



**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
URBANA PLAN COMMISSION**

APPROVED

DATE: April 10, 2025

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Dustin Allred, Will Andresen, Andrew Fell, Bill Rose, Chenxi Yu

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Lew Hopkins

MEMBERS ABSENT: Debarah McFarland, Karen Simms

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner; Teri Andel, Planning
Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Makenzie Pamperin, Austin Wang

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Allred called the meeting to order at 7:01 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

There were none.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Beverly Fagan regarding Plan Case No. 2502-CP-25
- Email from Audrey Ishii regarding Plan Case No. 2502-CP-25
- *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan – DRAFT dated 04-10-2025

E. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2502-CP-25 – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to adopt the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Allred reopened Plan Case No. 2502-CP-25. He reviewed the procedure for a public hearing.

Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, began by reviewing the changes made to the proposed plan since the previous meeting on April 3, 2025. He noted changes to the following:

- Minor Edits
 - Connected City Map
 - Events that have shaped Urbana since 2005
 - Adoption of the Land Development Code, formerly called the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
 - Adoption of the Manual of Practice in 2023
- Backgrounds and Trends
 - Language about adopting existing plans
- Added some complete streets language to Big Move 6
- Updated the Place Types matrix and some of the language in this section

Chair Allred asked if we have draft language for what would be in the ordinance that would address this. Mr. Garcia replied there is nothing that has been super fleshed out yet. City staff grabbed the adopted ordinance from 2005 Comprehensive Plan, inserted some language about adopting existing plans. They will need to look at the language and figure out exactly how we want to word it. Chair Allred stated that he did not believe the wording of the ordinance needs to come from the Plan Commission.

Mr. Rose and Chair Allred discussed with Mr. Garcia possible language regarding the adoption of existing plans. They agreed upon the following language, *“The following plans were adopted as amendments to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. They will be adopted as individual plans by the ordinance that adopts the Imagine Urbana Comprehensive Plan.”* Chair Allred stated that the point is to get that statement in there so that it makes sense that we are backdating their adoption essentially.

Mr. Garcia talked about *“complete streets”* noting that it is defined as an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. He said that in 2011, City Council adopted a complete streets amendment to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan adding objective number 47.8 to the plan, which simply says, *“use complete streets concepts in designing, constructing, reconstructing, and maintaining roadways.”* The amendment also added an implementation strategy which said to update appropriate documents, such as the Land Development Code to reflect the complete streets policy. With respect to this amendment, the Implementation has been uneven and ad hoc. Most of it has been a result of developing and implementing the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. So, there has been no push to develop an implementation plan or to flesh out how the City is going to do complete streets and what the goals are.

He said that *Imagine Urbana* does not mention complete streets. It has a Little Move 6.6, which says *“to develop policies for traffic calming”*. However, traffic calming is related to complete streets, specifically focused on slowing down traffic, which is a great thing. Traffic calming can be just one element of what complete streets really encompasses in whole. He mentioned that staff received a comment from Cynthia Hoyle, who is a longtime Urbana resident and former member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission for many years. Ms. Hoyle also wrote a book about traffic

calming in America. In her comment, she suggests that the City develop an implementation plan for the complete streets policy rather than focusing on traffic calming by itself. He mentioned that he found a study by Professor Michael Luen, who looked at numerous complete streets policies throughout the United States. Professor Luen found two main reasons why policies do not get implemented. One of the reasons is that the language of a policy is often so vague as to justify almost any conceivable policy. The problem can be mitigated if complete streets policies are more explicit. Policies should precisely state what they are designed to achieve and what means should be used to achieve those goals. Mr. Garcia recommends that they update Little Move 6.6 to read as such, *“develop a more specific complete streets policy and a plan to implement that policy”*. He said that we would lose the phrasing of traffic calming even though it is encapsulated within complete streets as a concept. He mentioned that he would be open to working traffic calming in the language, so they do not lose it.

Chair Allred asked how many standalone policy statements we have. Would a new policy create a new ordinance that would be separate from the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Code? Are there policy amendments that would be outside of these two ordinances? Mr. Garcia replied that he did not know that there would be anything outside of the Zoning Ordinance or the Land Development Code that the Plan Commission would address. The idea is that we would dive into policy documents/statements and figure out where they are failing in terms of meeting specific outcomes we are looking for in whatever policy we develop. Chair Allred stated that he is wondering if they really need policy or do we need to incorporate the concepts or ideas of complete streets into our existing ordinances? Mr. Garcia said that the existing Comprehensive Plan says to update appropriate documents such as the Land Development Code to reflect the complete streets policy. Our complete streets policy as it is stated is vague, so without fleshing out what our goals are from that policy or what we are looking to do, he does not know how we actually update our Land Development Code to match that policy. We need to work on the front end to figure out what exactly that we are talking about and then update those documents.

Chair Allred said that he is thinking of how to sequence the work or figure out the best way to get to the end point. He thinks that ultimately it is by making changes to existing ordinances which would occur through a staff report. He said that he would like to avoid creating more of these standalone policies that seem to not have a good home. It is not clear where their power is and how to keep them on our radar to pay attention to, rather than as an agenda item that the Plan Commission wants staff to research and come up with proposals on how to make changes to our Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Code.

Chair Allred stated that if we change the Little Move, then we also need to change the associated metric. Mr. Garcia said yes.

Mr. Rose stated that Mr. Garcia has provided a very succinct definition of what complete streets are. He would be comfortable with having Little Move 6.6 talk about traffic calming and add the definition of traffic calming. He does not know if they need to address implementation of that here.

Mr. Garcia continued with his presentation by talking about the Place Types matrix and their descriptions. He stated that he added sketches and photos. He noted language changes to the introduction of the matrix and changes to the colors used for indicating whether things are appropriate or not. He changed the formatting for the Development Type and Place Type columns.

He also processed photos to make them look sketchy and added photos where they were lacking. He noted that he made it so a person could click on the sketch and see a more detailed image.

He mentioned that he separated triplexes and quadplexes again. He added Cottage Court and used sketch photos of Buena Vista Court. He added sketch photos of small-scale, medium-scale, and large-scale apartments. Chair Allred asked if Mr. Garcia would be adding a description for the Cottage Court Place Type. Mr. Garcia stated that many of the Development Types do not have descriptions. Chair Allred replied that it may be something that needs to be added in the definitions and the terms, because it might not be familiar to people in terms of what that means.

Mr. Garcia stated that he removed the mixed-use large-scale from the Corridor Neighborhood. He intends to rename “*Institutional*” to “*Civic/Institutional*” with small-scale, medium-scale, and large-scale institutional buildings as well as campus institutional. He split Open Space and Recreation into three types with small and large recreation and then indoor recreation.

Chair Allred questioned using two churches as images for small-scale institutional. He said there are issues of constitutional rights in terms of suggesting some religious uses are not allowed in certain neighborhoods. Is this something that is reflected in the Urbana Zoning Ordinance currently? Singling out religious uses as opposed to places of gathering or something like that and regulating it that way. He said that he does not want to give the impression that City is suggesting something that would not actually be the way the City would regulate it. Mr. Garcia said that he would have to look at the Zoning Ordinance, but we currently have a use called *church, temple, or mosque*, and we parse out what zoning districts that use can be appropriate in.

Mr. Rose asked to see the introduction to the matrix. He stated that the last sentence of the first paragraph seemed repetitive with the first sentence of the following paragraph. He suggested eliminating the last sentence of the first paragraph and not begin the next paragraph with “for example” but rather begin with the future Zoning Ordinance. So, it would read as such, “*Details will need to be worked out when the zoning ordinance is rewritten to align with Imagine Urbana. {New paragraph} The future zoning ordinance may assign more than one zoning district with different regulations regarding the size, location, ...*”. He said the first sentence of the second paragraph could say, “*Each place type may contain more than one zoning district.*”. He stated that it is very important to note that each place type may contain more than one zoning district. Mr. Fell commented that the suggested language changes would be good for planners but not necessarily good for the public reading this document. He said that he would be more aligned with leaving the language the way it was presented by staff rather than changing it because it is clearer as currently written.

Ms. Yu stated that there is a way to make low quality photos into much better sketches without making them black and white. You can use a colorful sketch instead.

With there being no further questions for City staff, Chair Allred opened the hearing for public input. With there being no input from audience members, Chair Allred closed the public input portion of the hearing. He opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Fell stated that staff did a good job of incorporating the changes in the language the Plan Commission talked about at the last meeting. So, he is comfortable with all of the changes that have been made, and he feels that City staff followed the Plan Commission’s directions well.

He asked if traffic calming policies are part of complete streets. Mr. Garcia said that they could be, but they do not necessarily have to be. Mr. Fell asked why we do not just substitute complete street policies for traffic calming. Mr. Garcia replied that there is benefit to being clear. He said that one of the things he read from a complete streets study is that many of them can be vague as to justify any policy or any sort of treatment. So, he could see a situation where a city is implementing what they consider complete streets policies by just adding a bunch of pedestrian overpasses to six lane roads. This would not be in the spirit of what he would envision complete streets to be. Traffic calming is just slowing down traffic and making it a safe place that is more walkable. While traffic calming is a component that may be part of any good complete streets policy, it is not inherently baked into all complete streets policies. If we want to be explicit, it might be good to include specific language about complete streets policy with a focus on traffic calming or including traffic calming. He said there may be other elements that we might want to see.

Chair Allred asked what it means to say we are going to develop policy. Is the Comprehensive Plan the policy? The complete streets policy has always been adopted as an ordinance without much in it. Are there other examples of policies that are adopted as ordinances? Is this like a route that we want to go down? Mr. Garcia replied that there are not many that he knows of. Chair Allred said the City wants to have complete streets, so how do we get there and what needs to be in the Comprehensive Plan to get us there? What would be the intervening steps or implementation? He said if the idea is for the Comprehensive Plan to provide direction to staff in terms of what staff should work on, then we should include it in the plan so it will be a metric that staff reports and gives updates on.

Chair Allred stated that he disagreed with Mr. Garcia's statement about the study. He said that he feels there is enough specificity in that as a concept in the same way that there is enough specificity in walkability as a concept that we can reference and have an idea about what we are trying to do when we task staff to provide a staff memo with some recommendations about changes to the ordinances that would achieve this. Mr. Garcia believed that there is other language in the draft plan that is more explicit about other things, for example, it will say *"amend the Zoning Ordinance to do X"*, so we could say *"amend the Zoning Ordinance, the Land Development Code, and the Manual of Practice to focus on creating complete streets and calming traffic in our neighborhoods where appropriate."* Chair Allred said this would get us around potentially adopting another policy through an ordinance which we do not know what to do with. Mr. Fell agreed. What we really want is for these things to be solidified in the Zoning Ordinance, so they become law, not policy. Chair Allred added that the policy is the Comprehensive Plan, and we do not need other policies outside of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Fell said that he does not want to continue this case again if we do not have to. Mr. Garcia replied that we could tweak the implementation strategy that was adopted as part of the complete streets amendment to say, *"update appropriate documents such as the Land Development Code, Manual of Practice, and Zoning Ordinance to implement complete streets and traffic calming measures where appropriate"*. Mr. Rose suggested adding a following sentence that describes *"complete streets"*. Mr. Garcia said that he will add the following definition given by Smart Growth America: *"It is an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities."*

Chair Allred stated that he is still skeptical of the switch to sketchy type images. They look more sort of ghostly and old timey than they are something that is meant to convey indeterminacy to the public and to appease them in some way. He said that when he thinks about the development

community or architects working, there is more detail to be seen at least in the quality of the color images. Ms. Yu stated that it is springtime, which is prime time to take good photos. Mr. Garcia asked if the Plan Commission can move forward with the understanding that staff would add some better springtime photos.

Mr. Fell stated that the images are just conveying more scale than anything, and the current photos do that. He preferred if the photos were a little more solidified, but he is happy with staff's selection of the images to convey what they were trying to convey.

Mr. Andreson asked what the reasoning is for switching to the sketchy images. Mr. Garcia replied that it was a suggestion from the previous meeting to try it out. Chair Allred added that the idea was more of a psychological thing that sketchy images would create less anxiety in the viewer than something that appears as a real thing.

Mr. Rose stated that he has a slight preference for the sketches over the photographs. However, both are capable of conveying the information that we need. He trusts staff to use the best images. He believes it is important to have the matrix. How the matrix is illustrated is a matter of style and taste. Mr. Fell added that developers and other technical people will use the Zoning Ordinance to guide them in their developments over using photos. Mr. Garcia noted that is why it is good that the language in the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide further updates to the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Fell moved the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2502-CP-25 to the City Council with a recommendation to adopt the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan with the amendments discussed including language about complete streets and staff continuing to look at options for images in the matrix. Mr. Andresen seconded the motion.

Mr. Fell asked if Mr. Hopkins had any other relevant ideas or suggested changes. Mr. Garcia explained that Mr. Hopkins had submitted comments in writing. The changes that staff agreed with were included in the draft that was handed out prior to the start of this meeting.

Mr. Rose recalled a discussion of updating plans. Did the Plan Commission propose alternative wording to what is in the draft? He moved to amend the motion to include alternative language in the background and trends section to reflect what the Commission discussed. Mr. Andresen seconded the motion to amend. The motion to amend was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Roll call on the amended motion was as follows:

Mr. Andresen	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Mr. Rose	-	Yes	Ms. Yu	-	Yes
Mr. Allred	-	Yes			

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that this case would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole on April 21, 2025. He talked about the next steps and gave a timeline for the rest of the approval process. Chair Allred mentioned that this project has been ongoing for five (5) years, and he thanked everyone involved and participated in the making of *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. It is a quality

document. He encouraged Plan Commission members to attend at least one of the Council meetings to show support for this document.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There was none.

H. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Makenzie Pamperin approached the Plan Commission to speak. She thanked the Plan Commission for their work on reviewing and editing the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. She mentioned that the entire process had taken five (5) years.

J. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

K. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

L. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Garcia', is written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission