Evaluating Philo Road Business District Action Plan

Introduction
Philo Road Business District Action Plan is an initiative from the City of Urbana, business owners, and the community to attract and invigorate businesses in the area. In August 2004, the city presented a report on the economic condition of the Philo Road to the City Council based on previous studies such as 2001 Neighborhood Workshop, 2002 Existing Condition Report, 2003 Business Survey, and 2004 Resident Survey. This report formed the foundation for the action plan, which was approved by the City Council in January 2005.

Goals of the Action Plan
To revitalize Philo Road Business District via three aspects of development:

Social
- Improve security & safety

Physical
- Improve image of the Philo Road Business District
- Plan and construct infrastructure improvements
- Beautify the business district through public and private efforts
- Zoning and signage improvements

Economic
- Retain and enhance existing businesses
- Improve development incentives
- Provide marketing assistance
- Encourage creative building reuse
- Promote development of outlots to promote denser/more vibrant area

Objective of the Project
To assess the implementation of the action plan and its impacts on the business district revitalization

Implemented Projects and Programs

Physical Aspects
- Welcome sign installation
- Shared lane marking
- Bike lanes
- Side walks
- Landscaping
- Traffic signal improvement
- Sculpture installation

Social Aspects
- Increase police patrol frequency
- Form Neighborhood Safety Task Force
- Form Neighborhood Watch Group
- Nuisance ordinance
- No littering sign

Economic Aspects
- Organize Southeast Urbana Business Group meeting
- Conducted Carle Clinic Inquiry
- Planning a systematic frame work for building inspection
- Business signage installation
- Remodelling of old IGA

Evaluating the Action Plan

Quantitative Analysis
- Social
  - Crime - 20% decline
  - Housing
    - 51% renter occupied
    - 59% Caucasian
    - 1% decline
    - 21% African American
    - 5% increase

- Economic
  - Number of business
    - no significant change
  - Number of jobs
    - 124% increase
  - Employment
    - 4% increase

- Physical
  - Total crash (2005 - 2010): 28

Qualitative Analysis
- Social
  - Crime perception still exists
  - Many unreported crimes
  - Property management issue

- Economic
  - Businesses are slow
  - Need business incentives
  - City, property & business owners need to do more

- Physical
  - The area is more appealing
  - Physical improvements do not really attract businesses
  - Buildings are deteriorating

Recommendations
- Create a focus business development program
- Improve awareness about business incentives and resources
- Build on existing partnership
- Form a monitoring and follow-up task force
- Organize events to promote the area
- Create a communication channel between the stakeholders