



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, FAICP, Director

DATE: April 22, 2010

SUBJECT: University Avenue Corridor Study, Plan Case 2124-PR-2010

Discussion

The draft University Avenue Corridor Study was presented to the Committee of the Whole for review and comment on April 12, 2010. The Committee of the Whole subsequently voted to forward the item to the April 26, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting for further consideration. This memorandum is being provided to address questions raised during the discussion on April 12, and to provide copies of public comments received concerning the study.

A 30-day public comment period was held for the draft study from March 19, 2010 through April 19, 2010. The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission received three comments concerning the draft study during this public comment period. The comments received are attached as Exhibit A.

The Urbana Plan Commission reviewed the University Avenue Corridor Study at their April 8, 2010 meeting. Following review and discussion, the Plan Commission voted unanimously to forward the University Avenue Corridor Study to the City Council with a recommendation **to accept** (but not adopt) the study, subject to the following revisions:

- 1) That the recommendations for rezoning of parcels in Urbana be deleted from page 62;
- 2) That specific wording concerning non-fiscal development incentives be deleted from page 82 including:
 - a. “Waivers of requirements to elements in the zoning ordinance and/or development regulations”
 - b. The bullet points labeled “Reduced Setback and Density Restrictions” and “Reduced Parking Standards”;
- 3) That the study explicitly include requirements for bicycle parking; and
- 4) That language is added to Chapter 5 (Framework for the Future) indicating that the design of the streetscape elements identified are examples but which should not be taken as specific design proposals.

Recommended Changes

One of these revisions was to delete the recommendation for rezoning of parcels in Urbana from page 62. At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on April 12, it was questioned whether the section could be reworded to address the issue identified, but still be in keeping with the Plan Commission's recommendations. Staff recommends removing the references to rezoning of specific parcels in Urbana on page 62 and replacing with new language as follows:

Text to Remove

"There are two sets of parcels in Urbana that may need to be examined for rezoning should a development proposal be brought to the City that fits within the vision of this plan. These two areas are described below:

1. At the southeast corner of University Avenue and Goodwin Avenue, a large surface parking lot exists which is owned by the University of Illinois. The long term plans for these parcels is for the construction of two university-owned buildings. The current zoning is mixed, with half in the B-3 district and half in the R-5 district. It is recommended that these parcels either all be placed in the B-3 or B-3U commercial district. Alternatively, these parcels could be rezoned to a new University District description, which is under consideration by the City of Urbana.
2. At the southeast corner of University Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, an assemblage of under-utilized parcels exists. The parcels fronting University Avenue are zoned B-3, but the parcels along the north side of Clark Street are zoned either B-2 or R-4. This intersection is the location of one of the four nodes along the corridor, and is recommended to develop as higher intensity mixed-use buildings. The B-2 and R-4 zoning districts do not allow commercial or office uses at the character and scale which matches the vision for the nodes. A more consistent zoning category for these parcels, such as B-3, would be appropriate should a development proposal be brought to the City which matches the vision for the node. Any rezoning of these parcels should be done consistent with the Urbana Comprehensive Plan which recommends a buffering of the single family uses to the south and east from any commercial development."

Text to Add

Upon review of the existing zoning of parcels within the study area that are within Urbana, it is evident that changes may need to be made to facilitate the redevelopment of the corridor to meet the vision and goals identified for the Corridor. Possible changes may include options such as: the addition of permitted residential uses to existing commercial zoning districts, creation of a new zoning district, creation of an overlay district specific to University Avenue, and rezoning of parcels in the Corridor. Any proposed change would need to be reviewed in the context of the University Avenue Corridor Study, for consistency with the Urbana Comprehensive Plan, and in conformance with all applicable state statutes.

In addition, the Plan Commission requested that the non-fiscal development incentives identified on page 82 be deleted. Staff recommends removing the references to non-fiscal development incentives on page 82 and replacing with new language as follows:

Text to Remove

“Non-Fiscal Development Incentives

Both Cities could also offer developers incentives that are not directly tied to public money. Waivers of requirements to elements in the zoning ordinance and/or development regulations or an expedited planning process could be implemented for redevelopment along the corridor. The following briefly describes some approaches that may be possible:

- Expedited Approval Process - The approval process for developments meeting certain criteria or having particular characteristics complementary to the goals of this study could be fast tracked for approval. A set of graduated criteria could be developed to determine movement of the project through the process.
- Reduced Setback and Density Restrictions - Setbacks and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) restrictions could be relaxed in certain zoning districts within the corridor to promote development characteristics consistent with the recommendations in the plan.
- Reduced Parking Standards - Parking standards could be reduced when a developer orients parking to the rear or side of a building, or initiates shared parking with adjacent parcels.”

Text to Add

Alternative Development Standards

Both cities could also offer development incentives not directly tied to public money. Development standards could be customized specifically for the University Avenue Corridor to facilitate redevelopment consistent with the goals and visions for the Corridor. Further assessment of possible customized development standards is needed by city staff. Any proposed customized development standard would be subject to review and approval by the applicable plan commissions and city councils.

Recommendation

City staff and Champaign County Regional Planning Commission staff will be available at the April 26, Committee of the Whole meeting to address any further discussion concerning the study. Staff requests that the Committee of the Whole forward the University Avenue Corridor Study to the City Council for acceptance on May 3, 2010 with the above noted Plan Commission recommendations and the two wording changes.

Prepared by:

Lisa Karcher, AICP, Planner II

Attachments: Resolution to Accept the University Avenue Corridor Study
Exhibit A: Comments received during the 30-day Public Comment Period
Exhibit B: Draft Plan Commission Minutes from April 8, 2010

cc: Eric Halvorsen, CCRPC

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-04-009R

A Resolution to Accept the University Avenue Corridor Plan
(Plan Case 2124-PR-2010)

WHEREAS, in 2008 the State of Illinois awarded an Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning Grant to prepare a study of the University Avenue corridor between Maple Street in Urbana and State Street in Champaign; and

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana, the designated lead agency, engaged the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission to prepare a study of the University Avenue corridor in concert with the City of Champaign, University of Illinois, Illinois Department of Transportation, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, Urbana Park District, Carle Hospital, and Provena Medical Covenant Center; and

WHEREAS, these collective efforts resulted in the creation of a document entitled "University Avenue Corridor Plan" which promotes mobility, accessibility, safety, and economic revitalization through responsible development within the corridor; and

WHEREAS, at their April 8, 2010 meeting the Urbana Plan Commission voted 7-ayes and 0-nays to recommend that the City Council accept the draft plan with certain changes which have been recognized in the final plan; and

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois requests that grant recipients formally recognize the plan; and

WHEREAS, the City has determined it in the best interest of its citizens to accept the plan.

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

Section 1. The City of Urbana hereby accepts the University Avenue Corridor Plan.

Section 2. By such acceptance, it is the intention of the City Council that in future decision making the City will take the plan's recommendations into consideration.

Section 4. This Resolution is hereby passed by the affirmative vote of the members of the corporate authorities

then holding office, the "ayes" and "nays" being called at a regular meeting of said Council.

PASSED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2010.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAINED:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of _____, 2010.

Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

From: [Alber, Ryan C.](#)
To: [Eric Halvorsen](#)
Subject: Urbana University Corridor Study
Date: Thursday, April 15, 2010 2:53:10 AM

To Whom it May Concern,

I am absolutely in favor of a major reconstruction and reimagining of the University corridor in Urbana. The street was/is in horrible condition for such a major artery; now that Champaign has spruced up its side, the decay on the Urbana side stands out even more obviously than before. I agree that there is great potential in the area for future development and a reshaping of what currently exists. I believe that in order to attract new and more vibrant businesses, the area has to be more pedestrian and car friendly than it is now. I also think that a major factor is the aesthetic appeal of the corridor; if the street, curbs, lights, and sidewalks look like they belong in an abandoned ghetto, then I think it is very unlikely that new businesses are going to invest in the area. Plus, driving down the street right now is like an "avoid the pothole" game, which discourages people from using it as much as they could, thereby drawing business away from the area. I am absolutely all for the redevelopment of the Urbana side; as good a job as Champaign did with their side, I believe that if Urbana does it properly, that side could be even more attractive and efficient than Champaign's.

Thanks very much,

Ryan Alber

From: [Russ Stewart](#)
To: [Eric Halvorsen](#)
Subject: Univ. Ave. Corridor Study
Date: Friday, April 16, 2010 9:01:32 AM

Ref. Mobil-Super Pantry, 507 W. University Ave., Urbana, IL 61801

I am not in agreement with your plans as it relates to the above mentioned location. Basically, you are taking away all of our University Ave. entrances and leaving the single entrance on the side street. This will not be good for our business and I am not in favor of it. Russ

Russ Stewart
Tri Star Marketing, Inc.
2211 W. Bradley Ave.
Champaign, IL 61821-1802
Ph. 217-367-8386, Ext. 127
Fax 217-367-3920
rstewart@trism.net
www.superpantry.com

From: [Gary Cziko](#)
To: [Eric Halvorsen](#)
Cc: [Charlie Smyth](#)
Subject: University Avenue Corridor Study: Public Comments
Date: Monday, April 19, 2010 10:10:18 AM

Mr. Eric E. Halvorsen
Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
1776 E. Washington St.
Urbana, IL 61802

Dear Mr. Halvorsen:

We wish to offer our comments on the University Avenue Corridor Study as part of the public comment process.

We appreciate the work of CCRPC staff in preparing this study and providing well considered recommendations for improving the look, function and vitality of the University Avenue Corridor. We appreciate the visions and are in favor of the recommendations made in the study, except for two aspects of the roadway design for University Avenue: major intersections and the accessibility, comfort and safety of bicycling along University Avenue.

Concerning interchanges, research has shown that roundabouts can reduce serious and fatal crashes by 80 to 90% compared to signalized intersections. Roundabouts can also provide convenience and safety advantages to pedestrians. And yet no mention of roundabouts is made at all in the study, despite the fact that roundabouts are being increasingly used in North America. While space considerations may preclude roundabouts at many or even all of the major intersections along University Avenue, we feel that they should at least be considered as possibilities to explore instead of being ignored completely. If roundabouts were considered as part of the study and decisions were made to not include them, this should be explained in the study.

Concerning bicycle access and safety, Illinois now has a complete street requirement for streets that fall under IDOT jurisdiction. In addition, recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray La Hood indicate a shift in federal policy to promote all modes of transportation, including bicycles, in all federally funded surface transportation planning. At the local level, the City of Champaign has a complete streets policy and Urbana will likely have a similar policy soon, too. A conceptualization of University Avenue as a complete street would include making travel by bicycle along University Avenue (and not just to the corridor or across it) more inviting, comfortable and safer, an important move toward sustainability by encouraging non-motorized and public means of transportation.

As the "villages" of University Avenue develop with more locations for residents to live, work, shop and find services and entertainment, bicyclists and pedestrians will increasingly be travelling from one location on University Avenue to another location in the same or to a different "village." Bicyclists will certainly remain on University Avenue for such trips along University Avenue, as will pedestrians. If the roadway is perceived as a dangerous and hostile place for bicyclists, they will be riding on the sidewalk, reducing both their own safety and that of pedestrians.

One possible way of making University Avenue a complete street would be to apply a road diet that would make space available for bike lanes and possibly wider sidewalks as well, a design that has been successfully implemented in Urbana on Philo Road and Goodwin Avenue. While the study mentions that road diets are not appropriate for streets with over 30,000 ADT, the single reference cited provides no empirical basis for this limit. Indeed, there have been road diet conversions on roadways with ADT in excess of 30,000 ADT, such as Tacoma Avenue in Portland. More research needs to be done on the successful use of road diets on other arterials throughout the North America that have traffic volumes comparable to that of University Avenue.

Another possibility is the use of what are called "bicycle priority lanes" which are shared bike/car lanes with a clearly marked zone for bicycles. These are being used now in Long Beach, CA, Salt Lake City, UT, and Cambridge, MA (see <http://la.streetsblog.org/2009/06/29/cyclists-pumped-about-long-beachs-green-sharrows/> for a video of the facility in Long Beach).

In a meeting one of us (Gary) had with you and Rita Black on July 27, 2009 about these concerns, assurance was given that the plan would be reviewed before actually being implemented. An alternate configuration for University Avenue was offered that involved a road diet providing bike lanes in each direction, bus pullouts, and an extra five feet of sidewalk on each side of the street, all of which would increase safety, comfort and accessibility for bicyclists, pedestrians and mass transit users.

We hope that at the next opportunity to review and revise the plan the same level of creativity and progressive vision that has been used for the "village" concept and streetscape design will be applied to the design of the roadway itself and intersections. More alternatives need to be considered concerning the treatment of intersections and for making University Avenue a complete street that accommodates bicyclists. Indeed, such a change may be necessary in the future to satisfy conditions for federal and state funding and to be consistent with the transportation policies of the Champaign and Urbana.

Sincerely,

Gary Cziko & Charlie Smyth

Gary Cziko
Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Vice-Chair, ChampaignCountyBikes.org
Member, Sustainability Advisory Commission, Urbana, IL
Member, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission, Urbana, IL
Founder, TransitionChampaignCounty.org

Charlie Smyth
Urbana City Council Member, Ward 1

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: April 8, 2010

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: Urbana City Building – City Council Chambers
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Burris, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Ben Grosser, Lew Hopkins, Dannie Otto, Bernadine Stake

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Michael Pollock, Marilyn Upah-Bant

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Lisa Karcher, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Selwyn Andrews, Kyra Bando, Rita Black, Louisa Boron, Richard Chung, Matt Cleeton, Jacob Cullinan, Chris Fahey, Brad Fine, Irwing Gama, Eric Halvorsen, Doug Johnson, Katie Keller, Nakhyun Kim, Yongjin Kim, Kevin McGuinness, Sergio Mendoza, Elizabeth Opholt, Mike Reu, Andrew Rohan, Marcela Said, Joseph Salas, Susan Taylor, Bradley Thomas, Patrick Tobin

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

Chair Pollock called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m., the roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

Mr. Fitch moved that Mr. Grosser serve as Acting Chairperson in the absence of Michael Pollock. Ms. Stake seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Otto moved to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2010 regular meeting as presented. Ms. Stake seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Plan Case No. 2124-PR-10: Review and Formal Acceptance of the University Avenue Corridor Study

Lisa Karcher, Planner II, presented this case to the Plan Commission. She began with a brief description of the University Avenue corridor. She explained the impetus for the University Avenue Corridor Study. She asked that the Plan Commission review the document, offer any comments on the study and forward a recommendation to the Urbana City Council for approval or adoption of the study. She introduced Eric Halvorsen from the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission.

With no questions from the Plan Commission for City staff at this time, Acting Chair Grosser opened the public input portion of the hearing.

Mr. Halvorsen approached the Plan Commission and gave a presentation on the following:

- Study Purpose and Steering Committee Members
 - Study Purpose
 - Study Steering Committee
- Study Area
- Existing Conditions Analysis
 - Major Findings From Existing Condition Report
- Vision and Study Goals
- Connected Nodes and Villages
 - Node Locations
 - Village Locations
- Recommendations
 - Future Land Use
 - Zoning Changes
 - Existing Density

- Envisioned Density
- Urban Form Characteristics
- Building Orientation
- Parking Orientation
- Signage
- Low Impact Design
- Streetscape Concepts – Wright Street to Maple Street
- Recommendations for Nodes and Transit Stops
- Transportation Improvements – Roadways and Intersections
 - Focus on Operational Improvements, not Capacity
 - Access Management
 - Landscape Medians
 - Intersection Improvements
- Bicycle Improvements
- Pedestrian Improvements
- Transit Improvements
- Development Incentives
 - Fiscal Incentives
 - Regulatory Incentives
- Urban Design Plan
- Implementation Plan
- Where are We Now?
- Questions

Ms. Stake wondered why members of the community who live in the corridor were not part of the stakeholders involved in the planning process. Mr. Halvorsen replied that although they did not include business or property owners on the steering committee itself, the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) did hold two public outreach meetings. One was a public workshop to introduce the study and to ask the public to provide initial input. Once CCRPC staff formulated the recommendations that are being presented, they held a second informational meeting for additional public input. Formal mailings for all of the public outreach efforts were made to all property and business owners in the entire corridor. CCRPC staff also placed ads in the local newspapers, on the County's website, and on TV as well. They tried hard to get the word out.

Ms. Stake understands that there are some people who are very afraid of what is going to happen to where they are living. Does the study plan for any residential to be changed? Mr. Halvorsen said no. Most of the residential is to the south and to the north. To the south, it is mostly multiple-family residential, and to the north, it is mostly single-family homes. CCRPC is not recommending any major changes to the residential properties.

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, referred to Page 61 of the study (Exhibit C in the written staff report). He said that the circles represent the parcels where the Study recommends changes in future land use designations. There is very little in either Urbana or Champaign that would change in terms of future land use designations. There is one parcel in Urbana that they are proposing to change the land use. This parcel is located on the Carle Hospital campus and has already been developed. What she is hearing is either unfounded or misinformation.

Mr. Halvorsen pointed out that there is one parcel along the west side of Wright Street (in Champaign) that is currently a parking lot being used by Provena. It is currently shown as single-family residential on the Land Use Map. Since it is owned by Provena and being used by Provena, it makes sense to change the zoning to be more consistent with its current use of a parking lot for an institution.

Ms. Stake asked for a description of a “village.” Mr. Halvorsen answered that it is not a “village” in the traditional sense, such as with the Village of Savoy. CCRPC staff uses the term “village” as a creative way to divide the corridor into smaller segments. The corridor is about two-and-a-half miles, and there are many jurisdictions responsible in those two-and-a-half miles. By breaking the corridor down into “villages”, it is a way for them to key in on some of the main concepts that they want to enhance.

Mr. Fell wondered if CCRPC staff had conversed with officials that are charged with implementing the University Streetscape District about how successful they think it has been. He believes that the owners of the lots where the University Streetscape system is enforced did not have to pay for the improvements. However, property owners on the periphery and the building owners themselves are charged with making those improvements. So he is interested in CCRPC’s recommendation for how the proposed improvements get paid for. Are owners of the land going to be charged with replacing sidewalks, benches, etc.?

Mr. Halvorsen replied that he did not know where the University Streetscape system extends to in terms of the University Avenue Corridor. Mr. Fell stated that it is a similar concept. Mr. Halvorsen explained that when speaking with City of Urbana staff, they envisioned more of a public/private partnership between developers or property owners and the City where the City of Urbana is willing to go in and make some of the improvements if the property owner is willing to contribute to part of the streetscape improvements. Ms. Karcher added that the proposed University Avenue Corridor Study would be used similar to the Philo Road Action Plan in that it would be a guiding document as developments would come in along University Avenue to show the developers what the City is looking for in terms of streetscape.

Mr. Fell stated that one flaw in the University Streetscape system is that in the periphery of the district they put the burden on the property owner to make the improvements that the University dictates. For example, part of the streetscape requirement is that there must be a colored sidewalk. So there may be a block where every other person has made an improvement and the sidewalk looks terrible. The new sidewalks look great and the old sidewalks look terrible. This is a very haphazard sort of arrangement.

Ms. Karcher commented that this is something we face in having to put these plans in place when the City does not have the funding to do so. Because of the nature and size of the University Avenue Corridor and the funding it would take to complete the recommended improvements, improvements will probably happen in segments. The City can pursue grants and provide some funds in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), but still the improvements will have to occur in segments.

Mr. Otto appreciates the efforts the City staff is making in the study to provide for bike access. He recalled that in his presentation Mr. Halvorsen talked about altering the car parking

requirements as an inducement to get people to move parking off the front to the sideways. So there are ways of requiring property owners to provide car parking, but no one even in new buildings is providing bike parking. Is there any consideration in the study to provide for bike parking that is visible and accessible to the entrance of the business so people do not use parking meters and trees to tie their bikes up to? For instance when he goes to Carle Hospital he can't find places to chain his bicycle and sees other bikes chained to light poles there. And this is a new building. And he does not see bicycle parking at the new building on the southwest corner of Lincoln and University Avenues.

Ms. Karcher said that the Urbana Zoning Ordinance now has regulations that require new developments to provide bike parking. However, for existing buildings, the City needs to find ways to encourage retrofitting with bike parking.

Mr. Otto stated that he would like to see bike parking addressed in the proposed study so that people know it is a priority.

Mr. Myers noted that the City does not issue a final Certificate of Occupancy until required bike parking has been installed. There have been times when the City has issued a temporary Certificate of Occupancy so the business can open their doors, but then the business must still install bike parking in order to come into compliance. If anyone such as Mr. Otto finds a new development that does not have bike parking available, they are welcome to report this to City staff for follow up. Mr. Otto said he was pleased to hear this.

Mr. Otto talked about coordinating lights to improve traffic flow and reducing access points. What do the small shop owners and businesses think about the improved traffic flow? These improvements make it so drivers can breeze right through without having to stop and notice their business. There are conflicting interests in that they want to create villages, which means stop and spend a dollar and at the same time make improvements to improve traffic flow. How does CCRPC staff calculate this? Mr. Halvorsen stated that they typically look at vehicular traffic along a roadway, and the worst condition is the peak hour. The recommendations for signal coordination and retiming are actually targeted toward easing congestion during the peak hours when people are the most frustrated going to and from work. He agrees that small shop owners probably do want the traffic to slow down and stop.

One of the biggest concepts with the "node" would be that there would be an area with somewhat higher intensity development, possibly with uses like an anchor or local restaurant or a specialty boutique. Although there are competing interests he believes the attractiveness of the nodes and future developments along the corridor would help all the businesses (existing and new).

Mr. Karcher mentioned that the plan recognizes that connecting parking lots is part of access management. Even though they are providing for the traffic to flow along University Avenue, they are also providing ways to get in and making it inviting. An information kiosk and way finding signs would be put in to help direct people within the district.

Mr. Otto inquired about the intersection at Broadway and University Avenues as to making plans to encourage pedestrian traffic between Downtown Urbana and Crystal Lake Park. Ms. Karcher

stated that this was addressed in the proposed study. On Page 74, there is an illustration to show recommended improvements to this specific intersection to increase pedestrian access. This intersection is currently difficult to cross so CCRPC and City staff feels that installing a kiosk and wayfinding signs would improve one of the important connections to the City's downtown area. She mentioned that City staff has just begun working on a new downtown plan. They may very well be looking at how this connection brings people into the downtown area.

Mr. Myers added that Broadway Avenue streetscape improvements are already scheduled for construction through the CIP which would be funded through the tax increment finance (TIF) funds. The recommended improvements shown in the University Avenue Corridor Study will help pedestrians such as the islands at Broadway and University. Mr. Halvorsen pointed out that there are currently channelized islands for pedestrians at Broadway and University, but they are all concrete. The plan is recommending to enhance them for pedestrians and also so that drivers are aware of pedestrian zones.

Mr. Otto commented that there are a lot to like about the plan. One of the real strengths for him is to try and break up some of the parking lots that form a broad face there. If they can get the buildings closer to the street and the parking lots to the side and behind the buildings then it would be a huge improvement visually.

Mr. Fitch noticed that there are two recommendations in the proposed study to rezoning two lots from residential to business use. The Implementation Plan shows that both rezoning recommendations fall in the 5 to 15 year timeframe. Would City staff be considering coming back to the Plan Commission and to the Urbana City Council to make these requests?

Ms. Karcher explained that these are essentially just recommendations. It is not the City's intention to go in and rezone the properties until there is a development request. One of the residential rezoning that is recommended is owned by the University of Illinois and is used as a parking lot so it is not appropriately zoned as R-5, Medium-High Density Multiple-Family Residential. So for the vision of the study it would make sense to rezone this property to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Fitch expressed concern about the plan stating that the City should grant regulatory easements or variances. He asked if the study was telling people that if they propose new business development along University Avenue, then the City would give them a variance. Ms. Karcher suggested not using the word "variance." It is not the City's intention to encourage people to apply for variances. We could create overlay districts, where the City could recognize that there are certain conditions and create regulations for how the City wants the area to develop. Mr. Fitch felt this could be helpful.

Ms. Karcher stated that the proposed study is simply a framework with suggestions and recommendations. Once this study is adopted, if City staff decides to change development regulations then any changes would come back to the Plan Commission as a text amendment or some type of plan case.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out a discrepancy in that on the agenda, the action is to accept the proposed study and in the written staff report, the action is to approve the study. And Ms. Karcher just

referred to the action as adopting the study. Accepting, approving and adopting are not the same thing.

Ms. Karcher responded that City staff is requesting that the Plan Commission treat it as a policy review. The intention is to have the Urbana City Council adopt the proposed study as a guide for future development. It will not actually be an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan but will be a planning document. City staff recommends that the Plan Commission make a recommendation to the Urbana City Council for adoption.

Ms. Stake wondered if CCRPC staff sent notices to tenants living in rental units. Mr. Halvorsen clarified that they compiled a list of all addresses in the corridor. They then sent notices to all property and business owners. If there is a residential address, whether it was an apartment or a single-family home or other, the tenant would have received a notice as part of the mailing. They sent the mailings out about two weeks prior to the public meeting. In addition, he noted that the City staff also sent out flyers prior to the 30-day comment period notifying every residence, business owner, and property owner in the corridor about the 30-day comment period.

Ms. Stake expressed her concern about there not being a person who lives in the area serving on the steering committee. People who worked on the project were paid to work on it. Ms. Karcher replied that there were 28 participants who attended the November, 2008 workshop and 55 participants who attended the June, 2009 meeting. There were notices on Urbana Public Television and in the local newspaper, notices for the 30-day comment period were sent out to all the addresses in the area outlining what was happening, and the information has always been on the Champaign County website throughout the entire process.

With no further comments or questions from the audience, Acting Chairperson Grosser closed the public hearing. He then opened the meeting to Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Ms. Burris asked City staff to respond to Mr. Hopkins' comment about accepting, approving or adopting the proposed study and how each would impact the City. Ms. Karcher stated that City staff considers this a plan, so it was City staff's goal to have the Plan Commission review it, offer comments and offer a recommendation for adoption to the City Council. CCRPC staff will be presenting the plan to the Urbana Committee of the Whole on Monday, April 12 and City staff will ask the City Council to take action on Monday, April 19 by adopting the plan.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he would be reluctant to recommend adoption to the City Council. "Approval" could be interpreted as adoption so he is reluctant to this as well. The reason is that the proposed study specifically recommends rezoning the southeast corner of University and Lincoln Avenues. This specifically recommends that the City act to rezone in response to a proposal. He is not willing to have this in an adopted plan for two reasons: first, it is not what a rezoning is; and second, there was a specific case before the Plan Commission a few years ago, and the Plan Commission rejected it in part because a rezoning cannot be a rezoning contingent upon a particular proposal. So having this specific recommendation in the study is unacceptable to him as part of a formal plan.

On the other hand if the Plan Commission is being asked to “accept” a study then he would be in favor of it. By accepting a study that is completed by a consultant such as CCRPC the City is saying that the consultants have completed their assigned task and should get paid. The City can then take the study and use what they deem appropriate. However, acceptance would not give it the legal status or the implied backing that an adopted plan would have.

If City staff wants to use the proposed study as a plan, then there is significant work to be done on the document. Some examples of other work that needs to be done include more visual examples like bike parking. There is already a Broadway Avenue Corridor concept in the existing Downtown Plan. The existing concept should be explicitly acknowledged in the proposed plan and either say that the concepts discussed and visually shown in the proposed plan links to those in the existing Downtown Plan or that the proposed plan revises the concepts and plans in the existing Downtown Plan.

This is why it matters to him what the Plan Commission is suppose to be doing. Are they accepting a consultant’s study report? Or are they adopting a policy for the City? To be honest, he has not read the whole document all the way through word-for-word and would like an opportunity to do so before making any changes in order to be able to adopt it.

Mr. Myers clarified that the adopted Comprehensive Plan does designate the future land use at southeast corner of Lincoln and University Avenues as “Community Business.” The parcels in the proposed study that are being recommended for rezoning would be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hopkins agreed, but that is not the issue. The statement in the proposed document about what should be done claims to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan but instead is consistent with a specific development proposal. The City should not make a rezoning decision contingent upon a proposal, and we shouldn’t be making a recommendation about a rezoning claimed to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan that we have actually already rejected.

Mr. Myers said that the proposed study is not suggesting that this particular area be rezoned contingent upon a particular proposal. Mr. Hopkins disagreed. This is exactly what the proposed study says.

Ms. Stake believes that the proposed plan allows too much. They have not studied it enough to know if the City really wants to do all the things that are being recommended. If they go ahead and adopt the proposed plan then those things would be allowed to be done.

Mr. Myers pointed out that with regards to bike parking, there are illustrations in the Zoning Ordinance showing proper types of bike parking. Mr. Hopkins stated that to him the proposed document is a study. If City staff is comfortable with calling it a study, then he is comfortable “accepting” it as a study. However, in the form of a study, it is trying to communicate to people how the City imagines doing things in this corridor, and it does not talk about bike parking.

Ms. Stake commented that the maps are difficult to read as they are too small.

Mr. Grosser asked that if the Plan Commission decides to “accept” the proposed study rather than “adopt” it as a plan will this create problems? Rita Black, CCRPC, answered that there is

no requirement in the grant that the City has to “adopt” it. The only requirement from the grant is that they need to return a final document to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) before July 1 that has been approved by the City. Mr. Grosser questioned whether a formal acceptance would suffice. Ms. Black said yes.

Ms. Burris pointed out that CCRPC was contracted to do a study and the City has turned the study into a plan. She suggested that the Plan Commission goes back to what CCRPC was contracted to do and just look at it as a study. A plan can be created out of the study at a later time.

Mr. Grosser agrees with Mr. Hopkins and Ms. Burris. He believes that “acceptance” makes more sense. It is great to serve as a guide for what the City will do next. If the proposed document was to be “adopted” as policy, then he would want to read it more thoroughly and discuss all the points. He feels that the particular designs in the study are maybe too much the same. He would want to see it go to the Urbana Public Arts Commission for review and to create a Request for Proposal (RFP) for artists to look at designing something that would fit along the corridor.

Mr. Fitch felt that it needed some changes even if they only accept it. He is not comfortable with announcing that the City is going to ease the regulatory.

Mr. Otto wondered if it would pose a problem to table this until the next meeting to allow the Plan Commission more time to read and come up with changes. Ms. Black said that would be fine with CCRPC. Ms. Karcher explained the new timeline should this agenda item be tabled until the April 22 meeting. Mr. Otto then realized that the next meeting falls during Ebert Fest and wondered if this might cause a problem for reaching a quorum.

Ms. Stake commented that “accepting” the proposed document as a study would be much easier than “adopting” it. She wanted to discuss the document page-by-page.

Ms. Karcher asked for clarification about continuing the meeting. If the Plan Commission is looking at accepting the proposed document as a study, would they still want more time to be able to make comments? Or are there specific comments that they can make now and still accept it during this meeting?

Ms. Burris commented that she would feel comfortable accepting it as a study during this meeting. Mr. Otto asked if the Plan Commission made a recommendation to City Council to accept the proposed document, then would they get another chance to do more work on the study and then adopt it at a later time? Or if they accept it would they simply be finished? Ms. Karcher responded that if they accept it as a study, then it would be considered as a study and any recommendations that come out of it would be specific plan cases and would be brought before the Plan Commission and City Council for approval. It wouldn't be that they would revisit this specific document and adopt it.

Mr. Myers added that the contract with CCRPC is only through a certain period of time so after July 1 any work by CCRPC would be outside the scope of this particular grant.

Mr. Grosser stated that he is happy to accept it at this meeting. A motion to accept could include specific comments that the Plan Commission members want to make.

Mr. Otto said he was still learning the vocabulary and terminology. He appreciated Ms. Karcher's explanation and feels more comfortable knowing that any rezoning of property would be assigned a plan case and presented to the Plan Commission and City Council. Therefore, he would be willing to accept the study during this meeting.

Mr. Fitch moved that the Plan Commission accept Plan Case No. 2124-PR-10 with removal of specific references to rezoning of properties and removal of specific non-fiscal development incentives noted on page 82.

Mr. Hopkins recommended that they clean up the motion. The motion needs to be that the Plan Commission recommends to the City Council to accept the proposed study subject to the following revisions: 1) remove the recommendation to rezone the southeast intersection of University and Lincoln Avenues and 2) that proposals for bicycle parking be explicitly included.

Mr. Fitch stated that the things he would make reference to are as such: 1) all specific rezoning recommendations be removed (#1 and #2 on Page 62); 2) strike "Waivers of requirements to elements in the zoning ordinance and/or development regulations or an expedited planning process could be implemented for redevelopment along the corridor."; and 3) strike Reduced Setback and Density Restrictions paragraph and Reduced Parking Standards paragraph (Page 82) from the document.

Ms. Karcher explained that it may be the way it is worded. When City staff looked at this section, they did not think of it as being variances. They thought of it as being the creation of an overlay district that would put certain standards in place appropriate for that district.

Mr. Grosser stated that he would like to add the following to the list of revisions: design elements for unification should be sent to the Public Arts Commission for design as opposed to using what is shown in the proposed study.

Ms. Karcher commented that typically the Public Arts Commission does not review all of the streetscape elements. It might be better to say that the proposed study is a guideline which contains recommendations for improvements and final designs will be approved by the City.

Mr. Hopkins believed that they should be highlighting items and not trying to rewrite the study in real time. The design examples should not be taken as explicit design recommendations. Saying that the design elements should be sent to the Public Arts Commission is a policy decision which implies changing the way all streetscape improvements are reviewed and approved by the City.

Mr. Otto commented that public art is one thing and streetscapes and walls are another thing. Artists do not need to think much about traffic flow and visual things when they are creating public art, which is in a designated space and has one function. Fences, streetscapes and walls are not examples of public art.

Mr. Otto suggested having a clean motion and having members make amendments to the motion for each revision. Mr. Grosser stated that they are almost finished with making revisions and that they should not start over.

Mr. Grosser altered his revision to say the following: the design elements in the study should not be considered as a specific proposal.

Acting Chairperson Grosser restated the motion including the revisions, which is as follows: that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2124-PR-10 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation to accept as a study and subject to the following four revisions:

- 1) Remove recommendations on page 62 to rezone parcels in Urbana;
- 2) Explicitly discuss proposals for bicycle parking;
- 3) Remove the following recommendations on page 82 ~~for expedited approval process and reduced setback and density restrictions~~ under Non-Fiscal Development Incentives:
 - a) “Waiver of requirements to elements in the Zoning Ordinance and/or development regulations”
 - b) The bullet points labeled “Reduced Setback and Density Restrictions” and “Reduced Parking Standards”; and
- 4) Clarify that design examples shown in the study for streetscape elements should not be taken as specific proposals.

Mr. Otto seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Stake	-	Yes	Mr. Otto	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Mr. Grosser	-	Yes
Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Ms. Burris	-	Yes			

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Acting Chairperson Grosser reminded everyone who might be watching the Plan Commission meeting at home that the public comment period is open until April 19, 2010. CCRPC staff will give a presentation to the Committee of the Whole on Monday, April 12, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Myers reported on the following:

- + Annual Review of the Official Zoning Map was approved by City Council.
- + Champaign County Wind Farm Text Amendments – City Council voted to uphold the Plan Commission’s recommendation to defeat a resolution of protest.

- ✚ Next scheduled Plan Commission Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 6. There is a subdivision waiver request by Wisley Inn coming before the Plan Commission for approval. With the Ebert Fest occurring, she wondered how many of the Plan Commission members would be able to attend the meeting. She stated that she would have the Planning Secretary send an email to the Plan Commission members requesting this information. Mr. Myers described the location for the Wisley Inn request.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Myers, AICP, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission