

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: February 27, 2025

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Dustin Allred, Will Andresen, Bill Rose, Karen Simms, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS ABSENT: Debarah McFarland

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Geoff Bant, Joanne Budde, Makenzie Pamperin, Austin Wang

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Allred called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of the members present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the December 19, 2024 Regular Meeting

The minutes of the December 19, 2024 regular meeting was presented for approval. Mr. Rose moved that the minutes be approved by the Plan Commission as written. Mr. Andresen seconded the motion. The minutes of the December 19, 2024 regular meeting were approved by voice vote.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

- *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan – Place/Building Type Matrix

E. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

H. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

J. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Garcia reported on the following:

- **Dutch Bros. Coffee Shop Special Use Permit** – Mr. Garcia said that City Council approved the Special Use Permit with an additional condition that the developer would work with Planning staff and with Engineering staff to come up with some treatments at the driveway to help make it safer for people walking and biking past the driveway.

K. STUDY SESSION

***Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan Draft**

Chair Allred re-opened this item on the agenda. Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, and Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development, presented the agenda for discussion on the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan, which was as follows:

- I. *Imagine Urbana* Changes Since 2/20/25 Plan Commission Meeting
- II. *Imagine Urbana* Draft Review & Comments
- III. *Imagine Urbana* Review and Recommendation Timeline
- IV. 3/06/2025 Plan Commission Topics

I. *Imagine Urbana* Changes Since February 20, 2025 Plan Commission Meeting

Mr. Garcia and Ms. Ruedi reviewed the following changes that staff made to the plan since the last meeting:

- Define Street Types and Illustrate on the Connected City Map (Little Move 6.10)
- Renumbered associated metrics for Big Move 6
- Added language in Background & Trends to automatically incorporate updated versions of the 2016 Bicycle Master Plan, the 2020 Pedestrian Master Plan, and the 2008 Boneyard Creek Master Plan as elements of the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan

Chair Allred asked if the 2012 Downtown Plan was intentionally left off this list. He said it was listed in the amendments to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Garcia said that they can add it to the list if the Plan Commission wants to.

Chair Allred mentioned that there are several Champaign County plans, such as the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Greenways and Trails Plan. Mr. Garcia said that he is not sure how these two plans fit in with the Comprehensive Plan. During his time with the City, he has never referred to or pointed to them as reasoning for any decision making. He would need to give it some more thought before agreeing to adding them to the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Garcia continued to mention other changes that were made. They were as follows:

- Updated the Place/Building Type Matrix (handout) by adding photos
- Updated the Development Opportunities Map – updated to a higher resolution, can now zoom in on specific areas, added UCSD pump station, and added the undeveloped area south of The Pines as a development opportunity
- Updated Connected City Map – separated planned projects into priority projects, changed the color of the Mumford Drive extension and listed it as a low-priority project, made the blue arrows showing extended streets larger, and removed the completed projects from the map.

Chair Allred said that the numbering for the projects is weird. Also, there are two projects that have something other than a circle as the symbol, and there is no explanation why they are different. Mr. Garcia said that the numbering is weird because he grabbed them from below the map and swapped some of the projects out. He said that he did not have time to fix the numbering, however, he will fix it before the next Plan Commission meeting. With regards to the triangular symbols, he said that they are in places where there is uncertainty about the alignment of future extensions. He said that he could use a circle with a line instead of using a triangle. He noted a few other changes he wants to make to the map to make it easier to understand.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the changes he made to the Place/Building Type Matrix in more detail. He explained that the right side of the Matrix has the different place types that were defined for the plan. Green indicates what type of development would be acceptable in each place type. Yellow indicates the type of development that might be okay to have a limited number, or the City may want to place some sort of restrictions on that type of development. He said that the Matrix is a guide that will help with updating the Zoning Ordinance in the future. He pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan is a policy document, not a regulatory document.

Chair Allred said that there are many potential users (such as developers) of the Comprehensive Plan. So, he does not feel that some of the terminology makes sense. He used the commercial plus residential development type. The message they are trying to send is that these are building types where there is a mix of uses in a single building as opposed to saying the developer could have commercial or they can have residential. He recommended just calling it “mixed use” to make it clear for all users to understand. Mr. Garcia added that they could also add a definition of “mixed use” in the plan.

Ms. Simms asked if tiny homes would fit in the category of “accessory uses”. Mr. Garcia noted that he should define “accessory use” in the plan. Mr. Garcia explained that a tiny house would qualify as a single house, and it would be appropriate to have in either of the neighborhood areas, rural residential, or agriculture. If someone wanted to construct a tiny home on a lot that already has a regular-sized home on it, then it would qualify as an accessory dwelling. He stated that when we do a rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance, then we will need to get into these details. “Accessory dwelling” could include tiny homes, garage apartments, basement, or attic apartments. He stated that when we do a rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance, then we will need to get into these details.

Chair Allred asked if the photos were of Urbana properties. Mr. Garcia replied that some of the photos he used from a presentation that was given at a planning conference in Denver. He added that many of the existing accessory dwellings in Urbana predate the existing Zoning Ordinance and would not be allowed these days without zoning approval. However, there are examples of accessory dwellings in the City of Urbana that staff could use for photos instead of the out-of-city

ones. He noted that he did not believe there is an example in Urbana of a triplex. He said the photo of the quadplex appears to be smaller than the triplex. He stated that quite often people do not care how many units are in a dwelling. They care about how big the building is or how it looks.

Chair Allred wondered if it would help to include a range of the number of units that would be allowed in both the small apartment and the mid-size apartment categories. Mr. Garcia said yes. Ms. Simms wondered if they should include occupancy of a dwelling as well. Ms. Ruedi asked if it would be better to have a range of bedrooms versus the number of units.

Mr. Rose mentioned whether or not they would want to include a rooming house. Mr. Garcia said that brings up the concern of whether they are talking about development types or uses. Mr. Rose said that he is comfortable with what is mentioned in the proposed plan.

Mr. Rose stated that he can see this as reimagining how we might move into a zoning ordinance with significant changes. He asked if we risk confusing readers because of the similarity in overlap between our place types in the proposed Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Garcia said that he did not know. Mr. Rose suggested that they explain what the City is doing in the Comprehensive Plan preface, it might bypass some confusion. Mr. Garcia said that he wrote an introduction to the proposed Comprehensive Plan, but he has not received any feedback on it yet. He is willing to consider making changes, maybe even tie the updating of the Zoning Ordinance to Big Move #2.

Ms. Simms said that she noticed we do not have any place types for stores, strip malls, or open malls in the proposed plan. Driving through Urbana, there are many different store types, and she said that it would be nice to include them in the plan. Mr. Garcia said he appreciated the feedback.

Chair Allred mentioned the Charlotte Comprehensive Plan having one page that describes what “place types” are. Mr. Garcia said that he might have that plan printed out on his desk. Ms. Ruedi said that City staff called them building types originally and changed them to development types. She asked what Charlotte calls them. Chair Allred said that he believes Charlotte calls them place types; however, they are a mix with some describing buildings and some describing neighborhoods, and they are not coherent.

Ms. Simms referred to the government building on Page 5 of the proposed plan. She mentioned that it says “industrial”. Mr. Garcia explained that “industrial” refers to the place type on the next page. The page break occurred in a weird place. He had tried to split the table, and it created a weird format, so he plans to re-combine them.

Mr. Garcia talked about the types of Commercial/Business that are shown in the Place Types Matrix. Chair Allred stated that covering every version of commercial/business could start to look like a use table. He suggested combining and changing the place type label for to neighborhood commercial or commercial corridor or strip commercial. Mr. Rose added that they could provide an explanation in the preface saying that these are suggestions of development types.

Chair Allred noticed that office was not mentioned in any of the place types. It is currently allowed in the Light Industrial Zoning District; however, they are trying to move away from using the Light Industrial label because of the connotation with it. He said that they are trying to describe development types and show photos of what those might look like with regards to setbacks, number of stories/levels, etc. Ms. Yu suggested using different photos for the Industrial place

type. Chair Allred said the Charlotte Comprehensive Plan has something called “Suburban Office Commercial, which is where he would imagine many Light Industrial developments being. He said that he does not like using the word “suburban” because it does not really describe the form; however, he feels that they need to modify the Light Industrial label, maybe to something like “Commercial Corridor”. After the Plan Commission members discussing possible changes, Mr. Garcia stated that he received good feedback on the matrix.

Mr. Garcia talked about the Open Space place type. Ms. Simms said that it seems there is always a mixed use in most parks, for example a playground and a basketball court. She suggested that staff drive around the parks in Urbana and talk with developers to see what they envision for the open space they create. Ms. Ruedi said that they could have “Outdoor Recreational” and “Indoor Recreational” types.

II. *Imagine Urbana* Draft Review and Comments

Mr. Garcia and Ms. Ruedi presented an updated draft of *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. They noted that the draft incorporates discussion that the Plan Commission has had during study sessions over the previous three months. Ms. Ruedi pointed out that there are still some areas where verbiage is needed for clarity. No one has made any comments [recently] on the online version. Staff will accept any form of comments, whether it be online or a scratched-up copy redline.

Chair Allred stated that there are some broad, not specific, edits that he would like to see made to the plan. The basis for a comprehensive plan should be an analysis of the existing conditions. We should look at demographics, changes in demographics and land use, infrastructure conditions, etc. as one part of the plan, and the other part is public input. As the proposed plan is currently written, it does a good job of emphasizing the public input, but not so much the role that the analysis of the existing conditions played. He used Big Move #1 as an example, which says that people say Urbana needs more housing. He believes that we should also say that there is data showing the percentage of people that are rent burdened, or whatever. Ms. Ruedi replied that this information is available in *Examine Urbana*, which is in the appendix of *Imagine Urbana*. Staff thoughts are to keep the plan brief and to reference some of the appendix documents. Chair Allred said that he believes it needs to be woven throughout the plan to justify why some of the big moves and big ideas are in the plan. This makes the plan more powerful and legitimate because it comes not just from the public input, but also comes from the analysis of the data of the existing conditions in Urbana.

Chair Allred talked about the link to *Examine Urbana* in the draft plan. He believes that section with the link should also highlight a few key takeaways of *Examine Urbana* relating to the Big Ideas and Big Moves. This would also make a stronger argument for the content in the plan. Ms. Ruedi said that they can tie the highlights into the different sections of the plan. Chair Allred said that they need to determine what the key takeaways are and think about what we are highlighting in terms of Big Ideas and Big Moves, then we will know where to put them in the sections of the plan. Ms. Simms mentioned a strategy she uses when writing grants. She has to provide both data and needs analysis based on consumer input.

Mr. Garcia asked if the piece that says, “events that have shaped Urbana since 2005” is useful. Should it be put in the plan? Staff asked themselves this question about six months ago. They would appreciate feedback on this. Chair Allred said that he did not think that it needed to be a

timeline, but instead a paragraph that asks, “why does this matter?” and “what has been the impact?”

Chair Allred stated that some of his original comments include whether trends affecting local government in general is relevant to Urbana. If they are relevant, we need to explain how. Some of the trends include aging population and retirements reducing the size of the labor pool. While this is a broad problem of challenges we are facing in the country, is this a problem of Urbana? Ms. Ruedi commented that we may not know the answers to some specific trends. For example, one of the Big Moves and Little Moves is to do a housing study because we do not know that information.

Chair Allred suggested saying in the plan that these are some trends that we are aware of, and we want to know if these are things that we should be worried about in the City. Ms. Ruedi added that this would help people understand the progress that has been made in the last 20 years. Mr. Rose commented that he finds it useful that it would illustrate what scale of events were significant in Urbana. Some things were not such big deals, and it is in a way comforting that the big accomplishments are of a very human scale. Ms. Yu stated that she likes this suggestion.

Ms. Yu likes adding some of the data from the appendix to the plan to boost up some of the Big Moves and make the plan about Urbana. Otherwise, the plan does not feel like it is about Urbana. Mr. Rose concurred with Ms. Simms and feels that it would be worthwhile to take the *Examine Urbana* document and cull it for any data that can be used to support the claims that are made in *Imagine Urbana*.

Chair Allred stated that he believes the Barometers of Success needs more work. There needs to be more of an attempt to tie them to the particular Big Idea. If we are seeing progress in the Barometer of Success, then we are progressing in the Big Idea. Urbana becoming more of a place for everyone, specifically, is not really described in the plan, so what would we use to measure success. Ms. Ruedi said that this particular Idea was a difficult one to find Barometers of Success because it means different things to different people, so any input would be appreciated.

Chair Allred commented that he was unaware of whether these are placeholders or if they are the finished product, but they are written in a way that is sometimes hard to understand exactly what is being measured. It is also sometimes hard to understand what progress would be.

III. *Imagine Urbana* Review and Recommendation Timeline

Mr. Garcia reviewed staff's timeline for bringing *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan to Plan Commission as a plan case at a public hearing and to City Council after the Plan Commission makes a recommendation. He mentioned that staff has created a flyer to be mailed out to every residence in Urbana notifying people of the date (March 13th) for the first public hearing. Ms. Ruedi added that neighborhood groups will be receiving a notification as well. Staff will put some of the flyers at the library, the wellness center, and other places that the public go. They plan to reach out to social media and as many venues as they can.

Ms. Ruedi noted that as staff receives public input, they will be incorporating it into the plan. Staff will keep the Plan Commission abreast of any changes.

Chair Allred asked what happened with the timeline that staff and the Plan Commission decided upon before where the Plan Commission would hold a public hearing, then Council would hold a

study session, and then Plan Commission holding their second public hearing. Ms. Ruedi said that staff discussed this and decided that the Plan Commission should make a recommendation before it goes to Committee of the Whole. Rather than having it as part of the normal meeting process, the Committee of the Whole will have special study sessions just for *Imagine Urbana* once the Plan Commission forwards a recommendation.

The Plan Commission and staff discussed what day of the week that the Committee of the Whole would hold their special study sessions. Mr. Garcia said that they are thinking of holding them on Thursdays and to invite the Plan Commission.

IV. 3/06/2025 Plan Commission Topics

Mr. Garcia stated that there will be a text amendment for the Plan Commission to review in addition to another study session on *Imagine Urbana* at the March 6, 2025 meeting.

Ms. Ruedi asked that the Plan Commission take the time to review the draft plan and provide feedback so staff can incorporate changes based on their feedback in the plan before the next meeting.

Mr. Garcia reiterated that the opening of the first public hearing for *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan will be held on March 13, 2025 at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801.

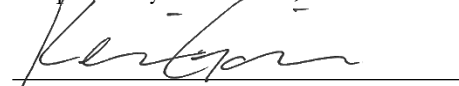
Chair Allred asked if staff planned to interview with WCIA or with the News-Gazette. Mr. Garcia replied that they would be willing to do so. He pointed out that Bridget Broihahn, who is the City's public relations professional, will help with outreach and getting a press release out.

Chair Allred asked if any members of the audience wanted to speak on *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. There were none. Mr. Garcia talked about the ways that people could comment on the plan.

L. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission