
DATE: Monday, June 15, 2026
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council Committee of the Whole of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, June 15, 2026, at 7:03 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: DeShawn Williams, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey, CM Verdell Jones III, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry*
***CM PRESENT REMOTELY**

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Darius White, Matthew Roeschley, Elizabeth Hannan, Don Ho, Tal Prendergast, Vince Gustafson, Evan Alvarez, Olivia Jovine, Seok Hyun Cho

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Stephanie Cockrell, Ward 5 Vacancy Candidate; Sophia Winkler-Schor, Ward 5 Vacancy Candidate; Dr. Meadow Jones, Ward 5 Vacancy Candidate; Stephen Bateman, Ward 5 Vacancy Candidate

Chair: *Verdell Jones III, Ward 4*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Chair Jones called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

a. Public Input

Jeffrey Trask expressed thanks for the City of Urbana's cooperation in drafting an ordinance establishing reparations and support with the Champaign-Urbana Reparations Coalition (CURC). Stated reparations are a form of overdue justice for African Americans to acknowledge, apologize, and provide restitution to begin healing. Recognized the leadership shown by Mayor Williams through his work toward establishing reparations locally and fighting for justice for all. Stated the framework for reparations locally draws inspiration from the City of Evanston's reparations program, the State of Illinois African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission, and other reparations programs across the nation.

a. **Public Input (Continued)**

Sharon Irish thanked the City Council and Mayor for their ongoing work toward establishing reparations. Further thanked Urbana and the Champaign County Board for financially supporting the CURC. Stated the City of Champaign has not yet decided if it will financially support the CURC. Shared students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) have voted to hold a referendum question to gauge support for local reparations. Voiced the CURC body should have a majority of local community members to ensure decisions are made by those most impacted by enslavement and its legacies. Emphasized the need for financial support to meet and develop a model for reparations. Stated Illinois State Senator Paul Faraci and Illinois State Representative Carol Ammons have committed to serve and represent their offices on the CURC. Additionally, expressed support for adaptive reuse and Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 regarding the landmarking of the Urbana Civic Center at 108 East Water Street. **Liz Cardman** spoke in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 regarding the Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 413-419 West Main Street. Stated the PUD will not create affordable housing, the PUD leads to a slippery slope of high-density development for students, and the PUD will stress single-family homeowners across Urbana. Expressed affordable housing can only come from government subsidized developments and shared support for building affordable housing everywhere in Urbana. **Mary-ann Blackburn** spoke in support of reparations and the recently approved Ethical Investment policy. Connected the movement for reparations with the movement for Palestinian justice as illustrated through the writings of Ta-Nehisi Coates. Stated reparations have already been established within the United States and many other entities in the nation are moving toward adopting a reparations program. Stated African American families who have experienced enslavement, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and acts of racism are owed reparations. **Angela Urban** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-06-016. Stated the vote should not consider input from a developer. Expressed hope for the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD) to collaborate with the Historic Preservation Commission on their grant application process. Stated the Urbana Civic Center is a crucial part of Urbana history as it served as an affordable community event space. Emphasized that the intent of the CUMTD to develop the property is irrelevant when considering landmarking the Urbana Civic Center. **Karen Medina** spoke in support of the local municipalities uniting to support reparations, Ordinance No. 2026-06-016, and adaptive reuse of the Urbana Civic Center. Stated while the CUMTD does require a downtown Urbana transit center, the Urbana Civic Center should be preserved due to its significance. **Aaron Ammons** thanked the City Council and Mayor for their support for reparations. Recounted how the United States paid reparations to victims of Japanese internment camps and pays for the Holocaust through continued payments to Israel. Stated the trafficked and enslaved African American people still do not receive compensation for the brutality that built the economic prosperity of the United States. Expressed hope for the City of Champaign to join the City of Urbana and Champaign County in supporting reparations and the CURC. Shared appreciation for the Ethical Investment policy. **Stuart Levy** spoke in support of reparations and Ordinance No. 2026-06-016. Stated there are currently not any tangible costs to designating the Urbana Civic Center as a historic landmark and considering it for adaptive reuse. Stated maintaining the building for adaptive reuse may be less expensive than anticipated by City staff. **Jessica Yasin** expressed support for the City of Urbana for their recent progressive legislative actions including the support for reparations and approval of the Ethical Investments policy. **David Hayes** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-06-016. Stated that the goals of the CUMTD and Historic Preservation Commission can support one another if more time is taken to consider adaptive reuse instead of demolishing the Urbana Civic Center. **Jim Young** spoke in support of advancing reparations which can include actions such as providing housing assistance, educational investments for African American children, and supporting healthcare access. Stated the CURC are ready to assist in developing a reparations task force and hosting public events promoting reparations.

b. Public Input (Continued)

Annie Adams spoke in opposition to Ordinance No. 2026-06-016. Stated the preservation of the Urbana Civic Center will harm the future of Champaign County and limit its ability to meet the needs of its growing population. Stated the proposed transit center will be an asset to the entire community. Stated there are no alternative site locations for a transit center in Urbana. Emphasized the need to protect bus operators and riders from extreme weather that they endure at the current Lincoln Square bus stops. Stated the CUMTD has emphasized that the designation of the Urbana Civic Center will stop them from applying for a federal grant to help fund the \$32,000,000 transit center development. Shared the CUMTD plans to memorialize the Urbana Civic Center within the future transit center and in historic archives.

Derek Williams spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 as the structure of the Urbana Civic Center could be used in the development of a necessary, new transit center.

Madison Bowman spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-06-016 as Urbana requires more landmarks and the CUMTD should consider adaptive reuse of the Urbana Civic Center. Stated student concepts created at UIUC demonstrate how adaptive reuse can be implemented and CUMTD should take on the challenge of adaptive reuse to preserve the historical value of the Urbana Civic Center. **Dennis Roberts** spoke in support of Ordinance No. 2026-06-016.

Noted a diverse coalition of people have come to express support for the historic preservation of the Urbana Civic Center and the adaptive reuse of the building. Stated, from viewing the exterior of the building, the Urbana Civic Center is in good condition and can be incorporated into the design of a future transit center. Stated the CUMTD will need a transit center and if the City landmarks the Urbana Civic Center, they will eventually find another site and return.

Written Public Input regarding Ordinance No. 2026-06-016, was received from the following individuals and were read by Council: Scott Mehaffey, Kathryn Holliday, Anna Hough, Ashlee McLaughlin & Karl Gnadt, Quinn Adamowski, Diane Marlin, and D. Garnett.

Written Public Input regarding Ordinance No. 2026-05-013 and support for a Champaign County Reparations Commission for African Americans was received from the following individuals but were not read: Anna Hough, Tait Johnson, Dennis Roberts, and Rohn Koester.

c. Ward 5 Council Seat Vacancy Applicants

Mayor Williams welcomed the candidates and provided them time to introduce themselves before the questions are presented. Dr. Stephanie Cockrell, Sophia Winkler-Schor, Dr. Meadow Jones, Stephen Bateman introduced themselves before answering the following questions provided by Council.

i. Question 1: What are two concerns you have for your Ward and why?

Stephen Bateman (SB) expressed a desire to use the position to address youth gun violence in the community and to improve affordability. Stated that the cost of living in Urbana is increasing and Urbana should provide more assistance.

Dr. Meadow Jones (MJ) stated improving housing and accessibility are two issues should be a goal for the position to accomplish. Emphasized the need for safe, reliable housing as well as home ownership in Urbana. Voiced concern for accessibility for people with disabilities in the community. Added, the City should promote more youth development opportunities as well.

i. **Question 1:** What are two concerns you have for your Ward and why? (Continued)

Sophia Winkler-Schor (SWS) voiced the challenges of housing accessibility and livability are large concerns for Ward 5 and Urbana. Emphasized the importance of providing everyone access to resources, community spaces, and services when considering livability within any community. Stated opportunities for affordable housing must be developed by considering novel methods of revenue generation such as a tax on vacant properties being neglected by their property owners. Highlighted it as an opportunity for Ward 5 as the area suffers from blight and neglected properties, leading to a lack of constituents and lack of support for local businesses.

Dr. Stephanie Cockrell (SC) listed the issues of neighborhood investment, public safety, housing stability, and economic development as primary concerns. Stated the business closures and vacant properties in the Philo Road area have lowered the quality of life for residents. Emphasized the need for youth investment as crime and the well-being of families are interconnected issues. Stated revitalization of the area should address safety and well-being while working to improve the lives of residents and providing more opportunities.

ii. **Question 2:** How would you balance advocating for your Ward while making decisions that affect the entire City?

SC stated advocacy for your Ward includes care for the City and improvements to a Ward of Urbana will lead to improving all aspects of Urbana. Expressed decisions made by Council should not be limited to the concerns of your immediate Ward but should consider those local perspectives when thinking on how support to the community, as a whole, can be provided.

SWS expressed the advocacy begins through gaining an understanding of the Ward's needs to use that understanding while considering the needs of the City. Stated this allows enables a collaborative approach with Council to improve the conditions of the City while keeping in mind the unique needs between the Wards.

MJ stated representatives should relay the needs of their constituents to address the concerns of the whole of Urbana through the advocacy Council brings together. Stated representatives should seek to find where the best work can be done and how best they can collaborate with their peers.

SB voiced the representative must listen to the needs of their constituents while acting in the best interests of the City and finding compromises to ensure all community members can benefit. Stated an understanding of what is most important to your community and where they are willing to compromise is how balance can be found.

iii. **Question 3:** What are your thoughts on policing in Urbana today, including strengths and areas for improvement?

MJ stated the Urbana Police Department (UPD) have upcoming projects, such as alternative response, that can reduce their workload. Stated community members should feel safe when UPD responds and Urbana should move toward creating additional social support systems to relieve the burden of having to respond to social issues, rather than criminal issues, from the UPD.

- iii. **Question 3:** What are your thoughts on policing in Urbana today, including strengths and areas for improvement? (Continued)

SWS highlighted the progress made on the alternative response program to better address the needs of the community without having to rely on a police response. Proposed monitoring and measuring the actual impacts of investments into increasing policing to see if they have produced material improvements to public safety or if those investments could be better redirected to alternative sources of public safety. Emphasized the need to consider the experiences of those who are policed when thinking of violence within the community.

SB expressed that the UPD have done a good job in improving their standards and the Chief of Police, Larry Boone is doing his best with the resources available. Stated efforts to improve transparency and community engagement will help create a more positive vision of police officers in the community to allow for more collaboration instead of opposition. Shared support for the alternative response program as it enables a more positive response to mental health crises, protecting the officers and the people in need of care.

SC stated opposition to unjust policing and policing systems that create disparities and systemic issues. Expressed support for systems of accountability and community connection that allows for the community and police to equitably collaborate as peers, rather than in a hierarchy. Stated the system of policing and accountability must be aware of how trauma leads to violence; how crime can be reduced through connecting families to resources, services, and opportunities; and how equitable collaboration between the community and police can lead to a more sustainable system to benefit everyone. Voiced that there must be a change from the current system that leaves people harmed.

Mayor Williams thanked the candidates for their answers and willingness to volunteer. Shared Council will be discussing the next steps during the upcoming closed session, and he will contact the candidates soon to inform them of the appointment decision.

5. Staff Report

City Administrator Darius White invited the public to attend the City of Urbana's Juneteenth celebrations, tomorrow, on June 16, 2026, beginning at 11:00 a.m. in Council Chambers alongside the Juneteenth food truck event at 201 East Illinois Street occurring from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Motion to recess for 5-minutes by CM Wu, seconded by CM Hursey.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

Council recessed at 8:24 p.m. and returned, with a quorum present, at 8:31 p.m.

6. New Business

- a. **Resolution No. 2026-06-023R:** A Resolution Amending an Intergovernmental Agreement for the Emergency Telephone System Board between the City of Urbana, the City of Champaign, the Village of Rantoul Illinois, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois and the County of Champaign, Illinois – FD

Presented by Tal Prendergast, Deputy Fire Chief. The Resolution amends an intergovernmental agreement for the Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) to include updates to reflect current Illinois 9-1-1 laws, operational practices, governance structures, financial administration requirements, and changes for the integration of the Village of Rantoul's dispatch Services into Metropolitan Computer Aided Dispatch (METCAD) operations. Tal Prendergast shared the Resolution includes various changes to operations in order to account for the closure of the Village of Rantoul's dispatch service. Stated the changes also include a change in payments to the Illinois State 9-1-1 Administrator to send payments to an account held by ETSB instead of a municipality or METCAD. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda by CM Hursey, seconded by CM Wu.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- b. **Ordinance No. 2026-06-015:** An Ordinance Approving a Special Use Permit (Medical Clinic at 909 North Cunningham Avenue / Plan Case No. 2522-SU-26) – CD

Presented by Evan Alvarez, Principal Planner with Olivia Jovine, Community Development Services Director available for questions. The Ordinance approves a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a medical clinic at 909 North Cunningham Avenue. Evan Alvarez stated Dei Gracia Healthcare has applied for a SUP to allow a medical clinic at 909 North Cunningham Avenue and the Plan Commission recommended approval of the SUP. Displayed images of the location of the building and business. Stated the medical clinic began operating around seven to eight months ago with the owner receiving approval through the regular business permitting process but was unaware a SUP was required. Shared the business owner has been working with the Community Development department to address this oversight.

Spoke on the general Land Use classifications and Zoning designations in the area of the business. Stated that the Cunningham Avenue corridor, where the business is located, is marked as a commercial Place Type under Imagine Urbana. Shared the business owner intends to provide preventative care and mental health treatment to clients. Noted the approval of the SUP aligns with goals within Imagine Urbana to support community health, public safety, and access to essential resources. Shared the three criteria for the SUP were met by the proposal and staff found the proposal to be beneficial for the public and to be suitable for its surrounding neighborhood. Stated the Plan Commission recommended approval with no conditions and for the SUP to apply to the entire property. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda, with an amendment to only apply to Suite A and exclude plasma donation centers, by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Wu.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- c. **Ordinance No. 2026-06-016:** An Ordinance Designating a Historic Landmark (108 East Water Street, “Urbana Civic Center” / Historic Preservation Case No. HP-2026-L-01) – CD

Presented by Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services and Evan Alvarez, Principal Planner. The Ordinance designates the property at 108 East Water Street, a property owned by the City, known as the Urbana Civic Center (Civic Center), as a historic landmark under Section XII-5 of the Zoning Ordinance. Questions and discussion followed. Evan Alvarez stated on April 27, 2026, the landmark nomination application was reviewed and found to be complete by staff before being sent to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for further review and judgement. Shared that on June 3, 2026, the HPC reviewed and recommended approval of the application for landmarking the Urbana Civic Center. Stated the final approval requires Council action due to the Civic Center being a City-owned property.

Shared background on the development of the Civic Center and its history as a community event space. Stated the design of the building is an example of mid-century Midwestern architectural modernism from the architects Delbert Smith, Scott Seaton, and Milan Olach. Stated the Civic Center operated as a public event space until December 2018 due to need for maintenance and financial concerns.

Olivia Jovine stated City Council, in 2014, adopted a Resolution that recognizes an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Urbana and the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD) to work toward the development of a transit facility in an ideal location such as downtown Urbana. Shared in 2018, staff presented to Council on the issue of the closure of the Civic Center and City Council later approved the closure of the building by the end of the year. Stated in 2023, Council approved the CIP for 2024 to 2028 which included divesting from the Civic Center and considering developing the lot. Stated City Council, in 2025 and 2026, approved updates to the CIP for 2026 which included funding toward the demolition of the Civic Center.

Evan Alvarez spoke on CUMTD’s exploration of using the Civic Center location for a downtown transit center, which required a Section 106 review, conducted in May 2024, per the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Shared the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) found the Civic Center eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the application for local designation was informed by that determination. Reported the Civic Center meets five of the requirements for a historic landmark and detailed each criterion. Shared the recommendations from the HPC to approve the designation of the Civic Center as a Local Landmark based on the building meeting five of seven criteria for the designation as a historic landmark.

Stated approving the designation would continue the current site monitoring, would require it to meet the requirements of Article XII of the Zoning Ordinance, and would require any future work on the building to be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness granted by the HPC. Questions and discussion ensued.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda, with no recommendation, by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: Evans

d. Ordinance No. 2026-06-017: An Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Annual Budget – HRF

Presented by Elizabeth Hannan, Human Resources & Finance Director / CFO and Don Ho, Senior Management Analyst / Budget Coordinator. The Ordinance adopts the FY2027 annual budget. Don Ho refreshed Council on the process of approving the incoming Annual Budget and revising the outgoing Annual Budget. Stated that the attached exhibit contains updates to account for the retained State Income Tax Revenue, savings carried forward by the Fire Department and increases to the Recycling collection budget that were made in the time since the proposed budget was made public.

Elizabeth Hannan stated around \$282,000 in unallocated funds remains in the General Fund remain available for use outside of the reserve fund balance. Stated \$218,000 of those funds are recurring revenue, retained from the State Income Tax Revenue that was originally anticipated to be reduced. Noted Council could utilize those funds toward the future implementation of the Alternative Response Program. Stated around \$63,000 of one-time funds would then remain to be allocated.

Questions and discussion followed.

Council provided direction to staff to continue allocating \$25,000 toward supporting repairs.

Motion to extend the meeting time to 11:00 p.m. by CM Hursey, seconded by CM Quisenberry.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- i. Motion to amend to forward \$37,000 in unused funding from the Sustaining Urbana Neighborhoods (SUN) grant program with an addition of \$63,000 in one-time funding to the FY2027 annual budget (totaling around \$100,000) by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Evans. Discussion followed.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Evans, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Hursey, Jones, Quisenberry

- ii. Motion to amend to allocate \$100,000 in available recurring funds toward the recurring funding for Alternative Response by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Evans. Discussion followed.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Evans, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Hursey, Jones, Quisenberry

- e. **Ordinance No. 2026-06-018:** An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget Ordinance (Budget Amendment #10 – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Estimates) – HRF

Presented by Elizabeth Hannan, Human Resources & Finance Director / CFO and Don Ho, Senior Management Analyst / Budget Coordinator. The Ordinance amends the FY2026 budget to conform to estimates provided in the proposed FY2027 budget.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

7. Discussion

a. Surveillance Ordinance

CM Wilken shared she will be compiling the proposals under consideration to be presented and voted on during a meeting in July. Welcomed collaboration and input from Council.

Motion to extend the meeting to 11:30 p.m. by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

8. Closed Session Pursuant to ILCS 120/2(c)(3) – Appointment to a Vacancy in a Public Office

Motion to enter closed session by CM Hursey, seconded by CM Wu.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Jones, Wilken

NAY: None.

Entered closed session at 10:39 p.m.

Motion to return to open session by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Jones, Wilken

NAY: None.

Returned to open session at 10:59 p.m.

9. Council Input and Communications

CM Wu shared further information regarding the Ward 1 Listening Session will be released soon and is currently scheduled for August 18th, 2026. *Chair Jones* thanked the public for their feedback and shared appreciation to Council for their advice as he familiarizes himself with the role of the Chair.

10. Adjournment

With no further business before the committee of the whole Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at 11:00 p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable [on-demand HERE](#).

Minutes approved: 8/10/26

PUBLIC INPUT Case No. HP-2026-L-01

From Scott Mehaffey <[REDACTED]>
Date Wed 6/10/2026 11:05 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanail.gov>
Cc Historic Preservation Commission <HistoricPreservationCommission@urbanail.gov>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Urbana City Council,

I'm writing to support the preservation and local landmarking of the former Urbana Civic Center - which is an ideal candidate for repurposing due to its relatively young age and flexible floor plan. As the work of Smith Seaton Olach, it has local and regional significance - and shows the important design influence of architect A. Richard Williams and other national figures.

Further, its architectural style is trending and will likely remain fashionable for many years to come as young architects continue looking to Midcentury Modernism for inspiration - and to California expressions of it especially, which the building evokes.

My understanding is that many local marriages, ceremonies, and parties were held in this building and that there is great public support for its preservation and adaptive reuse. To help ensure that happens sensitively, local landmarking is a very important first step.

I have participated in the Champaign-Urbana Midcentury Modern Tour for the last two years and am a 1987 graduate of the University of Illinois. As Executive Director of the world-famous Edith Farnsworth House located southwest of Chicago, I am delighted that so many communities across the country are preserving and celebrating their mid-20th century architecture - and that it has become a source of civic pride and community promotion. The former Urbana Civic Center is an architectural gem worthy of landmarking.

I hope you will have this letter read out loud to ensure that the audience is aware of my support.

Sincerely,

Scott Mehaffey, MS, FASLA

Executive Director | Curator

E [REDACTED]

P [REDACTED] M [REDACTED]

EDITH FARNSWORTH HOUSE HISTORIC SITE

P.O. Box 194

14520 River Road Plano, IL 60545

www.FarnsworthHouse.org

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

600 14th Street, NW – Suite 500-

Washington, DC 20005

www.SavingPlaces.org



PUD Public Comment

From Anna Hough [REDACTED]
Date Fri 6/12/2026 9:23 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

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Good morning,

I wasn't able to provide my public comment at Monday's meeting. Since the vote was ultimately delayed until July 6, I wanted to provide it here.

Best,
Anna Hough

"My name is Anna Hough. I'm a Ward 2 resident, a member of CUrbanism Club, and its representative to the Continuum of Service Providers to the Homeless.

I'm here to speak in favor of the proposed PUD on West Main Street. As a neighbor, I chose to live in the area because of its walkability, diverse housing options, and access to amenities like parks, the library, grocery stores, banks, and local restaurants, and I want others to have the same opportunity.

I also support it because Urbana faces a serious housing shortage. Champaign's recent housing study found a vacancy rate of 1.4%, far below the healthy range of 5–7%. Preliminary results from Urbana's housing study showed similar conditions: 80% of landlords reported no vacancy, and 11% had only one. These findings reinforce one another which makes sense, housing markets are regional.

The solution to a housing shortage is to build more homes. Without enough housing, the most vulnerable residents are displaced, while those with greater resources continue to compete for limited supply, driving up costs.

Champaign estimates it needs 7,000 new housing units by 2035 and has committed to building them. Champaign already issues residential permits at 10x the rate of the city of Urbana. This is not to incite a competition between the cities. I just want people to live in the community of their choice. For me, that is Urbana, but I don't know if it will have options that fit my needs in 3-5 years.

Housing markets are regional, and if Urbana does not provide a range of housing options, it risks losing current and future residents to neighboring communities. Additionally, increasing housing supply stabilizes rent over time, benefiting low income tenants most. I know we have some skeptics of this here. What I will say is this - building housing is like road maintenance or the dishes - you have to keep doing it. This is doubly true if you're in a shortage with a growing population.

Urbana needs more affordable housing, but it also needs housing for people at every stage of life—from households transitioning out of subsidized housing to empty nesters looking to downsize and free up larger homes for young families. A healthy housing market serves residents across incomes and life stages.

Urbana should create a comprehensive housing plan once the housing study is complete, engaging stakeholders and experts. Approving this PUD isn't a perfect solution, but no single development is, and it's what we can do today. Please don't let perfection be the enemy of the good—we need multiple solutions for a severe shortage and a real plan moving forward.

I love living in Urbana and want to extend that opportunity to as many people as possible. So please vote yes tonight.

One final thought - at the committee of the whole, council member Wu brought up the topic of rental junk fees. For those unfamiliar, a junk fee is an unexpected or hidden charge added to a tenant's base rent by a landlord. These fees obscure the real cost of housing and are unrelated to the actual cost of providing a rental. They're also not related to an additional amenity like allowing a pet or paying for parking.

Illinois just passed a law, HB 3564, that bans certain junk fees and requires landlords to put all valid fees on the first page of a lease to promote transparency. Additionally, the bill caps application fees at \$50 and goes into effect July 1.

This is good news for Illinois tenants but this bill was negotiated down over the course of a year from a much stronger one. The original version is still on the IL GA website. Urbana has the power to enact and enforce greater tenant protections and I would love for the city to explore this, too. I think the original version of the bill is a great jumping off point.

Thank you."

PUBLIC INPUT June 15 committee of the whole meeting

From Holliday, Kathryn [REDACTED]
Date Fri 6/12/2026 12:06 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

 2 attachments (522 KB)

Urbana Civic Center 2-26-2025.pdf; Urbana Civic Center.7-16-2025.pdf;

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Thank you to Mayor Williams and the city council for your consideration of the Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC's) recommendation to designate the Urbana Civic Center as a local landmark. I am sorry to be unable to attend the June 15 meeting and I am submitting my comments and two additional documents here that I hope will all be read aloud.

I am a member of the Historic Preservation Commission and have taught historic preservation and architectural history in Texas and Illinois for 19 years. In my previous comments on The Urbana Civic Center to HPC, I have advocated strongly for including experts in preservation and adaptive reuse in assessments of the building's condition and potential for reuse. In keeping with those comments I wanted to be sure that the comments of the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer were part of the public record. Attached are two letters, one dated February 6, 2025 and the other dated July 16, 2025, indicating that both the FTA and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer agree that the Urbana Civic Center is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for the excellence of its design and its importance in community and social history. The city of Urbana is fortunate to have such an outstanding cultural resource and it provides an excellent opportunity for reuse as part of a transit center. There are many architects who would relish the opportunity to work to renew this flexible building that remains in excellent condition. To knowingly demolish rare and special cultural assets is a tragic loss for any community.

The city owns this building and site and has the right to set the terms of redevelopment. The city can absolutely require that, subsequent to the findings of eligibility in the NEPA/Section 106 review, it would like to ensure that MTA pursues creative adaptive reuse of the Civic Center in its plans. In fact, this distinctive, sustainable approach is far more likely to win grant funding. It would also be eligible for other forms of funding through grants for historic preservation.

Part of the purpose of NEPA/Section 106 review is to find cultural assets and determine what impact their discovery has on proposed development. In this case community supporters and the Historic Preservation Commission concur that the building is an irreplaceable asset to the community and ask that it become an official city landmark, incorporated into future plans for the site. It is a false dichotomy that demolition is necessary for progress. Other communities

have successfully pursued such projects and Urbana can too. Thank you for your consideration.

Kathryn E. Holliday, PhD (she/her)

Randall Biallas Professor of Historic Preservation and American Architectural History

Professor of Landscape Architecture

Chair, Graduate Minor in Heritage Studies

Chair, History + Theory + Preservation

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

contact - [REDACTED]

about me - <https://landarch.illinois.edu/people/profiles/kathryn-e-holliday/>



**Champaign County
Urbana
New Construction, Transit Transfer Facility**

**FTA,
SHPO Log #001053124**

February 6, 2025

**Anshu Singh
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
200 W. Adams St., Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606-5253**

Dear Ms. Singh:

Thank you for the Eligibility and Effects Report for the Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project (SHPO log # 001053124), which we received on 1/10/25. Our comments are required by Section 106 of the [National Historic Preservation Act of 1966](#), as amended, 54 U.S.C. § 306108, and its [implementing regulations](#) (36 CFR Part 800) (Act).

This office does not concur with two determinations in the Eligibility and Effects Report. The Urbana Civic Center building at 108 East Water Street is an excellent example of architectural modernism and is eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A for recreation as a locus of community events and culture, and under Criterion C for its structurally expressive, modernist design. The building at 210 North Broadway is eligible for listing to the NRHP under Criterion C as an excellent example of a professional building in the Modern style, with an entrance courtyard surrounded by a pierced brick screen wall, which was a very characteristic element for the period. Both appear to have excellent integrity.

This project proposes to demolish 108 East Water and 210 North Broadway, which will adversely affect both historic properties.

Please continue to consult with Rita Baker (rita.baker@illinois.gov) and CJ Wallace (carol.wallace@illinois.gov) to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the adverse effect.

Sincerely,

**Carey L. Mayer, AIA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer**

c: Anthony Greep, U.S. Department of Transportation



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

JB Pritzker, Governor • Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director
One Natural Resources Way • Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271

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**Champaign County
Urbana
New Construction, Transit Transfer Facility**

**FTA,
SHPO Log #001053124**

July 16, 2025

**Anthony Greep
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
Region V
200 West Adams Street Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606**

Dear Mr. Greep:

Thank you for the additional information regarding the Downtown Urbana Transfer Center Project (SHPO log # 001053124), which we received on 6/24/25. Our comments are required by Section 106 of the [National Historic Preservation Act of 1966](#), as amended, 54 U.S.C. § 306108, and its [implementing regulations](#) (36 CFR Part 800) (Act).

This office concurs with FTA that Urbana Civic Center building at 108 East Water Street and 210 North Broadway are eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Our letter of 2/6/25 mistakenly asserted that 210 North Broadway was proposed for demolition. We concur with FTA that the project will not adversely affect 210 North Broadway.

We further concur that the project will adversely affect 108 East Water Street.

Please continue to consult with CJ Wallace (carol.wallace@illinois.gov) to develop a Memorandum of Agreement that will mitigate the adverse effect.

Sincerely,

**Carey L. Mayer, AIA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer**

**c: Anshu Singh, U.S. Department of Transportation
Dan DiGiuseppe, U.S. Department of Transportation**

Public input 6.15.16 - read into the record

From Anna Hough [REDACTED]
Date Sun 6/14/2026 7:20 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Good evening,

My name is Anna Hough and I am a resident of Ward 2. Please read my comment into the record if time allows.

I am writing in opposition to the proposed historic landmark designation of the former Civic Center.

I have lived in Urbana for most of my life and appreciate the role the Civic Center served in our community for many years. It provided an affordable space for celebrations, meetings, and events, and I value the memories people have of the building. We need places that foster community connection, and fortunately Urbana still has several venues that serve that purpose. While I believe in the mission the Civic Center once fulfilled, I also understand the practical realities that led to its closure after years of deterioration and costly maintenance needs.

I believe the best way to honor the former Civic Center is to put the site to work serving the public good of today. Landmarking the building would effectively prevent the construction of a downtown transit center at a site that has been identified after many unsuccessful attempts to find a suitable location.

As a regular bus rider living in downtown Urbana, I frequently use the current MTD transfer point next to the courthouse. Despite starting, transferring, and ending many trips there, I find it challenging to navigate. Riders are left waiting outdoors in inclement weather, with limited access to restrooms or shelter. People who depend on transit deserve a facility that provides dignity, safety, comfort, and protection from the elements.

The current transfer location also creates challenges for pedestrians. An indoor center would improve accessibility, provide a cleaner and more welcoming environment, helping people reliably get to work, school, appointments, and other destinations.

The history of the Civic Center can be preserved without preventing a project that addresses critical transportation needs for current and future residents.

Thank you for your consideration and your work serving the community.

Public Input 6-15-26

From Ashlee McLaughlin [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/15/2026 10:16 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>
Cc Karl Gnadt [REDACTED]

 1 attachment (141 KB)
20260615 UR Council Water St.pdf;

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Good morning,

Please see the attached input submitted by MTD in advance of tonight's meeting. We request that it be read out loud if time permits.

Please feel free to follow up with any questions.

Thank you for your time,

Ashlee McLaughlin
External Affairs Director
Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD)
1101 E University Ave
Urbana, IL 61802
[REDACTED]
mtd.org



Memo

Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD)
1101 East University Avenue, Urbana, IL 61802
217.384.8188 | mtd.org

To Urbana City Council

From Karl Gnadt, Managing Director/CEO

Date June 15, 2026

Subject Downtown Urbana Transit Transfer Facility

A. Introduction

This memo is provided to clarify the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's (MTD) position on the proposed downtown Urbana transfer facility and its relationship to the Civic Center property at 108 E. Water Street.

While the District has worked in partnership with the City of Urbana for more than 15 years to find a viable downtown transfer location, decisions regarding the Civic Center property directly affect MTD's ability to advance this project at 108 E. Water Street. No matter what is decided regarding landmark status, MTD will continue to provide a high level of service to all transit riders in the entire District, and we remain committed to improving transit access in downtown Urbana.

B. Project Overview

The proposed project is intended to:

- Construct a new centrally located transit transfer facility in downtown Urbana
- Improve passenger accessibility, safety, and amenities
- Support opportunities for co-location with other local government stakeholders (Urbana School District 116)
- Serve as a long-term infrastructure investment for MTD and downtown Urbana

The estimated cost of the project is \$32 million, based on construction costs for similar facilities of this size and function, with up to 80% eligible for federal funding. More information and discussion can be found in the MTD Board of Trustees meeting materials from [May 27, 2026](#).

C. Status of Federal Grant Applications

In January 2026, MTD staff started a grant application for project funding in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program. MTD did not submit the application due to the Historic Preservation Commission's emerging interest in the Civic Center and its potential for historic landmark designation.

MTD will not pursue funding for projects that depend on conditions outside its control that may prevent implementation. Applying for and receiving federal funds without the ability to implement a project:

- Creates compliance and oversight risk under federal grant programs
- Affects how the District is evaluated in future federal reviews
- Undermines the credibility of the agency as a grant recipient

MTD is currently prepared to pursue Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Buses and Bus Facilities grant program funding to construct a downtown transfer facility at the Civic Center site. This funding is very competitive and not guaranteed. Based on recent funding cycles, the FTA typically releases this opportunity earlier in the calendar year. As of June 12, 2026, the grant notice has not yet been issued and is expected to be released at any time. Once released, the application window is expected to remain open for approximately 8–10 weeks.

However, MTD will only apply to this program this year if it has a clear and actionable path to construct the project on the site.

- If the Urbana City Council votes against landmark status, MTD Staff intend to submit a Buses and Bus Facilities grant application for the construction of a bus transfer facility on the site (subject to timing).
- If the Urbana City Council votes in favor of landmark status for the building, or if the vote hasn't taken place by the time grant applications are due, MTD will not submit a grant application for the project to avoid the risk of receiving an award that can't be used for its intended purpose.

If the property is designated as a local historic landmark, MTD will need additional time to procure and engage an Architectural and Engineering firm to assess circulation and construction options that include the existing structure and still accomplish the needs for transit operations, passenger amenities, and space for the school district, while complying with transit specific design requirements and FTA funding eligibility. To ensure a grant application is competitive and realistic, it would be critical to accurately reflect any additional expenses and extended timeframes for restoration and preservation work to avoid budget shortfalls or compliance issues later.

For reference, the authorizing law for the BUILD and Buses and Bus Facilities grant programs is the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which expires on September 30, 2026. The current draft reauthorization bill (known as the BUILD America 250 Act) makes significant reductions to these funding streams. As a result, we expect that these grant programs will become even more competitive in the future.

D. Clarification Regarding Site Evaluation and Relationship to Civic Center Structure

MTD has conducted a sustained evaluation of available properties and parking lots in downtown Urbana over 15 years in coordination with City staff. This process has included analyses of multiple sites for operational feasibility, including parcel size, location, and bus circulation capacity. Not all parcels can accommodate transit requirements. Building on the City's earlier plan for the demolition of Civic Center, the 108 E Water Street property was identified as a viable location capable of supporting most, if not all, of our needs for a long-term centralized transfer facility by the City.

MTD has invested significant time and resources to identify a path forward. A two-year environmental review was completed and approved by the FTA on April 30, 2026, in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As part of this process, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) assessed the Civic Center's eligibility for historic designation, which is a technical verification and does not serve as a recommendation to landmark any property. The SHPO also approved demolition of the building upon completion of building documentation and photography submitted to state and local historic archives.

If site conditions do not allow for a facility that meets operational requirements, MTD will not advance the project at this location. Constraints associated with preserving or integrating the existing structure:

- **Bus circulation and layout:** Adequate space is required to safely move buses through the site and accommodate passenger loading. For example, there has been mention of removing the northernmost room of the Civic Center, which contains the kitchen and building mechanicals. MTD will be prevented from installing required sidewalk space with standard sawcut curb parking and bus lanes because there isn't enough room between the property line and either part of the building – even if the kitchen is removed (this has nothing to do with a bus's turning radius as claimed by a member of the Historic Preservation Commission). This presents a significant reduction in usable space for bus circulation and parking on the site.

- **Facility configuration:** A unified and accessible passenger environment, including covered and indoor amenities for passengers waiting and/or transferring between buses on different parts of the property from end-to-end is important.
- **Funding eligibility:** In order to apply grant funds to non-transit uses of the property (such as the Urbana School District offices), the transit and non-transit uses must be functionally and physically connected.
- **Long-term value:** MTD intends to invest in a location that meets as many current needs as possible while also avoiding constraints that could reduce long-term service effectiveness or future growth.

PUBLIC INPUT for June 15 meeting - Urbana Civic Center

From Quinn Adamowski [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/15/2026 10:56 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanalL.gov>; Historic Preservation Commission
<HistoricPreservationCommission@urbanail.gov>

 1 attachment (163 KB)
Urbana Civic Center_Local Landmark Recommendation_LOS.pdf;

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Greetings,

Please see the attached letter regarding the recommendation of local landmark designation of the historic Urbana Civic Center.

If possible, I would appreciate if my comments were read out loud for the public record.

Please let me know if you have any questions,

Best,

Quinn Adamowski
Regional Advocacy Manager
[Landmarks Illinois](#)

233 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 4400, Chicago, IL 60606

O: [REDACTED] [Landmarks.org](#)

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www.landmarks.org

15 June 2026

Mayor DeShawn Williams and Members of the Urbana City Council
City of Urbana
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801

RE: Support for Local Landmark Designation of the Urbana Civic Center

Dear Mayor Williams and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of Landmarks Illinois, the statewide historic preservation non-profit, I write in strong support of the proposed local landmark designation of the Urbana Civic Center and urge the City Council to affirm the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Historic Preservation Commission carefully reviewed the nomination and found that the Civic Center meets five criteria for local landmark designation. We believe that recommendation is well-founded and deserves the Council's support. Supporting local landmark designation and prioritizing protection of the building will ensure that there is not an irreversible loss of community heritage.

The Urbana Civic Center is a very distinctive example of Mid-Century Modern civic architecture in Illinois. Its pyramidal roof forms, strong modernist design, and prominent presence in downtown Urbana have made it an established and familiar structure for more than fifty years.

The Civic Center's significance has been recognized through the determination by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office and the Federal Transit Administration that the building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. That finding reflects recognition of the building's architectural importance and, more importantly, its role in the civic, cultural, and social life of Urbana.

Historic preservation is effectively a local planning and community development tool. In communities across Illinois, preservation efforts have helped stabilize neighborhoods, encourage reinvestment through adaptive reuse, retain naturally occurring affordable housing, and reduce unnecessary demolition of iconic components of the built environment. Preservation policies work in tandem with community and economic development goals, particularly when communities focus on retaining and adapting existing buildings rather than relying solely on demolition and new construction.

Further, landmark designation would not be a rejection of future investment, redevelopment, or improved public transportation infrastructure: historic preservation and adaptive reuse are not opposing goals. Across Illinois and throughout the country, some of the most successful and celebrated development projects are those that preserve significant historic resources while adapting them to contemporary needs.

The Civic Center presents an opportunity. Recent design studies demonstrated that adaptive reuse is feasible and worthy of serious consideration. Rather than replacing a distinctive civic asset with a generic structure, Urbana has the

opportunity to reuse an important building that is uniquely rooted in your history and identity. Incorporating the Civic Center into a future TOD would demonstrate innovation, sustainability, and stewardship while creating a destination that reflects the character of Urbana.

This approach would also align with contemporary best practices in preservation and sustainability. Reusing existing buildings conserves embodied energy, reduces landfill waste, and preserves the architectural character of communities. Moreover, increasingly, adaptive reuse projects are recognized nationally as models of responsible development and community investment.

We recognize that the City and the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District continue to evaluate future uses for the site. However, the City is not required to accept demolition as a prerequisite for redevelopment. As owner of the property and steward of an important public resource, the City retains the authority to establish expectations that future development respect and incorporate the Civic Center's historic and architectural significance.

Approving landmark designation does not determine the redevelopment plan for the site. Rather, it acknowledges the building's demonstrated significance and ensures that preservation alternatives remain part of the conversation before irreversible decisions are made.

Landmarks Illinois respectfully urges the Urbana City Council to affirm the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission and approve local landmark designation for the Urbana Civic Center.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to preserving the places that make Urbana unique.

Sincerely,



Quinn Adamowski
Regional Advocacy Manager

Public Input-HP 2026-L-01-Landmarking Civic Center

From Diane Marlin [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/15/2026 11:17 AM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

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PLEASE READ into the record

I urge you to vote NO on **HP-2026-L-01** – A request to designate the Urbana Civic Center at 108 East Water Street as a local Historic Landmark.

Over the past 20 years, there have been several community attempts to locate a bus transfer center in downtown Urbana. The current collaboration between the City of Urbana and CU Mass Transit District for use of the parcel at 108 E. Water St. gets us closer than we've ever been to achieving that goal. Landmarking the Civic Center will effectively end the current effort and send the process back to square one. This process has included a two-year, multistage National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review that is required for the federal grant.

- 1. Landmarking the Civic Center will effectively block the MTD from building a transit center at that location.** According to the MTD, it is not possible to re-use the Civic Center facility as part of a new transfer center due to requirements for vehicle circulation and safe access for transit riders.
- 2. There are no other feasible sites available downtown.** Over the past 20 years, multiple sites for a transfer center have been considered, including one at Lincoln Square. Another site was on Main St. as part of a much larger government complex envisioned for the County Jail block. Those concepts, and several others, didn't advance. After the City made the difficult decision to close the Civic Center in 2018 due to the deterioration of the building and prohibitive cost of repairs, the City, MTD and potential community partners began to evaluate that site.
- 3. Landmarking the Civic Center represents a lost opportunity to provide, at long last, a clean, safe, and comfortable facility to serve thousands of transit customers and drivers.** Currently, the City parking deck at Broadway and Elm serves as the default downtown bus transfer point. Families, students, senior citizens, persons with mobility issues and everybody else who has to transfer buses waits outside when it's 100 degrees or zero degrees, and when it's 10 am or 10 pm. The only nearby public restrooms are in Lincoln Square. Sometimes people utilize the porta potty in the parking deck, but not always.
- 4. Landmarking the Civic Center represents a lost opportunity to reduce the bus congestion surrounding the parking deck and courthouse. It represents a lost opportunity to provide a permanent and convenient location for Urbana school district administration, staff, and**

parents. It represents a lost opportunity to **meet the transportation needs of residents, businesses, and government offices.**

5. Landmarking the Civic Center facility represents a loss of a **downtown construction investment of at least \$32 million** (\$25.6 mil federal grant funds, \$6.4 mil local match). In addition, it represents a loss of \$133,400 that MTD has paid to consultants to complete the required NEPA review for the project, as well as \$30,632 for the demolition mitigation plan required by the State Historic Preservation Office. The consultant fees were paid from MTD's local capital reserve funds.

6. **The demolition mitigation plan ensures that the Civic Center will be memorialized in photos, blueprints, written history and physical description of the structure.** These will be archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield and in the Champaign County Historical Archives at the Urbana Free Library.

I urge you to vote against landmarking and continue working with community partners to build a much-needed, long-overdue transit center to serve our community.

Thank you,
Diane W. Marlin, Ward 7

Please read during Public Comment: Support the Historic Preservation Commission Landmark of the Urbana Civic Center

From Dennis Roberts [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/15/2026 12:41 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>
Cc Christopher Evans <Christopher.Evans@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

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Dear City Council Members

I'd like to take a minute of your time to clarify some of my comments I made as reported in the minutes of the HPC meeting of June 3rd, relating to the nomination of the Urbana Civic Center's Local Landmark nomination—which I support.

In my comments I note some of the deficiencies in the current state of the building, as pointed out during our tour of the building's interior (for which I gratefully acknowledge the opportunity to experience). I mention recalling the fairly cumbersome nature of the room dividers, remembering an issue with the acoustics of the sound system, noting the dilapidated quality of the old curtains, agreeing that the electrical circuits were outmoded, and the kitchen out dated—these are all features of the INTERIOR of the building, which, I mentioned during the tour, have no bearing on the actual landmarking of the *building*.

If the building were to be repurposed, as I hope it may be, by the MTD bus service, or any other party, these outdated elements would have to be brought up to current code, just as for any modern remodeling project. And it would be *unlikely* that these features would even be retained as part of its reuse as a bus terminal. A future bus depot would not need heavy curtains, temporary room dividers, or a community kitchen. It might have a few vending machines, and, of course, it would be necessary to upgrade the electrical service. A modernization of the public bathroom facilities would also be a required improvement.

Our facilities tour was completely focused on the Interior conditions and did not include a walk around the exterior of the building, to evaluate *its* condition, although we definitely learned that the roof leaked.

Landmarking deals mainly with the building's exterior. Only *exterior* changes are monitored and addressed by the requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the HPC. The HPC has no say as to a reconfiguration of the *interior*.

The actually impressive preservation of the interior space did impress many of the members of the HPC. It has an open, spacious interior and the use of brick, large windows, and a significant amount of wood trim in the beams and ceiling details all speak to it being a significantly attractive example of Mid-Century Modern architecture.

With no image of a proposed building elevation or site plan being offered by the MTD, who has yet to become the property owner, it seems that planning the site's reuse is wide open and would offer an opportunity to cleverly incorporate the existing Civic Center into any new construction concept.

David Hays mentioned during our discussions that "Adaptive Reuse" of a locally landmarked building would actually gain points for anyone preparing a grant application to fund their project, as it is considered highly preferable to demolition by many agencies. There are also federal tax benefits gained for listing a building on the National Register of Historic Places—a step the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office's representative noted it was already qualified to meet.

I believe it was appropriate for the HPC to vote to approve Local Landmark status for the Urbana Civic Center (after all, it is the body whose task it is to speak for historic preservation generally), and I encourage the City Council to agree with this guidance. The building's past use may not have been as profitable as desired, but it was an affordable meeting space for many civic groups and private individuals, and like the City Building, the police station, fire department, or our public library, it served the community without acting like a "cash cow" for the City.

Respectfully,
Dennis Roberts

Rafael Cho

From: Johnson, Tait Richard [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2026 10:19 AM
To: City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT

City of Urbana,

I write in support of designating the Urbana Civic Center as a Historic Landmark, in reference to Ordinance No. 2026_06_016.

It has a history of cultural and civic contribution to the community.

It is widely admired for its architectural quality and the building is a significant structure with great potential for adaptive reuse.

Regards,
Tait Johnson

Tait Johnson, Ph.D., AIA, NCARB
Graduate Program Coordinator
Teaching Assistant Professor
Illinois School of Architecture
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Public Input for June 15, 2026

From Dottie G [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/15/2026 2:10 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@UrbanaIL.gov>

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Please read my comments aloud into the public record at tonight's meeting.

I am writing to urge City Council to vote against landmarking the Urbana Civic Center. As a daily C-U MTD rider, I support and benefit from the development of a downtown transit station. The Civic Center site has been identified by MTD as the most viable location after several years of study and coordination with the City. This is not a speculative proposal; it is the result of a deliberate, long-term planning process which the City is an active contributor in.

MTD has stated in a recent board meeting that landmark designation would likely prevent the project from moving forward at this site. A vote to landmark the Civic Center is, in effect, a vote against establishing a modern transit hub in downtown Urbana.

The consequences of that decision are significant:

- Transit riders would permanently lose the opportunity for a centralized facility with improved safety, accessibility, and amenities; conditions that are urgently needed today.
- Downtown Urbana would miss out on the economic activity associated with increased foot traffic, as well as the stabilizing effect of sustained public and private investment that C-U MTD brings to their projects.
- The City of Urbana, as the property owner, would retain a building that has already been identified as requiring several million dollars in remediation to support any viable public use, with no clear or funded plan for its future aside from demolition.
- The broader community would lose the opportunity to make productive use of a highly visible and strategically located downtown site.

Historic preservation is an important value but it must be applied consistently and proactively. That is not the case today. The push to landmark the Civic Center has emerged only after redevelopment plans gained traction, despite the building having been slated for demolition since 2019 and having reached landmark eligibility without prior action from the Historic Preservation Commission. This sequence raises legitimate concerns about whether landmarking is being used as a reactive tool to stop equitable development rather than as part of a long-standing preservation strategy.

If City Council chooses to landmark the building, it should do so with a clear and transparent commitment to:

- Fully fund necessary remediation and ongoing maintenance
- Establish a defined and sustainable public use
- Demonstrate how this decision aligns with the City's broader goals for downtown development and infrastructure investment

Absent such a plan, landmarking the Civic Center would preserve a liability rather than protect a functional community asset.

Rejecting landmark designation would allow the City to continue its partnership with C-U MTD and move forward with a project that directly addresses documented transit needs, supports downtown revitalization, and reflects years of coordinated planning that City staff have delicately built.

I urge City Council to prioritize the practical, long-term needs of Urbana residents and vote against landmarking the Civic Center.

Thank you for your time and service.

D Garnett

PUBLIC INPUT (June 15, 2026, CoW)

From Rohn Koester [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/15/2026 3:59 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

*** Email From An External Source ***

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Dear Mayor and City Council:

This message is in support of the establishment and funding of a Champaign County Reparations Commission for African Americans. The county has already committed funds to this project – Urbana should step forward to help, as well.

That harm has been done historically to African Americans in Champaign County is already a matter of record. The practice of racist housing covenants is one piece, but racist policies have also existed historically in employment, healthcare, education and policing. Harm from these policies continues to disproportionately affect African Americans in the county -- more research is needed to understand its origins and to account for its harm.

I urge you to support the Champaign County Reparations Commission for African Americans and its work to establish long-term accountability.

Respectfully,

Rohn Koester
[REDACTED]

Urbana