
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2008
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: City Council Chambers, City of Urbana, 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL

Members Present: Brandon Bowersox, Rick Bernotas, Gary Cziko, Susan Jones, Barak Rosenshine, Gary Engelgau, Dana Mancuso, Bryan Lake
Staff Members Present: Jennifer Selby
Absent: Audrey Ishii, Gary Biehl

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Brandon Bowersox called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Brandon Bowersox introduced our new member, Bryan Lake.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by verbal record and a quorum was present. Each member did a brief introduction for Bryan Lake.

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 Rick Bernotas and seconded by Gary Cziko to approve the minutes from October 21, 2008. Upon voice vote the motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Input

Cynthia Hoyle, Transportation Planning Consultant at the MTD – Ms. Hoyle reviewed the Downtown Plan with Bill Volk, Managing Director at MTD, and expressed that that plan called for some kind of “fixed transit” option in the future and added that angled parking would not leave enough room on Main Street for that option. She stated that the cycling community needs to think about the visibility issue as well.

Rick Langlois, Chairman of Champaign County Bikes.org. – Mr. Langlois is going to make comments to City Council out of respect and good work about the commission. He stated that the CCB steering committee is in favor of the Urbana Bike Master Plan as designed and they are in favor of bike lanes on Main Street. They are also very interested in seeing the merchants do well and be happy. He also stated that the research shows addition of bike lanes will improve their business.

Barry Isralewitz, 305 W Park Street # 1; Urbana, IL – Mr. Israliwitz is a volunteer at the Bike Project. He stated that Downtown Urbana needs to be a welcoming place that shoppers want to go to and a bit more parking does not seem viable at all. He believes that there are a lot of places with a lot of parking and that bike parking should help support the businesses.

VI. New Business

A. Main Street Bike Lanes vs. Angled Parking – Jennifer Selby

City Council has accepted and approved the Downtown Parking Study. This presentation is in regards to the issue of bike lanes and/or angled parking on Main Street and summarizes why bike lanes were suggested on Main Street in the City's Bike Master Plan.

The Bike Master Plan came from the council common goal to get Urbana bicycling. Some objectives of the plan included: create and maintain a bicycle network that is continuous, connected, and easily accessible for all users; include on-road and off-road facilities; educate residents about alternative modes of transportation and bicycle facilities; and secure funding and implement bicycle improvements.

The first public workshop held May 3, 2007, brought in 67 people. Attendees were asked where they bike and how they get there. 60 different maps were completed and the Main Street corridor received the most requests for bicycle facilities, with Race Street coming in second.

Bicycle facilities were chosen to be included in the Bike Master Plan based on the bicycle level of service (BLOS). This tool measures the comfort level for on-road adult cyclists. To be included in the Plan, a street had to have a Level B or better. With the existing conditions of Main Street, the BLOS is a "C". When the street is changed to a 3-lane cross section with bike lanes, the BLOS goes up to a "B".

The Main Street corridor, as shown in the Bike Master Plan, starts with a route at Pfeffer Road which continues to Dodson Street. Bike lanes start at Dodson and go to Cedar Street. The route would then continue on Main Street at the Main/Springfield split and continue to Goodwin Avenue. The area at Busey Bank between Cedar Street and Race Street has a raised median that would be removed and bike lanes would begin at the split. The parallel parking stays the same between Race Street and Broadway Avenue and no spaces will be removed. The lane widths will be: 8 foot parking lanes; 6 ft bike lanes and; 11 ½ - 12 foot vehicle lanes. There is a possibility of doing a raised median at the center, although not likely will not happen due to the loading and unloading needed in the center median for businesses. Photographs of the existing and proposed corridor were shown.

The second public workshop was held December 6, 2007. 49 people attended. Participants completed a six question survey and broke into groups to pick their top 10 projects to be completed over the next 10 years. Main Street consistently ranked in the top 5 for all groups.

One advantage of bike lanes is that they will provide a dedicated space for bicyclists when traveling through the center of Urbana. They will also shorten pedestrian crossing distance and allow for a painted median at Walnut Street for pedestrians crossing from parking to the Champaign County Courthouse. The road diet allows for the creation of left turn-lanes at Race Street and at Broadway Avenue, which currently operate with permissive left turns. There were 37 accidents @ Race Street and Main Street in 2004-2005 with left-turn and rear-end collisions predominating. The left through lanes at Race Street are negatively offset, limiting view of opposing traffic.

The Urbana Bicycle Master Plan was approved by Urbana City Council in April 2008. The plan is currently being implemented with a striping and signing project in summer 2009. The City applied for an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant in May 2008 for a \$2.5 million Main Street project. Construction is anticipated in the summer 2010. The issue of bike lanes and angled parking will likely go to Council in January 2009.

Gary Engelgau asked about parking study that was completed. Jennifer Selby did say there was a surplus of parking downtown, according to the study. The City can not add on to the parking deck because current seismic requirements are larger than when the deck was originally built. Brandon Bowersox added the enforcement practices could get an overhaul. It was found that employees of downtown businesses are parking in the metered spots. The parking study recommends more signs to let people know there is a parking deck and that customers and employees can park there.

Gary Cziko asked if there was room for more parking on Broadway Avenue (angled) and asked how many spaces would be available. Jennifer Selby said there could be five to seven spots available. There is one handicap spot on the northwest corner of Broadway Avenue and Main Street. Dana Mancuso suggested that the merchants could do a survey to their customers asking how they got to their store before this document went to council. The parking study people did a survey of employees and found out that it was the employees that were parking in the metered spaces.

Barak Rosenshine asked about increased accidents with angled parking. Jennifer Selby said it was a factor and that she has information she can give to the group – especially with backed in angled parking. Discussion ensued about back-in angled parking and parallel parking. Dana Mancuso asked about encouraging bike shoppers stopping to shop. Jennifer Selby said they would have to get off the bike lane at the intersection

Public question was posed if the bike lanes were detoured south a block would it be legal for the cyclist to continue going straight. Discussion ensued. There was concern about the number of points of conflict in this area. If you detour the bike line you can end up with number of turns at hazardous intersections. Rick Bernotas said it is futile to expect people to route south a block and then west and then north again. Main Street is an east/west corridor and bicyclists will just continue through. As cyclists, you get a bottled neck with the angled parking and that presents a danger. Susan Jones added that more people will use the sidewalk when they see the bike lanes end. Gary Cziko added that Main Street is usually his destination and it should be a complete street for walkers, cyclist and drivers.

There was discussion of bike parking in the alleys Downtown behind the businesses, which the City owns. Jennifer Selby has considered parking in Crane Alley on the north side of Main Street. Most of OJC's employees cycle to work but there are electrical and utility issues to consider in the alleys.

Rick Bernotas said that Main Street needs to be a destination. We also need to understate how important this is as an east/west corridor. This (bike route) will connect a lot of east Urbana residents with the north side of campus as well as downtown. We need to have a safe bike route through downtown. Jennifer Selby said the idea was for Main Street to connect to Goodwin Avenue and campus all the way to Highcross Road.

Gary Cziko made a motion that BPAC recommend that the bike lanes be installed on Main Street between Race Street and Broadway Avenue as specified by the Urbana Bicycle Master Plan as approved by Urbana City Council in April 2008. Gary Engelgau seconded motion. Susan Jones added as specified in the Urbana downtown strategic plan 2002. Gary Cziko and Gary Engelgau accepted. Dana Mancuso added there needs to be additional review of the alternative of the already accepted master plan – a safer alternative. Gary Cziko and Gary Engelgau accepted. Susan Jones made a comment to consider information from the Downtown Urbana Parking Study which indicated that the perceived deficiency in parking could be alleviated by better signage to show where parking available and better enforcement of time zone on parking meters. Gary Engelgau encourages angled parking on Broadway Avenue between Main Street and Water Street. Brandon Bowersox asked for an official recommendation. All in favor of motion to recommend – no one opposed. Jennifer Selby will let the commission know when this will go to Council for approval.

B. SRTS Grant Application – Letter of Support – Jennifer Selby

The City is submitting an application on behalf of the Urbana School District because school districts can no longer apply for this grant alone.

Thomas Paine School wants to install a sidewalk from the Sunnycrest Apartments to the school. 35 children live in the apartments and they all walk across the field – rain or snow. Colorado Avenue has a path on the north side but no path through Lohmann Park. The school would like to open up the area south of the school. There are 35 kids who live near Colorado Avenue.

At King School, there are already sidewalks along the south and west sides of the school. The sidewalk on the north side is the access to King Park. The plan is to widen that existing sidewalk to an eight foot path. The sidewalk on the east side is five feet wide and it ends at the edge of the school. The plan is to widen that sidewalk and continue it to the north side of the school and to the park.

The Principal at King will soon begin a program called “WOW” – Walking on Wednesday – during which students would walk on their lunch recess to earn rewards. If the proposed project is completed, the students would have a 1/3 mile track around the school and also a connection to King Park that has a ¼ mile path around the park.

The application information included – “King Park Loop”. This meets our Bike Master Plan. Lohmann Park is on the property of Thomas Paine School and the plan would be a loop path within the park.

Jennifer Selby reviewed the application. There is a population of 285 students with this project and it would affect 25% of their student population to open up paths to walk to school. There are no other projects that need to be done to make this happen. The cost estimate is \$250,000. Hazards and barriers include missing sidewalks and no safe place to ride. This will increase the number of students walking because you can get to the school in a safe manner. Question was posed, how is the school and the larger community consulted? There was a walk about done around the schools, the wellness policy was referred to; the letter of support from the park district and BPAC will be included in the application. King School was the SRTS National Partnership State Project. She has letters of support from State of Illinois Representatives and she plans to submit on November 18, 2008. Jennifer Selby asked for motion to authorize to send letter on behalf of the commission along with the application. Barak Rosenshine added that that the path should be made of asphalt – less scraping and easier on the knees. He suggested asphalt to be on the paths wherever possible. Gary Cziko inquired if these sidewalks were consistent with guidelines plans for the Greenways and Trails. Jennifer Selby answered, yes and added it might be six months before we find out if we received the grant as this is 100% federal grant. The letter of support from this commission will go to secretary of transportation at IDOT. Dana Mancuso suggested getting letters of support from the children that walk each day to school. Jennifer Selby agreed and said she would contact the principal of the schools and have the children sign some paper work.

Motion made by Susan Jones to send the letter supporting SRTS – seconded by Dana Mancuso. No other discussion – all in favor no one opposed.

C. Greenways & Trails Design Guidelines – Recommendation to Council

Jennifer Selby sent information out to commission members via email and all members said they were able to review.

There was a lot of discussion about the two foot wide mowed shoulder that is mentioned in the guidelines. Jennifer Selby said that information came from the AASHTO guide. The commission would like to make it clear that these paths stay free from poles, fences and retaining walls. The type of paint should be specified in the guidelines as there has been a problem with the bike lanes on Gregory Street. Jennifer Selby stated that there are not going to be any lines separating the path and there will be no signs that state “Bikes only.” We want to make sure that sharrows are installed for roads that have 35 MPH or more.

Brandon Bowersox then asked for a motion to recommend approval or adoption of the Greenways & Trails Design Guidelines to City Council.

Rick Bernatos made a motion and Susan Jones seconded the motion - all were in favor – no one opposed. Motion carries.

VII. Old Business

No old business.

VIII. Announcements

Cynthia Hoyle said that C-U Safe Routes to School group is planning on having Mark Fenton in to be a speaker on April 7-8, 2009. He is an advocate of safe walking. They would like to partner with the C-U MTD and health

providers and she would like for BPAC to be a co-sponsor of this event. She will come back to a meeting in the future to ask for our support.

IX. Adjournment

Brandon Bowersox adjourned the meeting at 8:40

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Hoffman
Recording Secretary