



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Urbana Plan Commission

FROM: Rebecca Bird, Planner I

DATE: Thursday, October 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Plan Case No. 2154-CP-11: A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to amend the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan to adopt a Complete Streets Policy

Introduction & Background

This agenda item is a proposed amendment to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan setting forth the City's commitment to the concept of "complete streets." The Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) reviewed the proposed amendment on September 20, 2011 (minutes attached). The Urbana Plan Commission is to hold a hearing on the proposed text amendment and make a recommendation to the Urbana City Council for adoption.

The term "complete streets" describes an integrated transportation network designed, constructed, and maintained to allow safe and convenient travel along and across streets for all users, whether traveling by foot, bicycle, motor vehicle, or transit, and regardless of age or physical abilities.

The City of Urbana's design, construction, and maintenance of transportation facilities already incorporate complete streets concepts, but City staff is looking to formalize and fully integrate these practices as policies.

Policy Basis

The impetus for a complete streets policy comes from the 2010 Urbana Mayor and City Council Goals, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, and the 2008 Urbana Bicycle Master Plan. The relevant policy statements are presented as follows:

2010 Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals

Strategy L: Become a multimodal, bike and pedestrian-friendly community that supports sustainable transportation.

- *Adopt a complete streets policy. Include alternative roadway configurations, such as bike boulevards, that give priority to pedestrian,*

bicycle and public transit modes. For intersection projects, include roundabouts, and other technologies among the alternatives considered.

2005 Comprehensive Plan

Cornerstone Goal Mobility: The elements for keeping Urbana accessible to everyone by promoting a safe, multi-modal transportation system with high-quality and efficient infrastructure.

Goal 44.0 Provide for the safe, efficient, and cost-effective movement of people and goods within, through, and around the City.

Objectives

44.2 Reduce the number and severity of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular crashes.

Goal 46.0 Improve access to transportation modes for Urbana residents.

Objectives

46.1 Work to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access throughout Urbana.

Goal 47.0 Create a multi-modal transportation system.

Objectives

47.8 Make it easier for people to switch from one transportation mode to another.

47.7 Promote bicycle/pedestrian access to major activity centers.

Goal 49.0 Avoid development patterns that can potentially create an over-dependency on the automobile.

Objectives

49.1 Promote alternatives to automobile travel, through provision of sidewalks, pedestrian access, bicycle pathways, and high quality transit service.

49.3 Improve access to alternative transportation modes within neighborhoods.

Goal 50.0 Ensure adequate transportation facilities for new growth.

Objectives

50.1 Ensure that new developments provide easy access to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as automobiles and mass transit vehicles.

2008 Bicycle Master Plan

Urbana Bicycle Master Plan Goals:

1. Increase bicycle mode share in Urbana for all trip purposes by 50% in the next five years.
3. Substantially expand the bicycle network.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The proposed amendment would add an objective to page 53 of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan outlining the City’s commitment to a complete streets policy and an implementation strategy on page 103 to implement the policy. Currently, there is no explicit reference to complete streets in the Comprehensive Plan, as the term was relatively new when the plan was written.

Amend 2005 Comprehensive Plan to include the following (text to be added underlined):

Goal 47.0 Create a multi-modal transportation system.

Objectives

47.8 Use complete streets concepts in designing, constructing, reconstructing, and maintaining roadways and public rights-of-way.

In addition to adding Objective 47.8, the proposed text amendment would add following Implementation Strategy to the Implementation Program:

Implementation Strategy	Type of Strategy	Related Goals / Objectives	Related Maps	Timing	Responsible City Agencies	Other Responsible Entities
<u>Update appropriate documents such as the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code to reflect the complete streets policy.</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>47.7</u>		<u>Near Term</u>	<u>Community Development; Public Works</u>	

Discussion

The term “complete streets” describes a comprehensive, integrated transportation network with infrastructure and design that allows safe and convenient travel along and across streets for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motor-vehicle drivers, public transportation riders and drivers, and people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. A complete streets policy means that in designing streets, the City will consider whether a complete street treatment is appropriate in every future street construction, reconstruction, and maintenance project.

Since each complete street is unique, it is impossible to give a single description. But ingredients that may be found on a complete street include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urbanized area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. Below are annotated examples of complete streets:



Goodwin Avenue at Illinois Street, Urbana.

Wide sidewalks, curb extensions, and well-marked crosswalks help pedestrians travel through the intersection. On-street bicycle lanes provide bicyclists a dedicated space, keeping them segregated from automobile traffic. Striping narrows the travel lane, keeping speeds at appropriate levels.



Philo Road south of Florida Avenue, Urbana.

This transit shelter on Philo Road provides ample room for transit riders without obstructing pedestrians or bicyclists on the sidewalks.



Windsor Road and Vine Street, Urbana.

This crosswalk in front of Meadowbrook Park is accessible for pedestrians of all abilities. This crosswalk provides accessible curb cuts, highly visible striping, and an island in the middle of the street, effectively shortening the time needed to cross lanes of traffic.



Here, the pedestrian environment is improved with wide sidewalks, curb bulb-outs (which shorten the time needed to cross the street), and pedestrian traffic signals. Motorists have plenty of on-street parking, and the wide lanes allow trucks and buses to pass through comfortably. Cyclists can easily share the lane with cars. The bulb-outs give motorists an expanded degree of vision, as parked cars do not interfere with sightlines down the intersecting street.

Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/completestreets



Typical residential street in older sections of Urbana.

On narrow streets in residential areas with slow-moving traffic, the addition of sidewalks makes the street complete. Bicyclists can easily ride along the main travel lane.



This two-lane road accommodates motorized traffic and bicyclists who are comfortable sharing the lane. Pedestrians and cyclists are welcome on the shared use path that runs parallel to the road.

Photo: Dan Burden, Walkable & Livable Communities Institute



In rural areas, a wide shoulder helps pedestrians, bicyclists, and families with strollers travel from one place to another without needing a car.

Photo: Dan Burden, Walkable & Livable Communities Institute



Urbana Shared Use Lane Signs and Road Markings.

The addition of a 'Bikes May Use Full Lane' sign and share the road markings on the road alert automobile drivers that bicyclists may be present and informs them of bicyclists' right to use the full lane.

Reasons for Complete Streets

Complete streets policies meet the needs of communities because of the many benefits they provide. Here are some of the key benefits:

1. *Safety.* Complete streets improve safety. A Federal Highways Administration safety review found that streets designed with sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers improve pedestrian safety. Some features, such as medians, improve safety for all users, as they enable pedestrians to cross busy roads in two stages, eliminate mid-block left-turning motorist crashes, and improve bicycle safety.
2. *Health.* Complete streets encourage walking and bicycling for health. The National Institutes of Medicine recommends fighting obesity by establishing ordinances to integrate construction of sidewalks, bikeways, and other places for physical activity into new development. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among individuals without a safe place to walk, just 27% were active enough.
3. *Sustainability.* Complete streets address climate change and oil dependence. The potential to reduce carbon emissions by shifting trips to lower-carbon modes is significant. The 2001 National Household Transportation Survey found 50% of all trips in metropolitan areas are three miles or less and 28% of all metropolitan trips are one mile or less – distances easy to walk, bike, or hop on a bus or train. Yet 65% of the shortest trips are made by automobile, in part because of incomplete streets that make it dangerous or unpleasant for other modes of travel. Complete streets would help convert many of these short automobile trips to multi-modal travel. Simply increasing bicycling from 1% to 1.5% of all trips in the U.S. would save 462 million gallons of gasoline each year. Using transit has already helped the United States save 1.4 billion gallons of fuel each year, which is a savings of 3.9 million gallons of gasoline every day.
4. *Livability.* Complete Streets foster strong communities. Livability refers to the environmental and social quality of an area as perceived by residents, employees, customers, and visitors. This includes safety, health and well-being, economic opportunity, social equity, the local environmental quality, and preservation of valued cultural and environmental resources. Complete streets play an important role in livable communities, where all people – regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation – feel safe and welcome on the roadways. A safe walking and bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation and creating friendly, walkable communities.

For additional information on complete streets, two good sources are www.completestreets.org and www.walkable.org.

Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code & Urbana Manual of Practice

Following adoption of the Complete Streets amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, City staff will prepare amendments to the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code to incorporate

Complete Streets practices. City staff will take these amendments to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission for review and comment before forwarding them to the Urbana Plan Commission and City Council for adoption.

Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission Review

On September 20, 2011, the Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission reviewed the proposed text amendment. The Commission recommended including ‘and public rights-of-way’ to ‘roadways’ in the proposed goal 47.12 as the definition of ‘roadway’ does not always include shoulders and sidewalks. Staff agreed with this recommendation and has updated the proposed text amendment. The Commission unanimously recommended adoption of the proposed text amendment to add a complete streets policy to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Summary of Staff Findings

1. Urbana Mayor and City Council adopted the Urbana City Council and Mayor Goals on February 1, 2010 which included a goal of environmental sustainability and a sub-strategy to achieve that goal of adopting a Complete Streets policy (Strategy L).
2. The 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan was adopted in April 2005 with a cornerstone goal of ‘Mobility: The elements for keeping Urbana accessible to everyone by promoting a safe, multi-modal transportation system with high-quality and efficient infrastructure’ and goals and strategies related to achieving this cornerstone goal of mobility.
3. The Urbana Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in April 2008 with goals of increasing bicycle mode share in Urbana and expanding the bicycle network.
4. The proposed text amendment to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan will amend *Goal 47.0 Create a multi-modal transportation system to include Objective 47.12 Use complete streets concept in designing, constructing, reconstructing, and maintaining roadways and public rights-of-way.*
5. The proposed text amendment will amend the Implementation Program to include an implementation strategy to *Update appropriate documents such as the Urbana Subdivision and Land Development Code to reflect the complete streets policy.*
6. On September 20, 2011, the Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission reviewed the proposed amendment and unanimously recommended its adoption.

Options

The Plan Commission has the following options for recommendation to the Urbana City Council. In Plan Case 2154-CP-11, the Plan Commission may:

1. Forward a recommendation for approval as presented; or
2. Forward a recommendation for approval with specific modifications; or
3. Forward a recommendation to deny the request.

Recommendations

In Plan Case 2154-CP-11, the Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission recommends approval of the proposed amendment.

Based on the evidence presented in the discussion above, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommends that the Commission recommend APPROVAL of the proposed amendment to the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan, as presented herein.

Attachments: September BPAC minutes

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Date: Tuesday September 20, 2011

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: City Council Chambers, City of Urbana, 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL

Members Present: Gary Cziko, Brandon Bowersox, Ray Spooner, Susan Jones, Morgan Johnston, Bryan Lake, Michelle Guerra

Staff Members Present: Brad Bennett

Absent: Barak Rosenshine, Audrey Ishii,

New Business

2. Complete Streets – Comprehensive Plan text amendment—Rebecca Bird

This agenda item is a proposed amendment to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan setting forth the City's commitment to Complete Streets. Currently there is no reference to Complete Streets in the Comprehensive Plan. Goal 47.0 would add an objective to read:

47.12 Use complete streets concept in designing, construction, reconstruction and maintaining roadways adding: (and public rights of way)

Discussion ensued. Brandon Bowersox made a motion to add this objective 47.12 to the implementation program and the addition of *and public rights of way*.

Brad Bennett made a motion seconded by Susan Jones; upon verbal voice vote the motion carried to add Objective 47.12. This will be sent on to the Plan Commission and then on to City Council.

Adjournment

Brandon Bowersox adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.
This meeting was recorded on video tape.