



**CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

ADMINISTRATION

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Bruce K. Walden, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: William R. Gray, P. E., Public Works Director

DATE: November 18, 2004

RE: **Curtis Road Letter of Understanding**

INTRODUCTION

In November of 2003 representatives from the University of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the City of Urbana met to discuss the future use and improvements to Curtis Road, particularly between First Street and Race Street, and how those uses and improvements could impact the College of ACES South Farms. At this meeting, it was decided to include representatives from the Village of Savoy, Champaign County, and Urbana Township, to meet and discuss concerns and issues related to Curtis Road's future and formulate those issues and concerns into a letter of understanding (see attached "Letter of Understanding" draft).

For many years, the City of Urbana has designated Curtis Road as an arterial roadway. This means that it would serve a primary role for moving traffic east/west across the Champaign, Urbana, Savoy, and University region.

In 1995 a "Scoping Study" was performed among the member agencies determining what probable future right-of-way widths and number of travel lanes would be necessary to move the increased traffic volumes in the future. Recently, however, the University of Illinois College of ACES has acquired hundreds of acres of farmland north and south of Curtis Road in anticipation of moving the South Farms currently north of Windsor Road to those areas south of Windsor Road and beyond. The College of ACES has noted various safety and operational problems currently with plots. The College of ACES is concerned that those issues aren't duplicated with any future Curtis Road improvements.

The attached "Letter of Understanding" identifies the transportation needs of an arterial roadway classification for Curtis Road and the research needs of the College of ACES South Farms. Together, five agencies, along with the help of the Illinois Department of Transportation, have crafted a "Letter of Understanding" that is intended to let future

decision makers know what concerns there are in the event of any Curtis Road improvements, particularly between First Street and Race Street.

FISCAL IMPACTS

There are no fiscal impacts or commitments associated with the “Letter of Understanding.” In the years to come, there may be Curtis Road improvements in the subject area but none are specifically called for in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that a “A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE VILLAGE OF SAVOY, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, THE COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN AND URBANA TOWNSHIP” be approved authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to sign the attached “Letter of Understanding for Curtis Road Between First Street and Race Street.”

WRG:kf

Attachments: Resolution
 Letter of Understanding
 Map

RESOLUTION NO.2004-11-027R

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE VILLAGE OF SAVOY, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, THE COUNTY OF CHAMPAIGN AND URBANA TOWNSHIP

(Curtis Road: First Street to Race Street)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS, as follows:

Section 1. That A Letter of Understanding Between the City of Urbana, the Village of Savoy, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, the County of Champaign and Urbana Township, in substantially the form of the copy of said Letter of Understanding attached hereto and hereby incorporated by reference, be and the same is hereby authorized and approved.

Section 2. That the Mayor of the City of Urbana, Illinois, be and the same is hereby authorized to execute and deliver, and the City Clerk of the City of Urbana, Illinois, be and the same is authorized to attest to said execution of said agreement as so authorized and approved for and on behalf of the City of Urbana, Illinois.

PASSED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2004.

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of _____, 2004.

Tod Satterthwaite, Mayor

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

(Curtis Road: First Street to Race Street)

THIS UNDERSTANDING, made and entered into this ____ day of _____, 2004, by and between the City of Urbana, (a municipal corporation of the State of Illinois, hereinafter “City”), the Village of Savoy (a municipal corporation of the State of Illinois, hereinafter “Village”), the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (a body politic and corporate of the State of Illinois, hereinafter “University”), County of Champaign (hereinafter “County”), Urbana Township (hereinafter “Township”); hereinafter the above-named City, Village, University, County, and Township are collectively referred to as the “Parties”,

I. BACKGROUND. Amended by the University in 2003, the South Campus Master Plan of the University calls for the relocation of the agricultural fields, pastures, facilities, sheds and barns of the South Farms from their present location north of Windsor Road in Champaign and Urbana to a new, larger site that would extend along both the north and the south sides of Curtis Road, generally between First Street and Race Street, and further extending east to Philo Road south of Curtis Road, for a total area encompassing on the order of five (5) square miles.

Curtis Road is an important existing roadway connection between the suburban areas of the City of Champaign, Village of Savoy, and City of Urbana that has long been shown by relevant City and CUUATS document as a planned arterial. It lies within the maintenance jurisdiction of Urbana Township where it bisects the South Farms Relocation Plan. It is the primary east-west connector between those of Windsor Road on the north and Airport Road/Old Church Road on the south. Recent development patterns in south Champaign, Savoy, and Urbana are resulting in an increased reliance on this two-lane rural roadway. A new interchange for the I-57 intersection with Curtis Road gives added emphasis to the need for Curtis Road to continue to be open for east/west access to, not only properties lying to the south and east of the City of Urbana, but to properties in and near the Village of Savoy and the surrounding area.

The relocation of the University South Farms agricultural facilities and the need to maintain Curtis Road as a planned arterial street lead to conflicting goals and desires between the University on one side and the City, Village, County and Township on the other. This Letter of Understanding attempts to reconcile and accommodate

the concerns of the parties. This Letter of Understanding is not intended to be a binding contract, but rather to record essential points of concern of the parties and to document specific accommodations to be honored and abided by as future plans to improve Curtis Road develop.

II. CONCERNS OF UNIVERSITY. The University would prefer that Curtis Road be vacated as a public street, but failing such, advances the following as their concerns:

1. **Interference with South Farms Activities.** The University is concerned about the potential for interference between South Farms activities and a busy public roadway. South Farms activities are by nature of a rural character and proximity to urban development and traffic volumes has the potential to interfere with these activities. The South Farms has for many years endured urban traffic along Windsor Road and Lincoln Avenue and does not wish to repeat similar problems in the future.

2. **Land Use Commitment.** In negotiating for land purchase in the South Farms area, the University has represented to the nearby subdivisions of Yankee Ridge and Lake Park that future development of the relocated South Farms would not involve private development.

3. **Safety.** The University is concerned about maintaining the safety of South Farms activities, including animal movements and transport of agricultural equipment (sometimes by inexperienced student operators). Limitation of access along Curtis Road and provision of appropriate setbacks alongside the roadway will help to promote safety.

4. **Security.** Security of South Farms operations, animals, and test agricultural plots from potential trespass and vandalism is a concern and has been problematic at the current location. Provision of setbacks, fencing, and buffering will be important to maintain security.

5. **Environmental Integrity.** Maintaining a healthy physical environment at the relocated South Farms is important for the sustainability of the operation and integrity of plants and animals that are a part of the South Farms. This will require careful stewardship in the stormwater maintenance plans and in the control of substances, such as salt and other chemicals, that may be used in the course of roadway maintenance.

6. **Lighting.** The University is concerned about the potentially negative impacts that excessive lighting may have upon the operations, plants, and animals that will be present at the relocated South Farms.

7. **Flooding.** The University is concerned about the potential for localized flooding and damage to facilities that can result from roadway improvements.

III. CONCERNS OF THE CITY, VILLAGE, COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP. The local government units concerned, to wit, the City, the Township, the Village and the County, advance the following as their concerns:

1. **Land Use Plans & Tax Base Erosion.** The City of Urbana Comprehensive Plan (Extra-Territorial Jurisdictional Area Plan), adopted in 1993 shows approximately two (2) square miles of the affected lands (south of Curtis Road between Wright Street extended on the west and Philo Road extended on the east) as being designated for future commercial, office, and residential uses. Prior to the recent acquisition by the University, these lands provided significant tax revenues to the Urbana School District, the County, the Township, and other taxing bodies. The uses planned for this area also represented future significant tax-generating opportunities for these taxing districts as well as the City. The proposed South Campus Master Plan has resulted in the loss of a large portion of the City's growth area for taxable use and in the projected loss of millions of dollars in Equalized Assessed Value and tax revenues to the City and other taxing districts.

2. **Growth Patterns.** The South Farms Relocation Plan within the City's adjacent growth area interferes with the ability of the City and County to promote compact, contiguous growth in this portion of the metropolitan area. Because development will need to occur outside of the very large South Farms area, there will be increases in infrastructure costs to reach these developments, as well as the overall environmental costs of a more sprawling development pattern.

3. **Official Roadway Designation.** Curtis Road has long been planned as an important east-west arterial linking Champaign on the west with Savoy, the University, and Urbana on the east. This designation is reflected on the City's Official Roadway Plan (adopted as a part of the Comprehensive Plan

in 1993), in Regional Planning Commission documents dating back to the 1960's, and in a 1997 Curtis Road/ I-57 Scoping Study prepared by CUUATS. The designation as an arterial is further relied upon in current plans to construct an interchange with Interstate 57 at Curtis Road in Champaign. Continued accessibility and functionality of Curtis Road as an east-west continuous roadway is critical for compliance with Federal Highway Administration rules governing funding and designation of such transportation projects.

4. **Investment Decisions.** Future availability of Curtis Road as an east-west arterial has been critical for the land use development decisions along Windsor Road, Philo Road, and Illinois Route 130, and in south portions of the University campus that have occurred over the past several decades. Those developing in the Village as well as elsewhere at the University have made these investment decisions. For this reason, maintenance of Curtis Road as an east-west roadway is an important concern of the Village's as well.

5. **Road District Responsibilities.** The Township, through its Road District Commissioner, and under charge of its electorate, is responsible for maintaining rural roadways, including Curtis Road within the area of the relocated South Farms, in a safe and well-maintained condition. Such responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, patching, resurfacing, plowing, and structural improvements. The Township is concerned with its ability to continue to provide these mandated services and with the protection of the traveling public along this roadway.

IV. ACCOMMODATIONS. Pending resolution of the above-stated concerns, the University agrees to refrain from any efforts to close or vacate any portions of Curtis Road or other public roads in the South Farms Relocation vicinity, as such roads are necessary to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of area residents. The parties further agree to the provisions as follows:

1. **Each of the parties will support** the Illinois Department of Transportation and other relevant agencies to take whatever steps are appropriate to ameliorate the concerns expressed above. The Parties will work with IDOT and CUUATS as appropriate for IDOT to identify funding alternatives, provide timely plan reviews, work with the lead agency to identify and seek approval of design variances, work

with the lead agency on project scoping, consultant selection, and coordination with other governmental agencies, and assistance in preparation of execution of necessary agreements.

2. **The City, Village, Township and County each agree** to support design of any improvements to Curtis Road, in a manner that prohibits public or private driveway or street access between First and Race Street, other than driveway access to the Police Training Institute, and in the event of a roadway wider than two lanes the installation of an underpass along the east bank of the Embarrass River to facilitate cattle crossing.

3. **The University agrees not to harm** nearby private property owners through any actions that may remove or reduce public access and safety for these privately held lands and investments other than as specified in Item No. 2 above.

4. **The City, Village, Township and County agree** to prohibit installation of streetlights between First Street and Race Street, excepting only at the respective intersections of Curtis Road with Race Street and First Street.

5. **The University agrees** not to place any encroachments inside of the 150-foot right-of-way of Curtis Road, including fencing, and to comply with relevant setback, zoning, and development provisions of the County.

6. **Working in cooperation with the University and with each other, the City, Township, and/or County agree** to prepare a stormwater management plan under relevant guidelines for any proposed roadway improvement projects along Curtis Road and to mitigate any adverse impacts upstream or downstream with any detention requirements to be incorporated within the drainage ditches within the 150-foot right-of-way of Curtis Road.

7. **The University, in order to accommodate the concerns of the governmental units involved, acknowledges** that Curtis Road has been long designated as a planned arterial in the City of Urbana's Comprehensive Plan, and in various other regional planning documents. And furthermore, in recognition that in addition to public transportation concerns, that private individuals rely upon comprehensive planning designations in making investment decisions, the University will support the improvements of Curtis Road with the understanding that the concerns of the University outlined herein will be given very serious consideration and accommodated unless accommodation is totally impractical as

determined after a meeting with the respective leaders (i.e. chancellor, chief administrative officer, etc.) of each organization discussing such concerns.

8. **The University and Township will work cooperatively** to ensure that the roadway is maintained in a safe and passable condition for the protection of the general public, including those users associated with the South Farms, as well as those users of surrounding lands.

9. **The University and City agree to commence** a renewed dialogue regarding the impacts of tax base erosion upon the community and possible means of mitigation, including such cooperative efforts as payment in lieu of taxes, provision of in-kind services, recommended adjustments to the Metro-Zone boundaries, and privatization of University development and lands in order to attain increased tax revenue and economic development benefits to the community from the South Farms Relocation project.

10. **The University will undertake efforts to mitigate** the impact of the taking of growth areas and erosion of taxable lands from surrounding communities through privatization of properties, including but not limited to the Orchard Downs property and the Pomology Tract.

11. **The University will work cooperatively** with the City, County, Township, Village, IDOT, and other affected jurisdictions to ensure that the duly adopted plans and policies of these jurisdictions are upheld.

12. **The City, County, Township, Village, and other affected jurisdictions will work cooperatively** with the University to ensure that the goals and policies of the South Campus Master Plan, including the South Farms Relocation Plan, are met. This may include, at minimum, the amendment of the Urbana Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to depict the South Farms Relocation Plan and the cooperation of the County in providing appropriate development and zoning approvals for the South Farms Relocation Plan.

V. AMENDMENT OR REVOCATION. This Letter of Understanding may be amended or revoked only upon the mutual written consent of all parties.

* * *

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have caused this Letter of Understanding to be executed by their duly authorized representatives on the day and date first above written.

* * *

CITY OF URBANA

By: _____
Its MAYOR

Attest:

By: _____
CITY CLERK

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**

By: _____
Its CHANCELLOR

Attest:

By: _____

URBANA TOWNSHIP

By: _____
Its TOWNSHIP ROAD COMMISSIONER

Attest:

By: _____
Its TOWNSHIP CLERK

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

By: _____
Its COUNTY BOARD PRESIDENT

Attest:

By: _____

VILLAGE OF SAVOY

By: _____
Its VILLAGE BOARD PRESIDENT

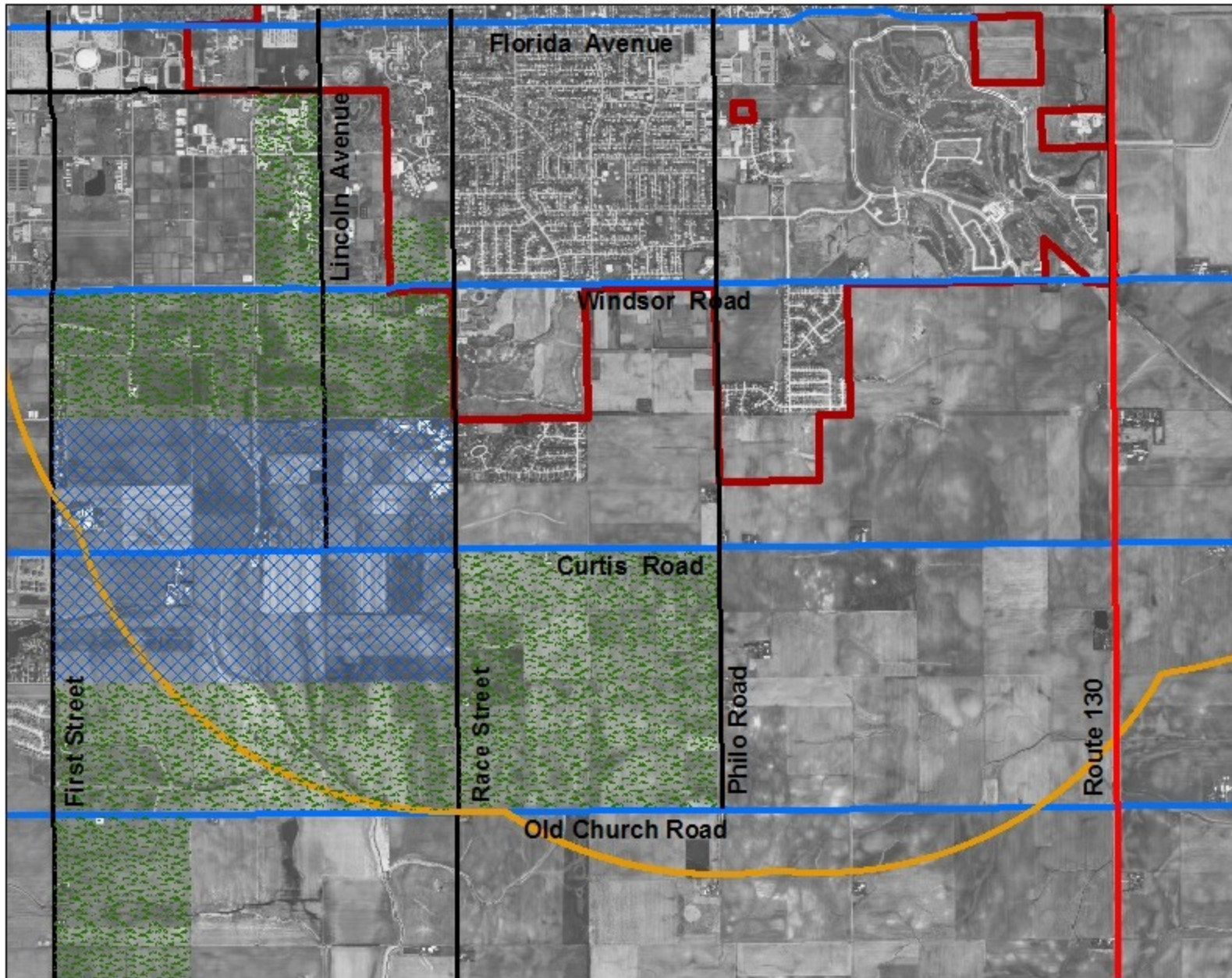
Attest:

By: _____

* * *

Attachment: Map Showing Area Covered by Letter of Understanding and South Farms Relocation Area

U of I & City of Urbana: South Farms Expansion Agreement



-  Urbana City Limits
-  Urbana ETJ
-  Pending Agreement Area 12-15-04
-  South Farms Relocation Area

