



**Champaign
County:**
Collaborative
Prosperous
Sustainable
Supportive
Enriching

2. our future. here. The Vision for Champaign County

our future. here. is built upon the ideas and aspirations of those who live and work in the county. These ideas – 2,222 in total – were generated during the Community Dialogues. The Community Assembly distilled the ideas from the Community Dialogues into 12 goals, 68 objectives, and 307 action steps. This version of the vision was then revised and refined based on feedback received at the Community Choices Workshops.

our future. here. is organized by five broad strategic elements that define the scope and key dimensions of the vision. It retains the same 12 goals but condenses the vision to 35 priority objectives supported by 145 specific action steps.

The results of the **big.small.all.** process capture a broad consensus of the community’s aspirations. The supporting action strategies in Chapter 3 suggest ways to turn the goals into reality.

**The Structure of the Vision:
Objectives and
Strategic Elements**

A Collaborative County

- County Identity
- A Tolerant Community
- Strategic Thinking
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Participatory Government
- Representative Government
- Town & Gown Relationship
- Countywide Transportation Planning

A Prosperous County

- Business Climate
- New Business Growth
- Technology Infrastructure
- Workforce Development
- Air Service
- Locally Grown Food

A Sustainable County

- Urban Growth and Farmland Resources
- Parks and Natural Areas
- Groundwater Supply
- Energy Use
- Waste Reduction
- Alternative Transportation
- Mixed Use Development
- Urban Redevelopment

A Supportive County

- Health and Well Being
- Healthcare Access
- Access to Services
- A Safe Community
- Affordable Housing
- Accessible Housing

An Enriching County

- Funding Quality Education
- Alternative Education
- Arts Education
- Regional Arts Center
- Access to Open Space
- Open Access for Recreation

Five Strategic Elements

our future. here. envisions a Champaign County that is collaborative, prosperous, sustainable, supportive and enriching.

These five themes describe the overall thrust of the vision. They organize the 12 broad goals and 35 specific objectives that were developed by the Topical Committees. The committee topics (see side bar on page 1.10) do not map directly onto these themes. Objectives developed by one committee may fall within two or more themes. The individual goals and objectives often have multiple dimensions. They are grouped in themes that reflect the primary, but not necessarily the only, concern that they address.

The five themes are:

A Collaborative County speaks to our intent to work better together, understand one another, and be prepared to work cooperatively and effectively to pursue shared goals.

A Prosperous County captures our desire to create a future in which Champaign County attracts new investment, the University is fully competitive, businesses flourish, individuals and families thrive, and resources are available to support community initiatives.

A Sustainable County describes our aspiration to create stable and convivial neighborhoods, use natural resources including prime farmland efficiently and wisely, minimize waste and pollution, and restore the ecological integrity of the natural environment.

A Supportive County reflects our commitment to ensuring that everyone in Champaign County has access to the basic necessities of a secure, happy, and dignified life in which they can contribute to the larger life of the community.

An Enriching County addresses our intent to enable individuals to flourish and to reach their full potential, and to lead lives that are healthy, stimulating, and fulfilling.

A Collaborative County

Goal

In 2030, we envision Champaign County as a collaborative county where...

All government bodies in the county work cooperatively, efficiently and with a high level of citizen participation to provide excellent public services.

Objectives

- **County Identity** – The residents of Champaign County will have a strong sense of being part of a single community with shared values and common interests.
- **A Tolerant Community** – Champaign County will be a model of tolerance, harmony and respect for racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity.
- **Strategic Thinking** – Organizations, businesses, and governments in Champaign County will have a clear sense of their place at the state, national, and global scale, and of the ways that global trends and conditions affect their immediate and long term prospects.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation** – Champaign County will be a place where intergovernmental cooperation is actively undertaken by all units of government.
- **Efficient Public Services** – Duplicative services will be substantially eliminated and all appropriate opportunities for sharing or consolidating government responsibilities will be implemented.
- **Participatory Government** – A significant proportion of the citizenry, of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds, will be actively engaged in local elections and in government decision-making and action.
- **Representative Government** – Citizen leaders will effectively represent all segments of the community.
- **Town & Gown Relationship** – Leadership of the University of Illinois and Parkland College will bring the knowledge, skill, and energy of their institutions to all significant civic initiatives.
- **Countywide Transportation Planning** – All appropriate agencies will implement a coordinated countywide transportation plan produced by a representative planning program comparable to the Champaign Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS).

Other Ideas

- Local governments will effectively communicate with the community regarding the effects and costs of significant government proposals and the process for decision-making.

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- Capital improvement planning will be done on a countywide basis through ongoing formal collaboration.
- All local planning authorities will have current, electronically-compatible plans for growth and development and share them through participation in a regional planning consortium to identify possible conflicts and opportunities with respect to regional issues (such as aquifer withdrawals).
- The County, municipalities, and other governmental entities will have formal policies guiding infrastructure investment and service provisions that equitably share the costs and benefits of development.

A Prosperous County

Goals

In 2030, we envision Champaign County as a prosperous county where...

A vibrant, diverse economy ensures the competitive position of the University of Illinois; trains, attracts, and retains a quality workforce; fosters an array of environmentally responsible businesses; provides well-paid jobs; creates a variety of shopping opportunities; and contributes to the quality of life in all communities.

Agriculture is a thriving segment of the community that is maintained through the preservation and protection of farmland and is supported by the use of locally grown crops, strong family farms, and a public informed about the importance of an agricultural sector that fosters ecologically sound, socially responsible and economically viable practices.

Objectives

- **Business Climate** – Champaign County will have a national reputation for its favorable business climate and support for local businesses.
- **New Business Growth** – The success rate of new businesses will increase significantly, and the earnings and employment in small businesses will keep pace with the overall growth of the county economy.
- **Technology Infrastructure** – Champaign County will have technology infrastructure that places it among the leaders in the nation.
- **Workforce Development** – Champaign County will have a unified, comprehensive workforce development program that will increase the share of county employment in well-paying occupations and raise the median wage relative to the State.
- **Air Services** – Champaign County will be the premier regional air service hub in Central Illinois.
- **Locally Grown Food** – A significantly increased share of the food consumed in Champaign County will be produced in the county.

Other Ideas

- The number of farms in Champaign County will be at least as large as today.
- Economic growth in municipalities, outside Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy, will keep pace with the overall county rate of growth.
- Most people, and all school children, will have had direct contact with farm operators and have greater knowledge of the significance of Champaign County agriculture.

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- New interstate highway access points will be constructed as needed.
- Freight and passenger train service will be much more frequent and reliable, and will link Champaign County with local, regional, and national points of interest.

A Sustainable County

Goals

In 2030, we envision Champaign County as a sustainable county where...

The community is a nationally recognized leader in environmental conservation, recreation, and education that successfully integrates people and their activities with the natural world in ways that create high quality, sustainable human and natural communities.

Land is used to create well planned, compact, and contiguous communities that minimize sprawl, provide sustainable infrastructure, promote infill development, protect natural and green areas, preserve farmland, encourage accessible mixed use neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, and offer an array of transportation choices.

Attractive and vibrant communities - old and new, rural, urban, and suburban - are pedestrian-friendly, include diverse activities and people, incorporate natural areas and landscaping, and highlight the distinctive qualities of the area.

A variety of countywide transportation options, including accessible public transportation and attractive well-maintained roadways, bike paths, and pedestrian ways allow people and goods to move safely and efficiently within and between communities, to the larger region, and beyond.

Objectives

- **Urban Growth and Farmland Preservation** – A significantly larger share of new development will be built at higher densities and will be contiguous to or within existing built-up areas, reducing the rate of farmland conversion.
- **Parks and Natural Areas** – The acreage of urban and county parks and protected natural areas will at least double, the ecological integrity of their natural areas will be restored, and the sites will be protected from disturbance by neighboring land uses.
- **Groundwater Supply** – Policies will be in place that protect the county's groundwater resources and ensure a safe sustainable water supply for humans and wildlife.
- **Energy Use** – Champaign County will significantly reduce non-renewable energy use.
- **Waste Reduction** – Champaign County will significantly reduce the tonnage of waste disposed of in landfills and increase the volume and type of materials that are reused or recycled.
- **Alternative Transportation** – Land use patterns, infrastructure investments, programs, and policies will provide most people with convenient and safe transportation choices and encourage walking, biking, and public transit.

- **Mixed Use Development** – Public and private initiatives will significantly increase the development and redevelopment of mixed use neighborhoods that include strong local businesses.
- **Urban Redevelopment** – Existing neighborhoods and downtowns will see significant new investment and become desirable locations where older buildings are preserved and complemented by new development.

Other Ideas

- Private and governmental actions have improved the quality of the county's streams and riparian areas, exceeding federal and state standards while maintaining effective drainage for agriculture and appropriate flows for other vital economic and public uses.
- Champaign County will have developed regional plans with neighboring counties to link natural landscapes and improve streams and riparian areas on a regional scale.
- Buildings in Champaign County will be constructed to be environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live, study and work.
- Multi-modal, controlled access, complete streets in Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy will be guided by the vision's goal for development patterns.
- Champaign County will be a national leader in its use of sustainable transportation modes and models.

A Supportive County

Goals

In 2030, we envision Champaign County as a supportive county where...

A caring, tolerant community that values diversity provides all people access to comprehensive services that contribute to health, welfare, safety, and quality of life throughout the county.

All communities provide people of all ages, abilities, and incomes with safe, affordable, well-maintained and energy efficient housing choices for both renters and owners.

Objectives

- **Health and Well-Being** – Key measures of health and safety will significantly improve for all residents in Champaign County.
- **Healthcare Access** – Champaign County will be a national model for providing access to an affordable, integrated, comprehensive, seamless model of health care.
- **Access to Services** – Residents of every community will have convenient access to information, education, recreation, supportive services, and crisis intervention.
- **A Safe Community** – Champaign County's communities will be safe environments that effectively deter drug use, criminal activity, and inmate recidivism through an integrated countywide system of evidence-based practices.
- **Affordable Housing** – All persons at every income level will be able to afford safe, quality housing.
- **Accessible Housing** – All persons with disabilities will be able to purchase or rent quality housing that is accessible, supportive, and meets their needs, at an affordable cost.

Other Ideas

- All schools will provide a safe and healthy learning environment in which students of all ages learn about, practice, and adopt a healthy lifestyle.
- Champaign County's opportunities and services for persons of retirement age will be a recognized model throughout the Midwest for the retention and attraction of persons 55 years of age and older.

An Enriching County

Goals

In 2030, we envision Champaign County as an enriching county where...

A countywide array of arts, cultural activities, community events, and entertainment options contributes to an exceptional quality of life and community spirit and is promoted to people of all ages and incomes, residents and visitors alike, at educational institutions, community centers, museums, performance venues, and exhibition spaces.

An excellent life-long education system provides a safe, healthy, diverse, innovative learning environment and job training opportunities through equitable funding, community involvement, and supportive relationships with the University of Illinois, Parkland College, and the business community.

Ample parks, trails, and centers for active and passive recreation opportunities contribute to the enjoyment, health and well being of the county's residents.

Objectives

- **Funding Quality Education** – All public schools will provide excellent instruction and student services in state-of-the-art facilities to all children, and will have the necessary financial resources, funded from a balance of sources that significantly reduce dependence on property taxes.
- **Alternative Education** – All students will have access to a range of alternative forms of schooling that meet their educational needs and enrich the learning environment.
- **Arts Education** – A consecutive program in all arts disciplines will be an integral part of the curriculum at every grade level in all Champaign County schools.
- **Regional Arts Center** – Champaign County will have a reputation throughout the Midwest as a center for art and entertainment and will be a model for its public and private financial support of the arts.
- **Access to Open Space** – All communities and residents will have access to quality neighborhood and regional parks that are connected through trails, greenways, and public sidewalks to all major cultural facilities and schools throughout the county and adjacent locales.
- **Open Access for Recreation** – Government entities will cooperate to provide all county residents with open access for recreation at all appropriate public facilities.

Other Ideas

- Everyone will have access to a comprehensive, lifelong career development system and a learning environment that promotes a thirst for knowledge and a passion for excellence.
- The audience for Champaign County attractions will be substantially larger and more diverse. Local attractions will be significantly enlarged and enhanced and new attractions serving the county and beyond will be established.
- All parts of the academic, business and professional sectors of the community will be actively involved in education and career development programs.
- Arts and cultural programs that address the needs, preferences, and talents of people of all ages, from children to seniors, will be conveniently available in every community.
- Arts programs that reflect the culture of all racial and ethnic groups will be accessible throughout the county in venues that bring those different groups together.
- Every arts group will have the capacity to utilize a wide array of media to effectively reach the entire population of the county in promoting arts events and venues.
- Each community in Champaign County will have and maintain an individual identity and Champaign County will have a regionally distinctive identity.
- All commercial development will be designed, maintained, and redeveloped to meet uniformly high aesthetic standards.
- All communities will be implementing plans to beautify all areas and neighborhoods and have policies that require that all development and public infrastructure be designed and maintained to meet uniformly high aesthetic standards.

