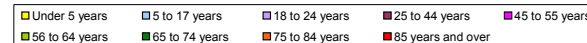


Chart 4: Age Distribution in the study area year 2015. Source: Forecast.
The population in the study area in between 18 and 24 years old is expected to decrease to 40% by 2015.



redevelopment. Corporations are also beginning to realize that improving public education can be a benefit to their workforce. For example, the City of Chicago has spent millions in rebuilding public schools, the University of Pennsylvania is a partner in a new University Public School and Microsoft has offered to equip a new technology high school in Philadelphia.

The Goals

Nine major goals have been set as the basis of the master plan for the Med-Tech District. (Alternative urban design strategies were the topic of a charrette held in Peoria on September 16, 2004) Community members were asked to respond to a maximum investment or minimum investment for public, private and institutional interests.

Goals:

- To assist in the development of a Technology Center on West Main Street which is strongly marketed and supported by existing research efforts in Peoria;
- To encourage and support the Technology Center with education programs by Bradley and existing social services entities which provide child care, legal assistance and cooperation with the School Board;
- To develop a plan for the University Node which includes academic, residential and support retail uses on West Main Street;
- To develop a plan for the Medical Node which includes hospital related uses, medical offices and support retail;
- To encourage development of active retail on lower floors of all new development on West Main Street with upper level residential and office space;
- To improve the physical character of West Main Street with specific design guidelines for new and existing businesses, parking and links to adjacent neighborhoods including parking on each side and widened sidewalks;
- To increase homeownership in the nine neighborhoods including converting existing multi-tenant homes back to single family use;
- To encourage increased residential use on West Main Street for student housing and rental apartments for institutional employees who wish to live near where they work; and
- To encourage a marketing program and public assistance strategy which attracts new business and promotes neighborhood investment nearby.

