

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: June 18, 2020

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Zoom

MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Dustin Allred, Jane Billman, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Lew Hopkins, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jonah Weisskopf

STAFF PRESENT: City of Urbana (Host); Kevin Garcia, Planner II; Lily Wilcock, Planner I

OTHERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Gabe Lewis

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Fitch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum. (Note: Commissioner Hopkins arrived at 7:05.)

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 9, 2020 regular Plan Commission meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Ms. Billman seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes			

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote as written.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2401-CP-20 – An application by the Zoning Administrator to adopt the 2020 Urbana Pedestrian Master Plan as an amendment to the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan (as amended).

Plan Case No. 2402-CP-20 – An application by the Zoning Administrator to adopt the 2020 Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan as an amendment to the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan (as amended).

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for these two cases together. Lily Wilcock, Planner I, gave a brief introduction to each case. She then turned the presentation over to Gabe Lewis, Transportation Planner with Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (RPC). Mr. Lewis gave a presentation on the following:

URBANA PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN – PLAN CASE NO. 2401-CP-20

Plan Contents – Seven Chapters

1. Introduction
 - A. Local Framework
 - 1) Walkability and Accessibility
 - 2) Urbana city Council and Mayor Goals
 - B. Study Area
2. Goals & Objectives
 - A. Accessibility and Connectivity
 - B. Equity
 - C. Safety
 - D. Vibrancy
3. Existing Conditions
 - A. Demand
 - B. Supply
4. Infrastructure Types
 1. Sidewalks & Curb Ramps
 2. Shared-Use Paths
 3. Crossings

5. Public Input
 - A. Public Input Round #1 (Outreach – Neighborhood Meetings & Farmer’s Market)
 - B. Public Input Round #2 (Presented recommendations from Round #1 and asked public to prioritize the recommendations)
6. Recommendations
 - A. Engineering
 - 1) All Recommendations
 - 2) Prioritization Criteria
 - 3) Priority Recommendations broken into 5 categories (highest, high, medium, low and lowest)
 - 4) Infrastructure Recommendations
 - 5) Brick Sidewalks
 - 6) Engineering Recommendations: 5 Development, 11 Maintenance and 4 Streetscape
 - 7) Programs Recommendations: 17 Education, 27 Encouragement, 6 Enforcement, 14 Evaluation and 2 Policy
7. Implementation
 - A. Cost Estimates
 - B. Funding Sources
 - C. Next Steps

Chair Fitch asked if any members of the Plan Commission had questions for City staff regarding the proposed Urbana Pedestrian Master Plan.

Mr. Fell wondered how they felt about the number of brick sidewalks and brick streets in the City of Urbana. He felt that they are a giant hindrance to some of the goals and objectives in the proposed plans. Mr. Lewis stated that while brick sidewalks and brick streets present accessibility issues and some people complain about this, there are some people who prefer them. He said RPC staff tried to address both audiences by keeping brick sidewalks where property owners want them and replacing brick sidewalks with concrete in all other areas.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the choice of which links of sidewalks are in which colors on the Brick Sidewalk Map came from the Urbana Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Mr. Lewis said yes, the color coding on the map are from the CIP. Mr. Hopkins noted that this is important to note, because if someone wanted to contest a color for a specific link, then they would need to contest the CIP. So, the question becomes, is the backing given for the proposed set of links articulated somewhere? Given the controversy about brick sidewalks in the City of Urbana, it might be appropriate to articulate it in the proposed plan since it is the City of Urbana’s Pedestrian Plan. Ms. Wilcock noted that City staff could provide more historical background in the future about how the color coding came about. The proposed Urbana Pedestrian Master Plan is a recommendation for staff to pursue a change just for the black-colored segments in the CIP map.

Chair Fitch commented that he would like to study the map because brick sidewalks are a big issue in his neighborhood. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the map is available in the 545 page document that was emailed to the Commission members before the packet was sent out.

Mr. Fell asked if each property owner would be notified prior to the sidewalk in front of his/her property being replaced so he/she could state their preference. Ms. Wilcock said yes, City staff would notify the property owners.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he could not find any indication of the gap or the priority for the fix of the East University Avenue/High Cross Road intersection, which the City tried to force a previous applicant to provide because it was high priority. If it is not in the proposed plan, then it seems odd. Ms. Wilcock stated that she would find out if it is part of the proposed plan or if it is part of the CIP. Mr. Hopkins stated that he would think of the proposed plan driving the CIP and not the other way around. If the City adopts the proposed plan, then it should at least be up-to-date.

With no further questions for City staff regarding the proposed Urbana Pedestrian Master Plan, Chair Fitch opened the case for public input. There was no input, so Chair Fitch closed the public hearing for the proposed Urbana Pedestrian Master Plan and opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Chair Fitch recalled that the original thought when the brick sidewalk plan was created many years ago was that the City would provide funding to maintain them. If properly maintained, then brick sidewalks are not a problem. The City did this for a few years and then stopped. The proposed plan would be a change from the original policy. He did not believe that his neighbors would like the proposed plan. The brick sidewalks in his neighborhood are not well maintained, and people in wheelchairs have to ride in the street. Now there are MTD buses going down the street because of the Washington and Vine Street detour, so sidewalk maintenance is an issue.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the key issue with the proposed plan is what it is saying about brick sidewalks. It should be stated in a way that says the City is not changing the original plan with the exception of this, and the implication will be that the City will go back to providing money to maintain the brick sidewalks. It is pretty clear that it has not happened and that it will not be able to happen moving forward. Either we don't worry about whether what is in the plan has to do with reality or we say it differently.

Mr. Allred questioned if the future Comprehensive Plan update would involve looking at the map from 2003. Would it be possible to update the map to current reality? Mr. Garcia replied that the map is definitely something City staff could look at. Most things in a Comprehensive Plan can be up for review when an update is being done. He pointed out that the brick sidewalk map was not dated from 2003, but that is when the brick sidewalk program was begun. Mr. Hopkins asked when was the data that is displayed in the map made. Mr. Garcia said that he does not know how the map was created or when the decisions were made because it is pulled from the CIP, which was formerly controlled by the City's Public Works Department. Since the City Administrator has become involved in updating the CIP, more staff from other departments are being asked to participate in its creation, so going forward City staff will be able to look at this map and come to more inclusive decisions about it. Mr. Lewis stated that the map comes from the 2019 CIP, but that RPC could update it with a new map from the 2020 CIP.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the categories of the links are not being revised in the CIP, which is a budgeting priority process. Whereas, the categorization of the links are based on the discussions with neighbors in previous planning exercises, which is where the categories came from. The

question of which ones the City might be planning to do within the next five years and where the City was going to get the funding is what he would expect to see in a CIP. He would not expect a decision that was made from the City interacting with the neighbors and property owners regarding sidewalk type to be modified or changed in a CIP. Mr. Allred asked if there is a way to add reference to the map in the CIP so that it refers to the most current version of the map. Mr. Hopkins replied that part of what this would require would be to clearly state where the map came from and when based on the input. Chair Fitch stated that he would agree to this. Mr. Lewis said that this is possible, and he would work with City staff on the wording.

Mr. Hopkins asked staff to be sure to check on the Aldi gap as well. Ms. Wilcock said that she would confer with Mr. Lewis and look into this and some other things too.

Mr. Hopkins commented about the process by saying that the Plan Commission is being asked to adopt the Pedestrian Master Plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. He preferred not to do this even though it is a long time practice. The reason we practice this is so that it has the small, but not zero, backing that a Comprehensive Plan under Illinois State law has for city decision making. It is the Comprehensive Plan by wording and statute that has that status. Unless we call this part of the Comprehensive Plan, it does not have that status. The problem with this is that if we do a new Comprehensive Plan, the City would have to adopt yet a new Comprehensive Plan as an amendment to the current Comprehensive Plan so that the new Comprehensive Plan included all of the many plans like the proposed amendment so they do not disappear. Part of this is legal statute, but part of it is also the City trying to keep track of what plans we think we are actually operating under. Knowing this, he is willing to forward this case with a few minor corrections. We have to be careful of where the City goes with the current procedures for the new Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Fitch stated the corrections included the following: 1) clarifying the language for the brick sidewalks and the inclusion of the map; and 2) clarification of the status of the proposed sidewalk near High Cross Road and University Avenue.

Mr. Garcia stated that City staff is not in a rush to get this adopted. So, the Plan Commission could continue Plan Case No. 2401-CP-20 to the next regular meeting to allow time for the members to review the proposed plan more and for City staff to look into the suggested corrections. Mr. Hopkins felt that the Plan Commission should continue the case. With there being no objections, Chair Fitch continued Plan Case No. 2401-CP-20 to the July 9, 2020 regular meeting of the Urbana Plan Commission.

URBANA BICYCLE WAYFINDING PLAN – PLAN CASE NO. 2402-CP-20

Mr. Lewis gave a presentation on the following:

Plan Contents – Six Chapters

1. Introduction
 - A. Plan Foundation
 - B. Plan Purpose
 - C. Policy Framework
 - D. Study Area
 - E. Steering Committee

- F. Wayfinding Benefits
- G. Bicycle Wayfinding Principles
- H. Urbana Green Loop
- 2. Peer Area Comparisons
 - A. Study Area
 - B. Primary Cities & Counties Reviewed
 - C. Secondary Cities Considered
- 3. Existing Signs & Destinations
 - A. Existing Signs
 - B. Bicycle Destinations
 - C. Destination Information
 - 1) Primary – Regional Level
 - 2) Secondary – Community Level
 - 3) Tertiary – Neighborhood Level
- 4. Public Input
 - A. Input Opportunities
 - B. Sign Design Votes
 - C. Corridor Naming
 - D. Corridor Prioritization
- 5. Sign Designs & Placement
 - A. Bikeway Designations
 - B. Bikeway Naming
 - C. Sign Design
 - 1) On-Street Bikeways
 - 2) Off-Street Trails
 - 3) Jurisdictions
 - 4) Urbana Green Loop
 - 5) Font
 - 6) Directional Arrows
 - D. Sign Placement
 - E. Sign Assembly
 - F. Prioritization Criteria
 - 1) Route Readiness
 - 2) Proximity to Destinations
 - 3) Bicycle Level of Stress (BLTS)
 - 4) Equity
 - 5) Public Input/Need
 - 6) Gap Closure
- 6. Implementation
 - A. Sign Quantity Estimates
 - B. Funding Sources

Chair Fitch asked if any members of the Plan Commission had questions for City staff regarding the proposed Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan.

Ms. Billman asked if there is a timeline for implementing the wayfinding signs. Mr. Lewis stated that this is something that the City could focus on implementing one corridor at a time, so it would be long term. Ms. Wilcock added that the only plan would be the Urbana Bicycle

Master Plan that would put a vague timeline on implementing. It was a matter of prioritization and connecting the network in a certain timeframe. These plans are where the City wants to prioritize funding when it becomes available.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the proposed amendment elaborates on something that was already in the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Lewis said that is correct. The Urbana Bicycle Master Plan has 13 areas for recommendations, and the proposed amendment supplements the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan by getting into more detail and addressing wayfinding signage.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the proposed amendment added any new routes. Mr. Lewis said no.

Mr. Hopkins suggested that the proposed Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan be an amendment to the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan rather than an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The reason for this is because it is only about and subservient to the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan. If they revise brick sidewalks and bikeways in the future Comprehensive Plan, then they will have a mess. The more plans they can keep track of, the better.

Chair Fitch asked if the Plan Commission could recommend the Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan as an amendment to the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan rather than to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Garcia replied that he liked the logic behind what Mr. Hopkins said because it is a supplement to the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan, which has already been adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. He is not sure of the mechanism of doing this, but he would look into it. City staff is not in a hurry to get the proposed plan adopted. Ms. Wilcock added that she too sees the proposed plan as part of the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan. The legal ad for the proposed case is to amend the Comprehensive Plan. Since the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan has been adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, City staff could keep the Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan under the umbrella of the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan. This way it still has the weight behind it, especially when going after funding and getting grants for implementing the plan. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that if they amend the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan to include the Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan, then they are by definition amending the Comprehensive Plan, which is what the legal ad says the City is proposing to do. Therefore, there is no need to re-notice the legal ad.

Chair Fitch moved that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2402-CP-20 to the City Council with a recommendation to adopt the Urbana Bicycle Wayfinding Plan as an amendment to the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes
Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Ms. Yu	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Garcia reported on the following:

- Kat Trotter, who was a part-time Associate Planner, has become a Planner I and is now full-time.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission