

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2025

Mobility Implementation Plan

miPLAN - Phase I - Affordability

An important miPLAN Phase I activity was identification of Mobility Enhanced Development (MED) Opportunities for the Champaign-Urbana Region. In a report completed in July 2007, opportunities and challenges for MED in the Champaign-Urbana area were identified. The MED area is defined as a compact neighborhood that is walkable, has strong transit connections and a grid street network, has a concentration of small retail and service-oriented business, and has a diverse housing stock. These elements then combine to create a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented community. MED helps promote higher densities needed to maintain area retail and other services, and identifies areas that possess the desired qualities for development.

If the area is to grow to the target population posited in community and regional long-range plans, the coordination of transportation and planning will play an important role in ensure that the area is prepared to accommodate that change, and that the area remains affordable. MED is one tool that can allow the area to grow its population in a manner that takes advantage of existing assets and resources efficiently.

Overall, the report revealed that currently housing costs are in the affordable range for most households (30% or less of income), but that a majority of households are paying greater than 19% of their income on transportation costs which is higher than the national average. The most affordable transportation areas are in Champaign-Urbana, particularly along the University Corridor, including the University campus and downtowns Champaign and Urbana. These areas also have the most transit access and pedestrian oriented environment. A key element in ensuring continued growth and development is ready availability of affordable and desirable housing.

In the Champaign-Urbana MSA, household size and income has a strong influence on auto ownership due to lower densities, dispersed development, and limited metro mobility options. One key to creating desired development is to enhance the public transportation system with such elements as increased bus service, streetcars, and/or light rail. Champaign-Urbana may still be growing a system that can be an asset of this type; however, as this trend suggests, there could be an untapped market for urban residential housing for all income levels. Currently, in the cities of Champaign-Urbana, the options for high-end housing appear to be limited and do not offer many choices for those that are interested in a medium- to high-density setting. Within the downtowns, higher density housing is mainly targeted to the student population at the University.

MED provides an efficient mechanism for achieving population growth objectives. Based on input from ongoing long-range planning and visioning efforts in the area, it appears that there is support for applying this approach to the Champaign-Urbana MSA.