

## MINUTES OF THE BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMISSION

**DATE:** Tuesday July 18, 2006

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** City Council Chambers  
400 S. Vine Street  
Urbana, IL 61802

**Members Present:** Brandon Bowersox, Gary Engelgau, Susan Jones, Rick Bernotas, Audrey Ishii, Barak Rosenshine, Sheldon Katz, Dana Mancuso, Gary Biehl, Gary Cziko (via telephone)

**Members Absent:** Bruce Meissner, Alexander Herder.

**Staff Members Present:** Bill Gray, Jennifer Selby, Paul Lindahl

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**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Brandon Bowersox called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

The roll was taken by verbal record.

Brandon Bowersox asked for each member to introduce themselves and discuss what brought them to our commission and to say what their experience is as a walker and or a biker.

**Gary Biehl** - University of Illinois Facilities and Services Traffic Engineer, member of CUUATS, CUTEK, Campus area transportation committee. He is there to communicate for the University.

**Sheldon Katz** - University of Illinois facility member Department of Mathematics and Physics – he rides and walks. He would like to see what we do here help improve bike and pedestrian facilities here in Urbana. He would like to thank the mayor and the council for helping create this commission. He is especially interested in facilitating cooperation between Urbana and the U of I.

**Susan Jones** - Editor of the newsletter for the Prairie Cycle Club. She bikes recreationally and commutes to Parkland most days. She is a representative for the League of Illinois Bicyclists in the area. She would like to draw on some of the knowledge that other cities have in making bicycling better in other parts of the State.

**Brandon Bowersox** - Council member for Ward 4, he bikes a couple of days a week and walks to get to work and other places around town. He would like for these to be viable ways for everyone to get to school and work. He was one of the people that helped figure out that other towns have these sorts of commissions and thought that Urbana should form a commission.

**Barak Rosenshine** - Retired. He has been a consumer of bike and recreation and has done centuries along the bike paths in Illinois and Wisconsin. He has run marathons along the lake front of Chicago. He is anxious to have a chance to stop consuming and serve a little. He is a regular runner and a walker.

**Gary Engelgau** - Retired. He has experience in bicycling but is more of an expert of walking. He uses walking for exercise. He is interested in having good transportation in all modes for the community. Safety and how do we meet the needs are his interest.

**Rick Bernotas** – Software Engineer for Motorola. He is a pedestrian and a cyclist – adding that a big reason he is here is to get the Research Park on the map as far as commuter bike and pedestrian paths are concerned.

**Audrey Ishii** – She has walked and ridden in Urbana and campus for 28 years, has worked in downtown Urbana, and now her office is on campus. Primary mode of transportation is running. Safety is a concern for her.

**Gary Cziko** – University of Illinois since 1979. He is a member of the bigsmallall Transportation Committee and the Intramodal Transportation Committee with UIUC. He does a lot of cycling and walking. He is very interested in making Urbana a more friendly area for bicycling transportation as well as for recreation.

**Dana Mancuso** – Urbana Park District. She has lived in the community for nine years. She is looking forward to sharing the information she learns here between the City and the Park District.

**Jennifer Selby** - Civil Engineer for the City of Urbana. She will be responsible for implementing any ideas that the committee comes up with. She does a lot of walking back and forth to parks with her children.

**Bill Gray**- Public Works Director and City Engineer. He has been here since 1992. He is involved with the Campus Area Transportation Study, CUUATS technical committee and CUTEK meeting attendee. His family enjoys occasional walking and bike riding.

**Paul Lindahl** - Planner with the City of Urbana Community Development department he is a staff member of the Greenway & Trails Steering Committee. He does some walking and biking around town and he attended the U of I so he can relate to the challenge of walking and biking across campus.

### III. Overview of commission duties:

Brandon Bowersox gave an overview and background of the commission and the duties as commission members. Commission was created:

- To advise City Council on how to make bicycling and walking viable modes of transportation.
- To analyze routing operation and safety. To review the Capital Improvement Plan.
- To review the Bicycle Master Plan.
- To perform a regular evaluation and recommend an action plan for biking and walking facilities, on street and off street paths and lanes, bicycle racks, signage and signals.
- To coordinate with external agencies on maps and regional connections including the Greenway and Trails plan. Design, education and public outreach opportunities.

Brandon mentioned that was a lot of information for the commission to cover.

### IV. Background Information

#### a. City of Urbana, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (William Gray)

[http://www.city.urbana.il.us/urbana/public\\_works/engineering/capitol\\_improvement\\_plan/main.html](http://www.city.urbana.il.us/urbana/public_works/engineering/capitol_improvement_plan/main.html)

Bill Gray provided the commission website addresses for each local source we will be referring to throughout the meeting. The first item that he mentioned was the Capital Improvement Plan. The document projects out 10 years worth of projects and the various categories of infrastructure. This document covers anything from sanitary and storm sewers, to street lighting, drainage type projects, street work, maintenance related or reconstruction, road widening and traffic signals. This plan does have several bike paths/multi use paths that are planned over the next 10 years. There is a very detailed bike path system map that is on the website that will forecast in what year we are looking at making upgrades and expansions. Bill encouraged the commission to become familiar with the bike path system map and look at the 10 fiscal years of projects that are listed on the map.

**b. City of Urbana, Comprehensive Plan (Paul Lindahl)**

[http://www.city.urbana.il.us?URL=/urbana/community\\_development/planning/comprehensive\\_plan/comprehensive\\_plan.pdf](http://www.city.urbana.il.us?URL=/urbana/community_development/planning/comprehensive_plan/comprehensive_plan.pdf)

Paul Lindahl discussed the Comprehensive Plan stating that it provides goals and objectives by which land use, neighborhood preservation, economic development, transportation, social, environmental and quality of life decisions are made within the City.

**c. City of Urbana, Bike Master Plan (William Gray)**

Bill Gray stated there was a similar bike commission in Urbana back in the late 70's early 80's and there was a bike master plan that was created for the city. It implemented quite a few things including bike routes and established with criteria and standards for bike related facilities. Our thought is that it is time for an update. This is a document that we will seek consultant help on and not do it in-house. We want to do a Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. We have been looking into other websites and various communities documents and noting consultant names to see who has performed such documents. Maybe one or two people from this group could be part of the selection committee to help select this consultant. The U of I, City of Champaign and the MTD are also looking at creating a bike master plan. There may be a rationale to use the same consultant to create a plan for all the entities. The City of Champaign is in the midst of a transportation master plan and there is a bicycle component to that master plan so they may continue to move forward and not participate with the other groups. It is important to look at the community as a whole.

**d. Champaign County Greenway and Trails (Paul Lindahl)**

<http://www.ccrpc.org/planning/transportation/greenways/documents.php>

Bill Gray said it was important to go to this website between now and our next meeting because we all need to work in concert with this group because there are many charges that the Greenway and Trails group has that may overlap with what we would like to do. They are in the midst of coming up with an intergovernmental agreement with the cities and the University to employ the CUUATS staff. This group will address the need for coordination between the City of Urbana and Champaign, The Village of Savoy, Champaign County, Forest Preserve District and the MTD. They want to implement a better system of pedestrian connection and bicycle connections both for commuting and for recreational trails in Champaign-Urbana.

**e. Big. small. all Champaign County Bikes (Susan Jones)**

<http://www.bigsma11all.cc/>

Susan Jones explained that bigsmallall is a citizen group that is trying to get citizen input and action on long term plans and to identify goals for just about every aspect of our county's life—including the natural and built environment, economic and community development, transportation, education, culture, recreation, sports, diversity, and social issues, among others.

She is also with the Champaign County Bikes (<http://www.champaigncountybikes.org>) this is an effort for bicyclist to communicate with each other and to people that are planning and implementing things. Susan is also involved with the League of Illinois Bicyclists. Ed Barsotti, the Executive Director of this group, has some ideas for tasks that the commission can do. Brandon suggested we invite him to a meeting and Susan offered to contact him.

**f. CATS III, Champaign County LRTP (Brandon Bowersox)**

<http://www.ccrpc.org/planning/transportation/cats/cats.php>

<http://www.ccrpc.org/planning/transportation/lrtp/lrtp2025.php>

Brandon Bowersox mentioned these last two websites. The CATS III is the campus area focus on transportation including: walking, biking, transit and automobile use. Champaign County has a long range transportation plan (LRTP) that discusses how we will all get around in Champaign County in 20-30 years. That includes road building efforts, expanding the transit system. He suggested the group looks at these websites as well.

**V. Discussion of regular meeting (Brandon Bowersox)**

Brandon asked the staff to find out what other cities have as their usual agenda items. He talked about how public input and commission input would be part of the meetings. He then opened up the meeting to other commission members as to work ideas they have in mind. Susan Jones said that one of the things the people from Champaign County Bikes would like to do is to have input into specific plans for the multi use and bike paths. She said the Windsor Road bike path is difficult for commuting bicyclists because motorists expect them to be on and off the path. Just coming in on Windsor Road today, she had trouble making a left turn onto Race Street.

Brandon said that he believes in order to make walking and biking safer he said he thinks of it as a 3-legged stool. The first leg would be facilities, the second leg is about education - how motorists and bicyclists are supposed to use it and the third leg is about enforcement.

Sheldon Katz said he would like to look at ordinances so we can prevent problems from happening 20 years from now. As Urbana develops we can keep in mind bicyclist and pedestrians as we go along. He was also wondering about the CATS III Bike Master Plan. He did not understand from Bill if there was coordination in progress there or is this something that we need to do. If so, can we play a roll in helping with that? Bill said there will be coordination and all commission members are invited to attend the meetings. Bill Gray will let all the members know when the next meeting is.

Gary Engelgau mentioned the complete streets concept that seems to be a national trend as it suggests many standards that maybe we can tie to or see if we agree with. Also, would this be a basis for on going things we can try to get a general consensus on? This takes into consideration all modes of transportation, which would be one of the ideas we are trying to enhance.

Brandon Bowersox discussed that the League of Illinois Bicyclist had a complete streets legislation that they recommended to IDOT and the State to have a policy saying that we as a State build complete streets. When the State is doing a road project, from the start of the planning they plan for walking paths, sidewalks, bike paths, unless they can show there is not a need for it. It would automatically be routine that these would be considered. He said he knows this legislation didn't make it through Springfield yet, but maybe next session it might get started again. Some localities are thinking about having a complete streets policy or adopting this name as they think about their local planning even though IDOT has not called their program that. Locally, as we plan and build road projects, we will know that from the start where the walkers and bikers are going to be.

Rick Bernotas wanted to continue what others have been saying about complete streets. A lot of bicyclists would be interested in the bike paths and how they are implemented. He said that when you are driving a car around you see things differently than when you are biking.

Dana Mancuso made a suggestion that the commission does some work to remove barriers to becoming a pedestrian or a bicyclist. To make it just as easy to walk or ride a bike as it is to hop into the car.

Susan Jones said a big chunk of that is the education aspect of both the drivers, walkers and the cyclists, if you know where you can go and what you are supposed to do and know that other people will respect that it is a lot more encouraging.

Audrey Ishii suggested that parking fees could be altered to encourage walking and biking. For example, the yearly parking fee system on campus may encourage driving everyday. If someone is paying a high premium for a parking space school-year round, they are more likely to drive and use that parking space because it is paid for. They are less likely to walk or bike and let the paid parking space go unused.

Bill Gray mentioned we could have a presentation addressing education at future meetings. He also suggested presentation of the Greenways & Trails Plan and an update on CATS II and CATS III.

Barak Rosenshine would like to see if someone could come and talk about the Capitol Improvement Plan and the projected paths on the map. Brandon said that this was City of Urbana plans so we could get that done very easily.

Bill Gray said the Park District is going through a strategic plan process to see and have more internal recreational type paths within parks and connecting parks to parks. The city needs to integrate the Park District's planning and goals with ours so they fit together. He gave an example of jogging or biking from Crystal Lake Park along the Saline Branch, under US-45 and further east to the dog park.

Audrey Ishii would like to see how we could objectively measure our success. For example, statistics that show how many hours people put in on bike riding, or if there is a reduction in the accident rate. She thought that Susan Chavvaria would have those answers. Sheldon Katz said the statistics on the use of alternative modes transportation are out there in Urbana and those numbers have been going down in recent years. Brandon Bowersox added he thought that was true in Champaign as well as in Urbana. The Long Range Transportation Plan might have some good statistics about that. There is some good news in those statistics, in that the alternative share in Urbana is a lot higher than Champaign because of paths on Campus and because of Urbana's compact growth that we are able to walk and bike and make that choice. There is a Bicycle Friendly Community Program. One of the pieces to make yourself a bicycle friendly program is to have the community set a goal for how many people they hope will be using biking and walking as a transport method and then measure it and watch the progress.

Gary Cziko said he would like to know what is going on with construction projects around Urbana. Brandon recommended that a section of our meeting could be construction updates of what is happening in town and the commission could have some input on construction projects and make some recommendations.

Bill Gray updated the commission on some construction projects going on around town.

- Lierman Avenue, which is in the final stages, is a good example of a complete street. The project included construction of a multi-use path and sidewalks, removal of the ditches, installation of storm sewers, and construction of curb and gutter.

- Lincoln Avenue between north of Florida and south of Springfield (costs of approximately \$1.3 million) includes the widening of the walking path on the west side of Lincoln Avenue and provides better bike access on the east / west streets to connect to the bike path system on campus. The project also includes reconfiguring the driving lane from four lanes to three lanes, which will result in fewer driving lanes to cross. There will be signals at Lincoln and Nevada to deal with the volume.
- Philo Road from Colorado Avenue to Windsor Road will include completion of sidewalks on the west side; the east side has a multi – use path already. The roadway will be a consistent three lane cross section with a center bi-directional turn lane just north of Windsor Road. Colorado Avenue will be completed to a multi-use connectivity between Philo Road and Stone Creek subdivision and the street will be widened past CVS and the funeral home.

Bill explained what we are trying to incorporate in the mindset we have to look at the full range of modes of transportation and how we can fit that into the plan and fit it into a limited right-of-way. The biggest challenge of this group is he hears recreational biking and commuting biking and the needs that both of those have. This is only so much right of way and pavement available and so much money so we might need to make some hard decision in guiding future projects.

Barak Rosenshine added a few comments as a pedestrian and a jogger. He mentioned that on the recreational path on the west side of Meadowbrook Park, there is a point near the parking area where the concrete switches to asphalt and you can feel the difference in your feet. He said that asphalt is much kinder to knees and to feet. As an aging jogger he said he is not going to go on the Stone Creek bike path because it is entirely concrete. He has heard that concrete is durable and asphalt is not, but his knees are of questionable durability. He looks at these recreational paths to be constructed through the Park District and he wonders what kind of material these new sidewalks will be made of. Dana Mancuso was not sure of the constructive material going to be used but she will have that addressed at a future meeting.

Gary Biehl said one thing the commission can do to help planners and engineers is to take a look at the existing network and make some recommendations. At the last CATS meeting, Gary Cziko illustrated something that creates problems for the commuter bike. There was discussion of the Green Street bike path and how it ends at Wright Street and the concept of having a right hand turn lane to the left and it is dangerous because the bicyclist disappears for a moment because of the path placement.

Brandon Bowersox wanted to discuss the schedule for the next two meetings. He felt there are a lot of things that need to be discussed and, to keep the meetings short, we need to meet the next two months. The next two meetings will be held August 15, 2006 and September 19, 2006 in the council chambers at 7:00 p.m.

## **V. Adjournment**

Brandon Bowersox adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.