

Central High School Relocation Study

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Educational Tradeoffs:

Weighing the options for a new high school location

How to use this booklet

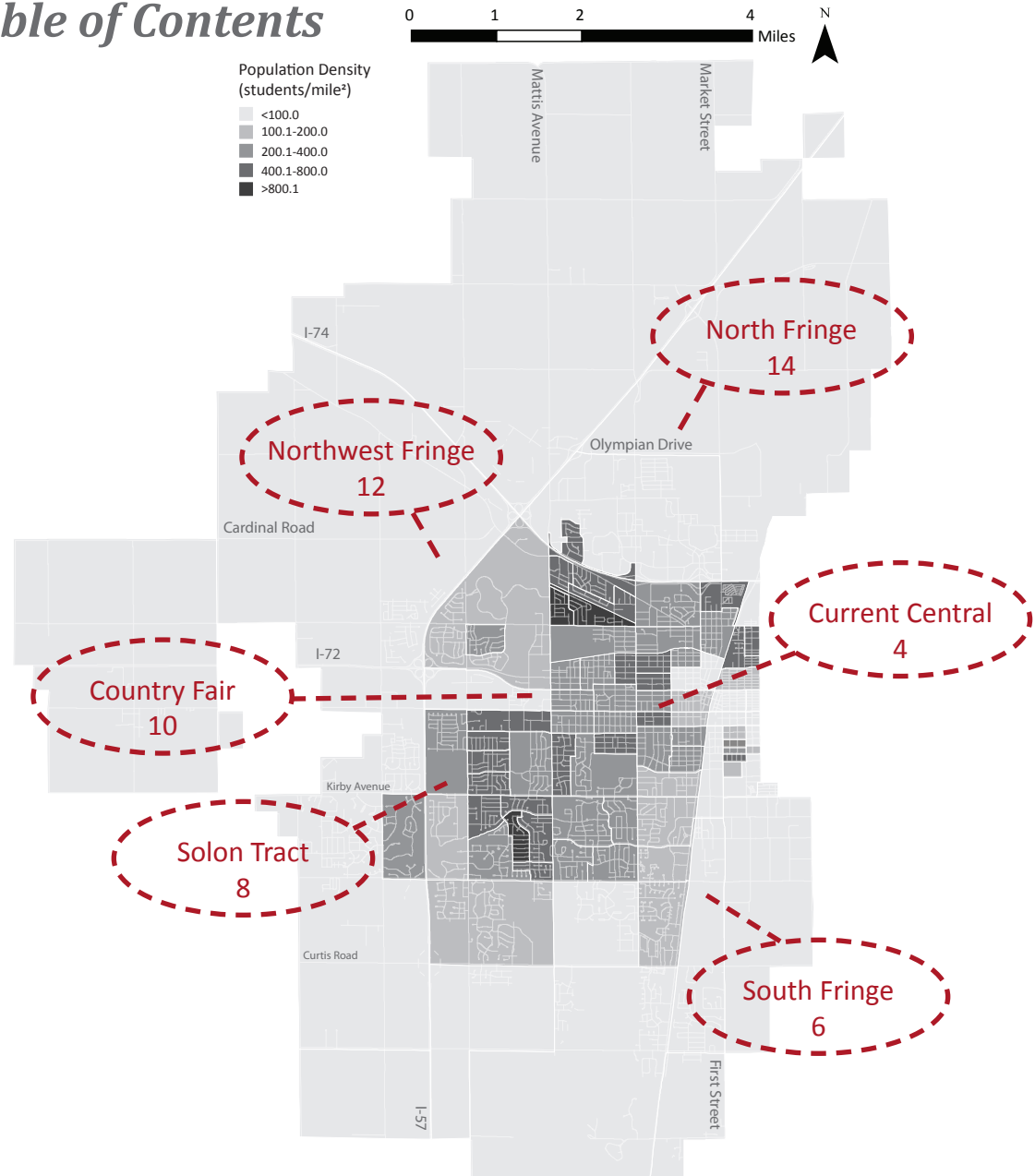
Each of the remaining high school site options (as of June 2012) has a page in this booklet, with a brief description, map, and lists of pros and cons.

Look at each page and talk about it with your friends and neighbors. Talk to a school board member. Attend a meeting on the issue. Visit the website to read full reports and post comments:

<http://centralrelocationstudy.wordpress.com>

You might not agree with the pros and cons listed here but perhaps they can help you join the discussion. The future of Champaign's high schools is in your hands!

Table of Contents



Why “Educational Tradeoffs?”

About the Project

In the fall of 2010, I saw articles in the News Gazette about the Champaign Unit 4 School Board considering land options for a new Central High School. Ever since my own days at Central in the early 2000s, I had heard rumors about building a new school, so needless to say, I was curious.

What started out as a short paper for my urban history and theory class eventually became a proposal for my master’s capstone project, and finally a ten month, 500 hour adventure in research, community engagement, and politics. The result was four 25-page reports, this booklet, and a website to share the information I had gathered, as well as presentations to the Board of Education on April 23 and June 11, 2012.

Most people can agree that Champaign Central High School needs improvements in technology and energy efficiency, and lacks adaptable educational spaces and many on-site athletic facilities. A new school will be a \$75 to \$90 million investment (a cost roughly equal to the District’s current annual educational expenditures) and will also slightly change the structure of operational expenses.

Even more importantly, the location of new or remodeled facilities will impact families served by Unit 4 as well as the rest of the community. Thinking about “Educational Tradeoffs” can help us make sense of all the locations and negotiate better compromises that will serve the needs of all families.

This issue is contentious and has already sparked much debate throughout the community. Although we face many decision-making challenges, we also have tremendous opportunities to change the direction of education in Champaign and leave a legacy to our community. Your participation is key.

- Holly Nelson, Central Alum 2004, UIUC Master of Urban and Regional Planning 2012

About the tradeoffs

The pros and cons on the following pages come from extensive research in four different areas:



TRANSPORTATION
accessibility, mode choices, costs



SOCIAL
stakeholder perceptions, demographics, social capital



ENVIRONMENTAL
resource use, sustainable sites, materials, health hazards



FISCAL
capital costs, operating expenses

Current Central High School

The School Board has decided that the current Central site is no longer the best location for a high school because it is crowded and educational programs are limited by physical constraints of the building. Also, athletic programming is a challenge because most practice sites are located elsewhere in town.

As we try to decide what to do in the future, we can think about what we like and dislike about the current site and compare that to site options for a new high school.

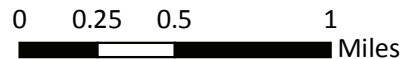
Quick Facts







Site Size: 6.5 acres

Population within 1.5 miles

Total: 44,900

High school: 930

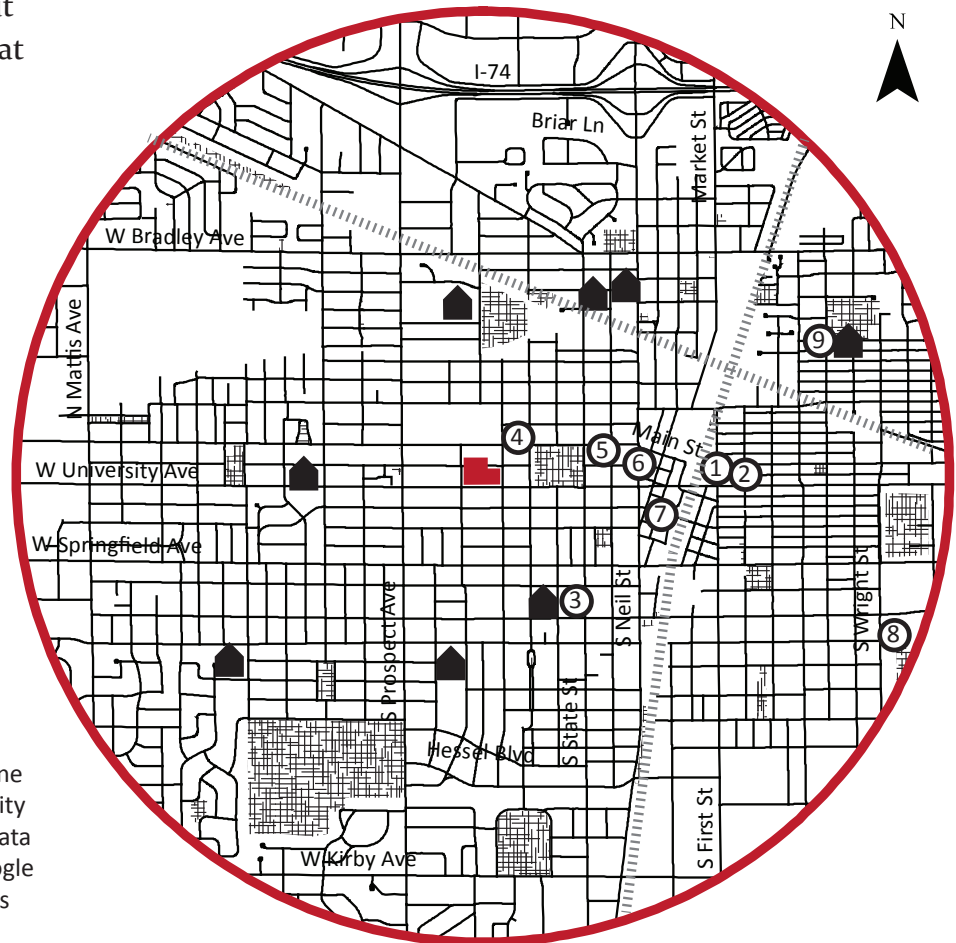


-  High School Sites
-  Other Unit 4 schools
-  Parks
-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Area within 1.5 miles

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① North First Farmer's Market
- ② Champaign Co. Historical Museum
- ③ Champaign Public Library
- ④ Mckinley Family YMCA
- ⑤ Springer Cultural Center
- ⑥ Downtown Champaign
- ⑦ Illinois Terminal
- ⑧ University of Illinois
- ⑨ Douglas Branch Library

Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, June 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, and City of Champaign Planning Department. Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author's knowledge of the area.



Pros



In the middle of the community (easy access)
Many people within walking or biking distance
Low transportation costs
Near Illinois Terminal (bus transfers)



Near to many low income and minority families
Good access to community resources
Building has beautiful architecture
Strong historical context
Near densely populated areas of the District



Low pollution from transportation
Resources already invested in the building
Does not use good agricultural land

Cons



Limited parking



Complicated athletic logistics limit participation
Space is limited and remodeling is difficult
Lacks space for vocational programming
Limited storage space for all programs
Facilities are considered inferior to Centennial
Adaptation to technology may be difficult



Energy efficiency harder to achieve
Less capacity for on-site renewable energy



Remodeling may be costly

South Fringe

Quick Facts

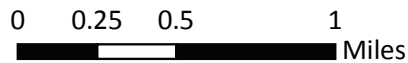
Site Size: 60 acres

Population within 1.5 miles

Total: 8,900 - 14,100

High school age: 200 - 290

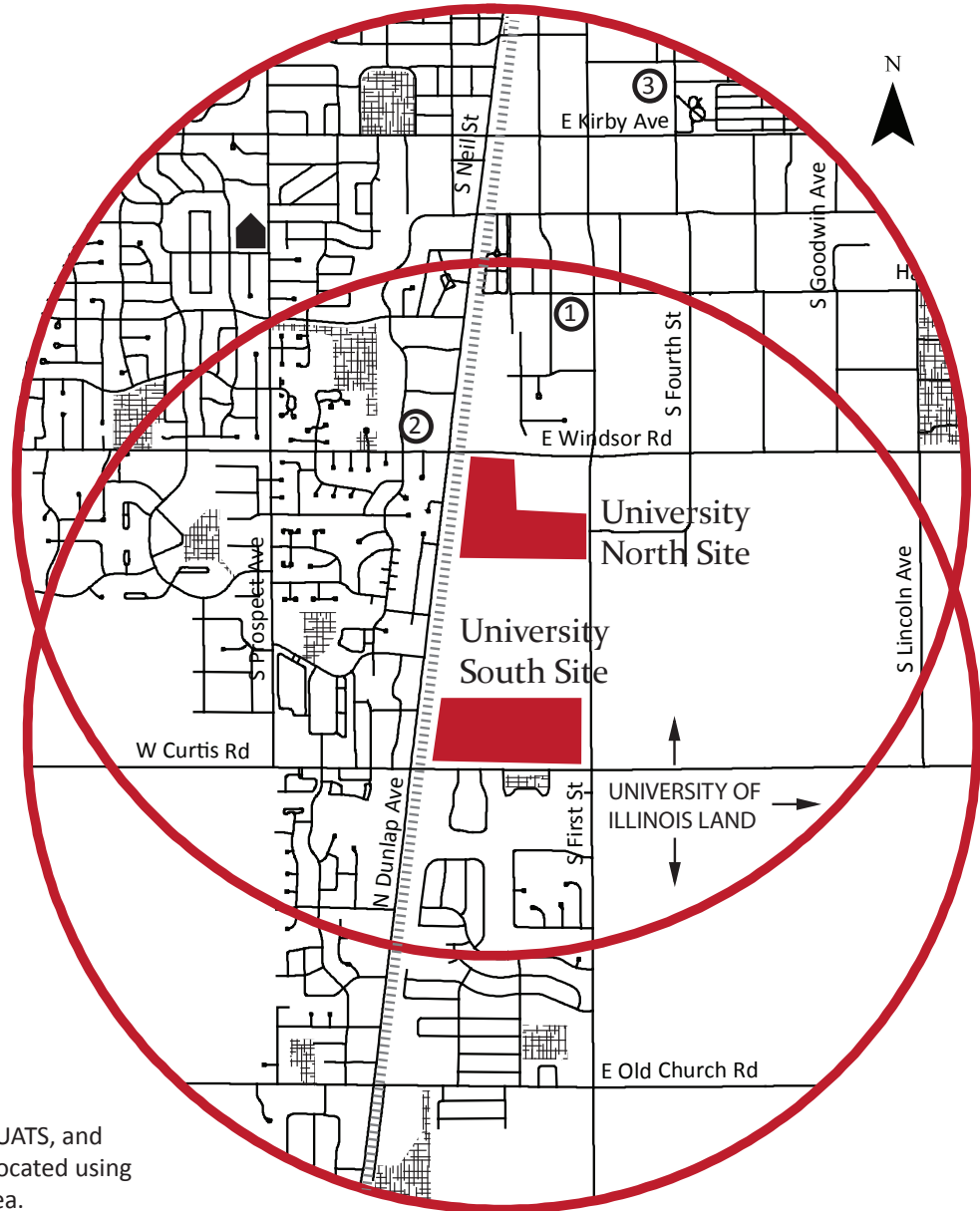
School cost estimate: \$83 million



- High School Sites
- Other Unit 4 schools
- Parks
- Roads
- Railroads
- Area within 1.5 miles

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① UI Research Park
- ② Fox Drive Office Park
- ③ University of Illinois



Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, June 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, and City of Champaign Planning Department. Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author's knowledge of the area.

Pros



Ample parking



Centralized sports facilities
Near developing areas
Increased access to University of Illinois resources
Large site is insurance for changes in the future



More potential for on-site renewable energy



Lower initial capital costs
Lower debt repayment (first 20 years)

Cons



On the edge of the community (unequal access)
Few people within walking or biking distance
High transportation costs
Student drivers in the University area



Far from many low income and minority families
Far from most densely populated areas of the district
University owns surrounding land (limits housing)
Poor access to community resources



High pollution from transportation
Larger landscaped area to maintain (more water use)
Uses good agricultural land
Some nearby industrial activities



Higher long term operational costs (25 years onward)

Solon Tract

Quick Facts

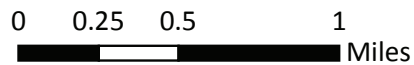
Site Size: 80 acres

Population within 1.5 miles

Total: 20,000

High school age: 830

School cost estimate: \$82 million

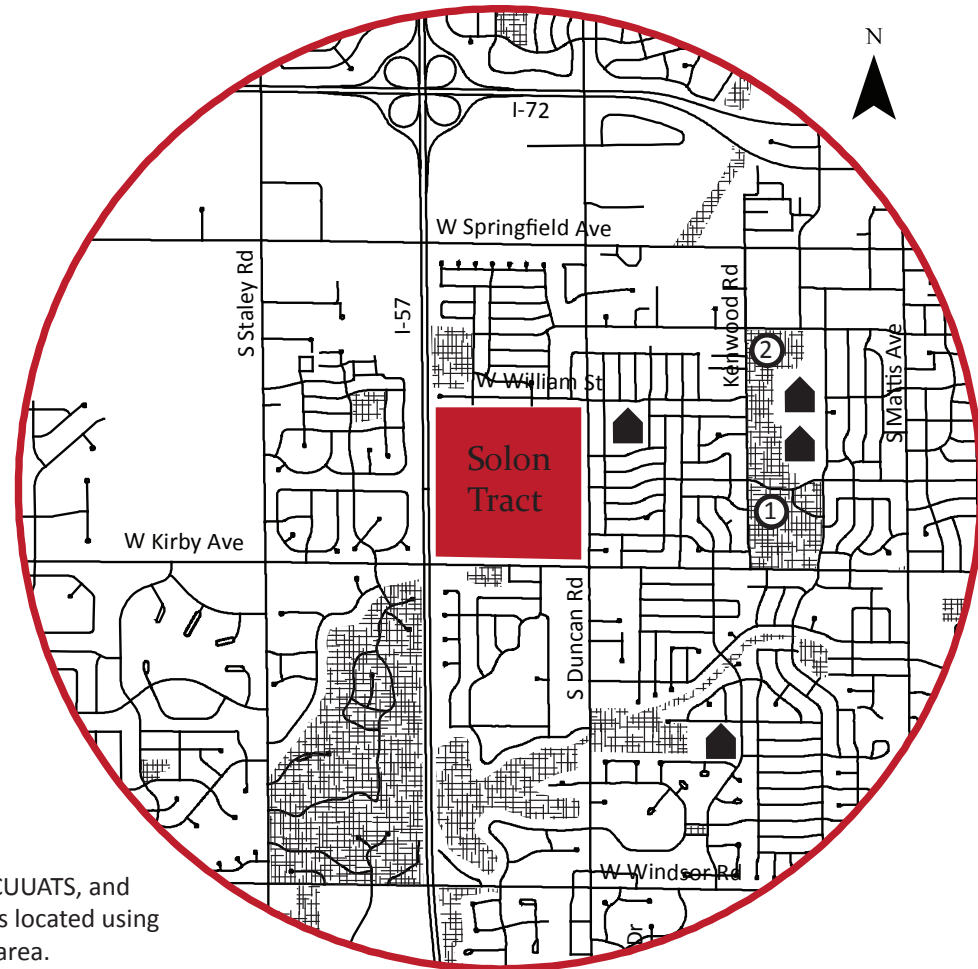


- High School Sites
- Other Unit 4 schools
- Parks
- Roads
- Railroads
- Area within 1.5 miles

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① Leonhard Rec Center, Sholem Pool
- ② Champaign Park District

Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, June 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, and City of Champaign Planning Department. Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author's knowledge of the area.



Pros



Near the middle of the community (moderate access)
Many people within walking or biking distance
Medium transportation costs
Ample parking



Centralized sports facilities
Could share some resources with Centennial
Moderate access to community resources
Somewhat near densely populated areas of District
Large site is insurance for changes in the future



Medium pollution from transportation
More potential for on-site renewable energy
Stream could be habitat and educational resource
Avoids use of good agricultural land
Limited exposure to industrial activity



Moderate initial capital costs
Moderate debt repayment (first 20 years)

Cons



Far from many low income and minority families
High school attendance areas might switch



Larger landscaped area to maintain (more water use)
Potential flooding around existing stream



Higher long term operational costs (25 years onward)

Country Fair

Quick Facts

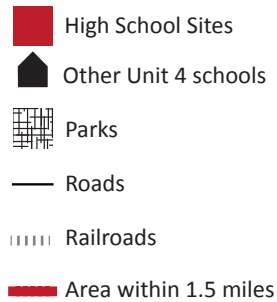
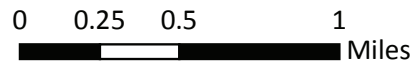
Site Size: 40 acres

Population within 1.5 miles

Total: 27,900

High school age: 1,080

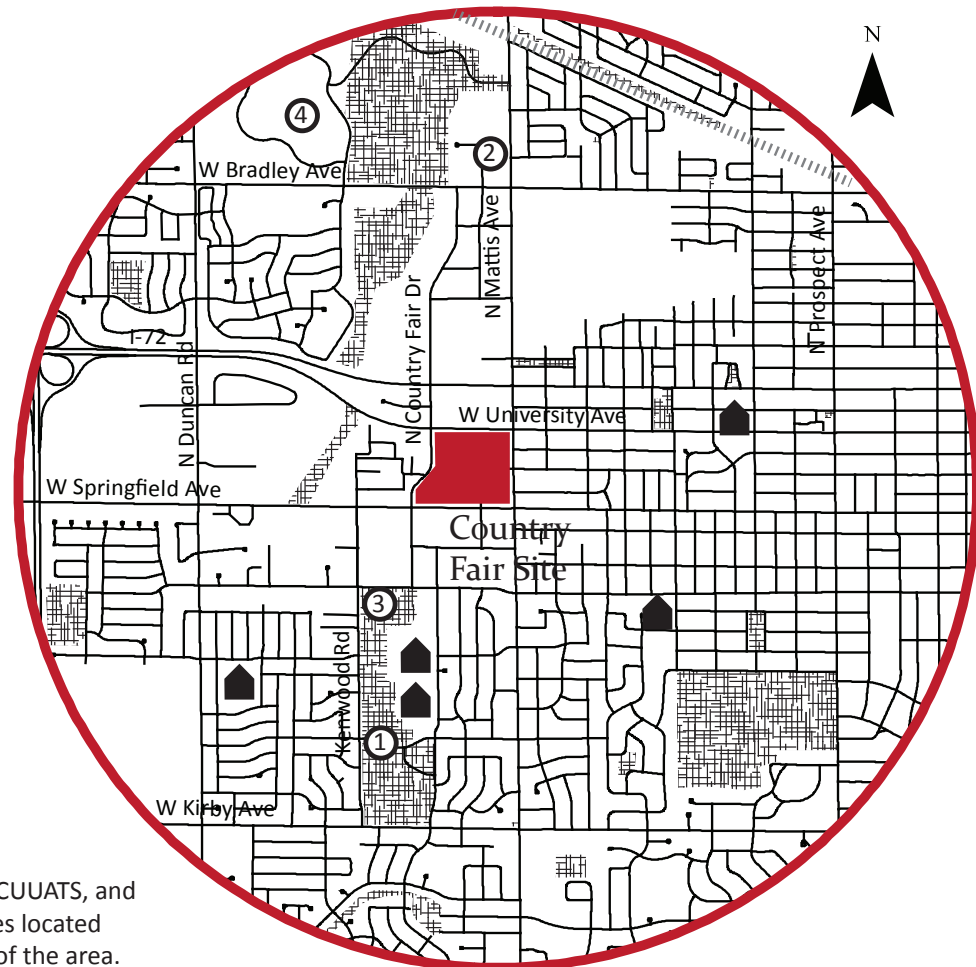
School cost estimate: \$90 million



Significant Cultural Sites

- ① Leonhard Rec Center, Sholem Pool
- ② IL Dept. of Human Services
- ③ Champaign Park District
- ④ Parkland College

Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, June 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, and City of Champaign Planning Department. Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author's knowledge of the area.



Pros



In the middle of the community (easy access)
Many people within walking or biking distance
Low transportation costs
Bus routes could potentially be consolidated



Could share some resources with Centennial
Near to many low income and minority families
Good access to community resources
Near densely populated areas of the District



Low pollution from transportation
Smaller landscaped area to maintain (less water use)
Avoids use of good agricultural land
Possibility to reuse buildings or pavement



Lower long term operational costs (25 years onward)

Cons



Parking may be somewhat limited



Displaces businesses and risks use of eminent domain



Less capacity for on-site renewable energy
Nearby industrial activities
Gas station and dry cleaner on site need clean-up



Higher initial capital costs
Higher debt repayment (first 20 years)

Northwest Fringe

Quick Facts

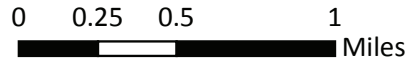
Site Size: 70 acres







Population within 1.5 miles

Total: 6,200

High school age: 210

School cost estimate: \$85 million

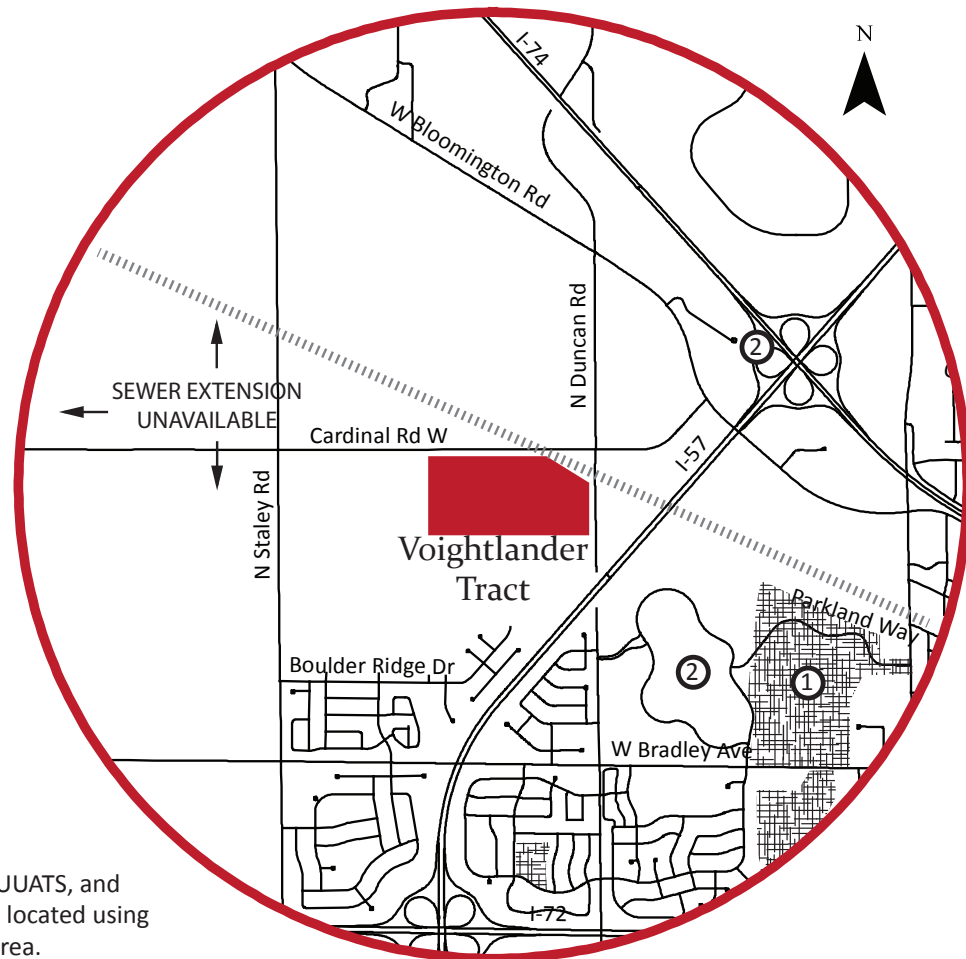


-  High School Sites
-  Other Unit 4 schools
-  Parks
-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Area within 1.5 miles

Significant Cultural Sites

- ① Dodds Park
- ② Parkland College

Map created by Holly Nelson, UIUC, June 2012. Data provided by CUUATS, and City of Champaign Planning Department. Data on nearby amenities located using Google Maps, Walkscore.com, and the author's knowledge of the area.



Pros



Ample parking



Centralized sports facilities
Near developing areas
Large site is insurance for changes in the future



More potential for on-site renewable energy



Moderate initial capital costs
Moderate debt repayment (first 20 years)

Cons



On the edge of the community (unequal access)
Few people within walking or biking distance
High transportation costs
Access is very limited due to interstates



High school attendance areas might switch
Far from most densely populated areas of the district
Far from many low income and minority families
Poor access to community resources
Future development near the site is limited



High pollution from transportation
Larger landscaped area to maintain (more water use)
Uses good agricultural land
Some nearby industrial activities



Higher long term operational costs (25 years onward)

North Fringe

Quick Facts

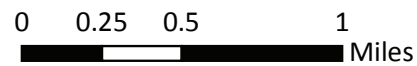
Site Size: 60 - 72 acres

Population within 1.5 miles

Total: 2,900 - 4,700

High school age: 60 - 110

School cost estimate: \$78 million



- High School Sites
- Other Unit 4 schools
- Parks
- Roads
- Railroads
- Area within 1.5 miles

Significant Cultural Sites

- Marketplace Mall

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Pros



Ample parking



Centralized sports facilities
Near developing areas
Somewhat near many businesses
Large site is insurance for changes in the future



Pond could be habitat and educational resource
More potential for on-site renewable energy



Low initial capital costs (about \$72 million)
Low debt repayment (first 20 years)

Cons



On the edge of the community (unequal access)
Few people within walking or biking distance
High transportation costs
Interstate 74 limits access routes



Far from most densely populated areas of the district
Poor access to community resources



High pollution from transportation
Larger landscaped area to maintain (more water use)
Uses good agricultural land
Some nearby industrial activities



Higher long term operational costs (25 years onward)

For more information, visit <http://centralrelocationstudy.wordpress.com/>

Acknowledgments

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