
Date: Tuesday, March 20, 2007
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: City Council Chambers, City of Urbana, 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL

Members Present: Brandon Bowersox, Gary Engelgau, Susan Jones, Gary Cziko (via phone), Rick Bernotas, Barak Rosenshine, Gary Biehl

Staff Members Present: Jennifer Selby

Absent: Sheldon Katz, Dana Mancuso, Audrey Ishii

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Brandon Bowersox called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by verbal record and a quorum was present.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. Upon voice vote the motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by to approve the January 23, 2007 minutes. Gary Engelgau moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Susan Jones. Upon a voice vote the motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Input

Scott Dossett, 501 E. High Street, Urbana. He is a founding member of HUENA. The Green Street corridor will involve working out an infrastructure to pull people from the east or west side of Urbana to Lincoln Square and downtown Urbana. The concept includes a solid concrete path on the pavement or off the pavement, a multi-use path that will connect the area from almost to Solo Cup to downtown. They would like to be supportive and involved in the process with this commission. Jennifer Selby is going to be the project engineer for the Green Street project. She will be doing the design and she will be getting in contact with Scott Dossett with the ideas. Brandon Bowersox mentioned that the bike master plan process that we are kicking off and there will be public input meetings and he will be sure to notify HUENA and other neighborhood association to alert the groups when the meetings will be held.

Tim Bartlett 4021 Danbury Drive, Champaign ; He is here to represent the Champaign County Design and Conservation Foundation also known as the CCDC Foundation. The group has been serving Champaign County residents for forty years. One of their most notable projects is the proposed Urbana to Danville Trail Project. He passed out exhibits and photos to show connections and trail idea. There is to be a connection from Urbana to Kickapoo. The foundation has been involved in the negotiations with Conrail who owned the corridor at that time, the corridor had been rail-banked. Five years into the process the corridor was sold to CSX which is another rail company. Conrail was willing to donate the corridor to the foundation. When CCDC started negotiating with CSX they were not interested in donating the land. They are looking for them to purchase the corridor. In the last five years CCDC has been discussing with the Champaign County Forest Preserve and the Vermillion County Conservation District as they both have interests in being owners of the corridor. They support the idea of the regional trail system that is about 25 miles long that will connect Urbana to Danville. He mentioned that East Central Illinois has no regional trail system. In 2007 and 2008 they will be pushing hard to acquire the corridor so that the foundation could then turn around and make a gift back to the forest preserves. CCDC thinks this is a project that is heavily supported in Champaign County. CCDC had the land appraised and CSX had it appraised they are trying to work out to make it favorable to both sides. Barak Rosenshine asked if there were any federal funds available. Tim Bartlett said there are a couple of answers there are some trail programs that are funded by federal funds and there are other opportunities to try to seek federal funding with some transportation bills. There are also state grant funding opportunities. As a reminder they are at the acquisition stage. This is a long term

project. Gary Engelgau asked if there are standards on how wide and what type of surfaces it is made of. Tim Bartlett said there are standards and they could be developed. Trails that are wide enough to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists standard is eight to ten foot wide. The corridor now is about 100 foot wide. It does narrow in areas and there is a possibility of other usages, such as equestrian trail. All the rails have been taken up but the ballasts are still in tack. There are areas where there is storage on the corridor. The foundation is taking the approach to deal with the acquisition for now and then put into place proper land use controls could be put in place. The Urbana trail starts at the east side of Route 130 and parallels with Route 150 more or less throughout the whole corridor to Danville. Tim Bartlett said this would be a great place for economic development, special events and races that focus attention back on local pride. He would assume our group would be very interested in supporting this. Brandon Bowersox asked what our group could do to help and what could the viewing public do to help and support CCDC. Tim Bartlett said to be patient, this is a long term project that involves time and money - possible future fundraising. He will pass along more information as he gets it. The foundation roll right now is acquisition then looking for local support to ultimately take ownership and management of the corridors.

VI. New Business

A . Safe Routes to School Funding Update

Jennifer Selby presented information from the Safe Routes to School Training she and Brandon Bowersox attended on February 13, 2007.

Fewer kids are walking and biking to school and more parents are driving. In 1969, approximately 42% of children walked to school. In 2001, that number dropped to only 16%. Parents list distance, weather, fear of crime against children, and traffic as the main reasons they do let their children walk to school. Over the past 3 decades, childhood obesity has quadrupled from 4% to 16%.

The Safe Routes to School Programs is administered by IDOT and was developed to improve conditions for students who walk or bike to school. The elements of SRTS programs include the 5 E's: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation.

Engineering describes infrastructure and other physical measures to create safe places to walk or bike. Engineering projects include the school zone, the routes traveled to and from school, street crossings, and traffic calming near schools. Items such as: school zone signage, sidewalks, on-street bicycling, shortening crossing distances, marking crosswalks, narrowing lanes, speed bumps, raised pedestrian crosswalks, and tight radii are engineering projects.

Education teaches pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety. Children can be taught safety skills, the health benefits of physical exercise, and the environmental benefits of walking/bicycling vs. driving. Parents can be taught walking and biking safety guidelines to reinforce with their children, safe driving near schools, and school pick up and drop off procedures. Neighbors can be taught to watch for pedestrians and bicyclists, drive slowly, keep sidewalks clear, and prune plants.

Encouragement generates excitement and interest in walking and bicycling. Encouragement programs include events such as Walk to School Day, walking school buses, bike trains, mileage clubs, classroom contests, park and walks, and provision of maps of desirable routes to schools.

Enforcement deters unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Community and school efforts can include safety patrols, crossing guards, neighborhood watch programs, and role models. Police officers can teach safety skills, evaluate traffic concerns, provide police presence, and monitor guards and students. Law enforcement methods include speed feedback devices, a traffic complaint hotline, pedestrian's stings, and progressive ticketing.

Evaluation measures the impact of SRTS efforts. Methods of measurement include: crash data – 3 years before and after; perceptions of safety study; observation of safety behaviors; knowledge and awareness before and after testing; and student travel surveys.

The state of Illinois has approximately \$23 million through 2009. Both public and private schools serving grades K through 8 are eligible for funding. Both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects are eligible for funding.

The City of Urbana has teamed with the Urbana School District, the City of Champaign, the Champaign School District, and the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission to write a School Travel Plan. This is the first step in applying for funding. The school plan is due May 31, 2007 and the deadline for applying for funding is June 30, 2007.

B. Pedestrian Safety Workshop Summary

Jennifer Selby attended a 3 day course on February 26, 27, 28, 2007. The course included two workshops entitled How to Develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and Designing Streets for Pedestrian Safety. These workshops were sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration.

A Pedestrian Safety Action Plan is a plan developed by community stakeholders that is intended to improve pedestrian safety in the community. The steps involved include: involving stakeholders, data collection and analysis, selecting safety solutions, and providing funding.

Stakeholders - including citizens, public employees, business owners and the media – can identify safety concerns, deficiencies and opportunities. Data collection can verify problems identified by stakeholders and can identify other pedestrian safety problems. Analysis of the data identifies high crash areas so concerns for safety can be ranked and the extent of implementation of solutions can be determined.

Safety solutions include engineering, education and enforcement projects. Education involves teaching pedestrians, drivers and neighbor's safety skills. Pedestrians need to know to cross where expected, pick a safe route, obey traffic signals, be seen and be alert. Drivers need to watch for and yield to pedestrians, obey speed limits, and stop completely. Neighbors need to keep sidewalks clear and prune trees and shrubbery. Enforcement teaches safety, evaluates traffic concerns, provides police presence, and improves driver and pedestrian behavior.

Engineering includes sidewalk design, street crossings, intersection geometry, roundabouts, signalization, transit, and road diets.

Sidewalk Design – Sidewalks should be 4 feet wide minimum, clear of obstacles, have a smooth and level surface, and be separated from traffic. Driveways should be built like sidewalks, not intersections. The concrete sidewalk should continue through the drive, the radii should be tight, and a 4 feet wide path with a maximum cross-slope of 2% should be provided.

Street Crossings – Safety measures include crosswalks, striping, signs, and medians/islands. Crosswalks should be provided at signalized intersections, school crossings and between desirable locations. Crosswalks can be striped in a variety of ways. Crosswalk signage includes warning signs and signs indicating the location of the crosswalk. Raised medians and islands significantly reduce crashes by reducing crossing distances and exposure.

Intersection Geometry – Pedestrian friendly intersection characteristics include tight radii, square intersections, simple crossings, slow speeds, and no free flow movements. Curb extensions can provide better visibility for drivers and pedestrians, shortens the crossing distance and calms traffic at the intersection. Raised islands at intersections separate decision points, reduces the crossing distance and improves signal timing.

Roundabouts – Roundabouts have a crash reduction factor of 54%. They are safer because of the yield on entry, slow speed, reduced conflicts, and no left turns. Elements of a roundabout include: splitter islands, crosswalks, slow speed exit, truck apron, deflection to slow speeds, and a landscape center.

Signalization – Signalized intersections can be improved for pedestrians by providing pedestrian heads, placing push-buttons in convenient locations, and timing signals to minimize pedestrian delays and conflicts. Pedestrian countdown timers are more understood than current Walk/Don't Walk system of pedestrian heads and should be used where possible. Push-buttons should be placed on a level landing at the top of the ramp, in line with the crosswalk and on the side of the pole in the direction of the crosswalk. Timings shall be calculated 2 ways and the greater time should be used.

Transit – For safety reasons, transit stop locations should be convenient and accessible and should have an accessible bus shelter. Far side stops are preferred and crosswalks should be placed behind the bus stop. The advantages of crossing behind the bus include: pedestrians can see traffic; bus driver can move forward; and bus doesn't run over pedestrian.

Road Diets – Road diets reduce the number of driving lanes and reclaim the street for other uses such as bike lanes, medians, parking, etc. Road diets reduce crossing distances, provide better left turn sign distances, slow speeds, and result in fewer intersection conflicts.

C. Bicycle Master Plan Status

Jennifer Selby informed the group that we have a signed contract with CCRPC and we have our steering committee set up and the first meeting will be Friday March 23, 2007. We will have more to report at the next meeting. Brandon Bowersox did ask about the downtown signs about not riding your bikes on the sidewalk. She is going to wait to see what the bicycle master plan has to say before we proceed. Brandon Bowersox said that the next step for our group would be helping reach out to the community to get them to attend the public input sessions.

VII. Old Business

No old business

VIII. Announcements

May 3, 2007 there will be a four hour course from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. entitled Safe Roads for Bicycling. The Illinois League of Bicyclists is presenting. This is a free seminar but you need to get registered.

IX. Adjournment

Brandon Bowersox adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Hoffman
Recording Secretary