



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

**TO:** Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Lorrie Pearson, AICP, Community Development Services Director  
**DATE:** December 10, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE URBANA KICKAPOO RAIL TRAIL EXTENSION STUDY

---

## Introduction

The Urbana Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT) Extension Study was developed by Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) staff through funding from an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Statewide Planning and Research grant and local match from Carle Health System. The purpose of this study is to analyze the potential of extending the existing KRT westward from its current terminus in East Urbana through Downtown Urbana to Lincoln Avenue. This study addresses the City of Urbana City Council and Mayor Priority for 2018-2021 to “expand connectivity of the Kickapoo Rail Trail with a focus between Vine Street and Lincoln Avenue.”

City Council is asked to accept the study. Upon acceptance, it will be submitted to IDOT by December 31, 2020, per IDOT’s requirement.

## Background

Local ownership of the KRT corridor by the Champaign County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD) ends at Scottswood Drive extended. The rail corridor west of Scottswood Drive extended is considered an active railroad, is owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad (NSRR), and is being used by DART Container and Emulsicoat, Inc. The City of Urbana and Urbana Park District have joined CCFPD as local partners to extend the KRT west through Urbana.

The Urbana KRT Extension Study area is bounded by Scottswood Drive extended on the east, University Avenue on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the west, and Main Street on the south. The KRT Extension Study area spans roughly 2.4 miles through a diverse range of land uses populated with residential neighborhoods, commercial businesses, industrial facilities, and several green spaces. The study area is broken into four sections (from west to east): Section #1 between Lincoln and Broadway Avenues, Section #2 between Broadway Avenue and Maple Street, Section #3 between Maple Street and Lierman Avenue extended, and Section #4 between Lierman Avenue extended and Scottswood Drive extended.

## Plan Summary

The study introduces this information as well as the benefits of this study and rail-trails (Chapter 1). This is followed by an overview of the supporting literature that helped shape the analysis performed and considerations addressed. Included with the literature review is a review of prominent peer city rail-

trails, and connections to the KRT Extension Study (Chapter 2). The study then discusses the existing conditions found in the study area. Features examined include the current transportation network, land uses, bicycle & pedestrian facilities, traffic volumes, and an analysis of vehicle crashes within the study area (Chapter 3). Following is a network analysis that seeks to determine how well bicyclists and pedestrians are accommodated by the study area's existing transportation network (Chapter 4).

The study next focuses on the current environmental conditions of the study area and how the proposed Urbana KRT extension can maintain and enhance environmental resources that prove crucial to local and regional livability (Chapter 5). Next, design guidelines for rail-trails, trail crossings, and trailheads consistent with national, state, and local plans are outlined (Chapter 6).

CCRPC staff used this information to develop five KRT extension alternatives to determine reasonable and practical options that the steering committee should pursue to extend the KRT (Chapter 7). CCRPC presented these alternatives to the public through an online 30-day public comment period held in October 2020. Thirty-five people submitted comments, with the majority choosing Alternative #1 or #3 as their preferred alternative (Chapter 8). The Final Alternative recommends a rail-with-trail on the north or south side of the railroad in Section #1 depending on the availability of land, and a rail-with-trail on the south side of the railroad in Sections #2 through 4. Next steps recommended for local partners are to seek funding and work on land acquisition, complete engineering and environmental surveys, construct the trail in phases, address the replacement of the Vine Street bridge, and develop trailheads (Chapter 9). This study document will be submitted to IDOT by December 31, 2020.

## **Options**

The City Council has the following options:

1. Approve the resolution and accept the study
2. Do not approve the resolution to accept the study

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that Council approve the resolution to accept the study.

Attachment: KRT Extension Study: <https://ccrpc.org/urbana-krt-extension-study/>

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-12-068R**

**A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE URBANA KICKAPOO RAIL TRAIL EXTENSION STUDY**

**WHEREAS**, the staff of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) applied for a Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) grant through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and received funding to develop the Urbana Kickapoo Rail Trail Extension Study; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Urbana has worked with staff from the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), a steering committee, and a stakeholder committee to produce the Urbana Kickapoo Rail Trail Extension Study that documents existing conditions and public input to develop a final alternative; and

**WHEREAS**, the Urbana City Council and Mayor set a priority goal between 2018 and 2021 to expand the connectivity of the Kickapoo Rail Trail with a focus between Vine Street and Lincoln Avenue; and

**WHEREAS**, extending the Kickapoo Rail Trail through Urbana will improve transportation, create placemaking opportunities, enhance businesses and neighborhoods, and improve access to parks; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Urbana will continue to work with the Urbana Park District, Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, and other stakeholders on efforts to extend the Kickapoo Rail Trail in Urbana.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

That the 2020 Urbana Kickapoo Rail Trail Extension Study be and is hereby accepted as a guide to extending the Kickapoo Rail Trail west from its current terminus to Lincoln Avenue.

**PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL** this Date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

---

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

**APPROVED BY THE MAYOR** this Date day of Month, Year.

---

Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor