

Media Background Document
Urban Loop
City of Urbandale, Iowa

What is the Urban Loop?

It is an economic development area that encompasses approximately four square miles in the City of Urbandale.

The Urban Loop's common, defining element is the six miles of combined Interstates 35 and 80 between Merle Hay Road and Hickman Road in Urbandale. It's near the center of a fourteen-mile, mid-continent, border-to-border and coast-to-coast combined stretch of those interstates.

The Urban Loop is dominated by the ninety-degree turn in the freeway that is its most recognizable feature.

Why the name *Urban Loop*?

Community stakeholders engaged in a months-long process to define a name, logo and tagline for this economic development area dominated by I-35/80. The name hints at the former streetcar turnaround loop near 70th Street and Roseland Drive. This is the area from which Urbandale grew as a city.

The name reflects its location in Urbandale. It also makes reference to the fact that the ninety-degree turn in the freeway is a common element in many transportation "loops" through Urbandale and throughout the Metro area.



Why is Urbandale launching this brand now?

This event is the culmination of decades of work by the City and its partners. On all sides of the interstate corridor, the City has installed streets and utilities and developers and businesses have followed closely behind with investments of their own to continue growing Urbandale's economy.

The Urbandale community is at a very unique point in its history when new interchanges at 100th Street (opening 2018) and Meredith Drive (opening 2020) are added to existing interstate system access points. This interchange access complements hundreds of acres of development-ready land. We have an incredible opportunity to shape the future of our community and to reposition Urbandale in the marketplace.

What are the primary purposes of the interchanges?

The primary purpose is to improve safety and increase traffic capacity. The stated need for action cites: 1) back-ups during peak traffic hours; 2) the northbound exit loop ramp is over capacity; and 3) crashes are above the statewide average.

Another important project goal is to promote economic development.

What is unique about this area?

Urbandale has more interchange access points to I-35/80 than any other community in the Des Moines Metro:

1. Merle Hay Road
2. 86th Street
3. 100th Street (2018)
4. Iowa Highway 141
5. Meredith Drive (2020)
6. Douglas Avenue
7. Hickman Road

The Urban Loop has opportunities for new business park developments, infill development lots and existing buildings for tenants seeking space.

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How large is the area?

It is 6.4 miles on I-35/80 from Merle Hay Road to Hickman Road.

Urbandale is near the middle of the fourteen mile stretch of combined interstate between the northeast and southeast mixmasters.

The area encompasses approximately 4 square miles.

There are 2,500 total acres of developed and available parcels combined.

There are over 700 acres of available lots for development in the Urban Loop area.

There is over 800,000 square feet of space for lease in the Urban Loop area.

What is the cost of the interchanges?

The City of Urbandale estimates its cost for the 100th Street at approximately \$22 million.

The Iowa Department of Transportation's estimated cost for the Meredith Drive interchange and Iowa Highway 141 flyover ramp project is estimated at \$44.2 million.

What is the impact to taxpayers of an infrastructure project of this size?

This is a major project. However, Urbandale has carefully planned for this project to ensure that it fits within the amount that we have budgeted for capital improvements. There is no additional tax for Urbandale taxpayers associated with this project.

Access is something that Urbandale refers to often? What "access" does this mean?

Urbandale provides unparalleled access to:

- Hundreds of acres of development-ready land with dual interstate visibility/access
- A coast-to-coast and border-to-border transportation network via five I-35/80 interchanges
- A low city tax rate and highly-valued services
- Flexible tax rebates for development projects
- Engaged city officials committed to economic development
- A strong network of local businesses

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What is the purpose of the brand launch event?

Like other cities, we know image is everything when it comes to competing. The purpose of the September 26 event is to share in part how Urbandale plans to use its assets of location, infrastructure and accessibility to capture and communicate our competitive advantage.

Attendees will see the new name, logo and tagline for the area. In marketing terms – it's branding – and is what will be shared. But this is about more than externals; attendees will also learn about the vision Urbandale has for the development areas served by the interstate system.

We believe there are many great things to share about Urbandale, with our 'unique selling proposition' being our coast-to-coast and border-to-border transportation network provided by I-35/I-80. At the September 26th public event we will share how Urbandale will be packaging and promoting the competitive difference of our interstate loop system.

What happened to Rider Corner?

Rider Mine operated in the northwest part of Urbandale through the mid-twentieth century, then closed. The name became a reference point for the dominant feature of the Urban Loop area. However, it is a moniker that does not sufficiently describe the span of the development area served by Urbandale's access to I-35/80. Urban Loop is a reference both to the unique feature of the freeway *and* the development areas it serves.