



CITY OF URBANA  
PLAN COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

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**DATE:** Thursday, March 27, 2025  
**TIME:** 7:00 PM  
**PLACE:** 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

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**AGENDA**

- A. Call to Order and Roll Call
- B. Changes to the Agenda
- C. Approval of Minutes
- D. Communications
- E. Continued Public Hearings

**Plan Case No. 2500-T-25** – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to amend regulations in Article VI of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance allowing porches and porch stairs to encroach into a required yard. *[Continued to the April 17, 2025 Regular Meeting]*

**Plan Case No. 2502-CP-25** – A request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to adopt the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan (Available online at <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/urbana-il>)

- F. Old Business
- G. New Public Hearings

**Plan Case No. 2501-SU-2025** –A request by Kathleen Groark, dba Insite RE, Inc., on behalf of DRA Properties, LLC, and Verizon Wireless, for a Special Use Permit to allow a tower with antennas at 102 East Michigan Avenue in the CRE (Conservation-Recreation-Education) Zoning District. *[Continued to the April 17, 2025 Regular Meeting]*

- H. New Business
- I. Audience Participation
- J. Staff Report
- K. Study Session
- L. Adjournment

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

The City of Urbana welcomes Public Input during open meetings of the City Council, the City Council's Committee of the Whole, City Boards and Commissions and other City-sponsored meetings. Our goal is to foster respect for the meeting process, and respect for all people participating as members of the public body, city staff, and general public. The City is required to conduct all business during public meetings. The presiding officer is responsible for conducting those meetings in an orderly and efficient manner.

Public Input will be taken in the following ways:

### **Email Input**

In order to be incorporated into the record, emailed public comments must be received prior to 5:00 pm on the day preceding the meeting and sent to the following email address: [Planning@urbanail.gov](mailto:Planning@urbanail.gov). The subject line of the email must include the words **"PLAN COMMISSION - PUBLIC INPUT"** and the meeting date. Emailed public comments labeled as such will be incorporated into the public meeting record, with personal identifying information redacted.

### **Written Input**

Any member of the public may submit their comments addressed to the members of the public body in writing. If a person wishes their written comments to be included in the record of Public Input for the meeting, the writing should so state. Written comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted).

### **Public Hearing**

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony may speak during each public hearing at the time they appear on the agenda. This shall not count towards regular Public Input for the meeting. The Public Hearing is an opportunity for comments and questions to be addressed specific to each case. Board or Commission members are permitted to respond and engage during this time and/or the Chairperson may direct the applicant to respond during rebuttal. Comments unrelated to any of the public hearings listed on an agenda should be shared during the Public Input portion of the meeting where Verbal Input guidelines shall apply.

### **Verbal Input**

Protocol for Public Input is one of respect for the process of addressing the business of the City. Obscene or profane language, or other conduct that threatens to impede the orderly progress of the business conducted at the meeting is unacceptable.

Public comment shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per person. The Public Input portion of the meeting shall total no more than one (1) hour, unless otherwise shortened or extended by majority vote of the public body members present. The presiding officer or the city clerk or their designee, shall monitor each speaker's use of time and shall notify the speaker when the allotted time has expired. A person may participate and provide Public Input once during a meeting and may not cede time to another person or split their time if Public Input is held at two (2) or more different times during a meeting.

The presiding officer or public body members shall not enter into a dialogue with citizens. Questions from the public body members shall be for clarification purposes only. Public Input shall not be used as a time for problem solving or reacting to comments made but, rather, for hearing citizens for informational purposes only.

In order to maintain the efficient and orderly conduct and progress of the public meeting, the presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to raise a point of order and provide a verbal warning to a speaker who engages in the conduct or behavior proscribed under “Verbal Input”. Any member of the public body participating in the meeting may also raise a point of order with the presiding officer and request that they provide a verbal warning to a speaker. If the speaker refuses to cease such conduct or behavior after being warned by the presiding officer, the presiding officer shall have the authority to mute the speaker’s microphone and/or video presence at the meeting. The presiding officer will inform the speaker that they may send the remainder of their remarks via e-mail to the public body for inclusion in the meeting record.

### **Accommodation**

If an accommodation is needed to participate in a City meeting, please contact the City at least 48 hours in advance using one of the following methods:

Phone: **217.384.2440**

Email: **[Planning@urbanail.gov](mailto:Planning@urbanail.gov)**

### **Watching the Meeting via Streaming Services**

All City meetings are broadcast on Urbana Public Television and live-streamed on the web. Details on how to watch are found on the UPTV webpage located at **<https://www.urbanail.gov/executive-department/page/urbana-public-television>**.



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning Division*

m e m o r a n d u m

**TO:** The Urbana Plan Commission  
**FROM:** Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner and Zoning Administrator  
**DATE:** March 27, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** **Plan Case 2502-CP-25:** A request by the Zoning Administrator to adopt the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan.

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### Supplemental Memorandum

Staff has continued to refine the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan since Plan Commission met on March 13, 2025.

The changes to the plan are outlined below, and can generally be described as:

1. Responding to suggestions and comments from members of the Historic Preservation Commission;
2. Making minor updates to the Development Opportunities map;
3. Refining Place Types by splitting “City Center” into three distinct categories, per the discussion at Plan Commission, and amending the map to reflect those three categories;
4. Making other minor changes.

### Additional Plan Refinements

#### Addressed Comments from Historic Preservation Commission Members

- Added a Little Move:

- 2.4 Update the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance to align with *Imagine Urbana*

- Added a Metric:

- 2.4.1 Completion of Historic Preservation Plan update

- Added an Objective under Big Idea 4:

- 4.5 The City's historic architecture and features are used to enhance its eclectic character.

- Added a Little Move:

- 4.8 Seek grant funding dedicated to historic downtown redevelopment.

- Added Metrics:

- 4.8.1 Grants applied for
- 4.8.2 Grant money received
- 4.8.3 Number of historic downtown properties receiving grants
- Added a Little Move:
  - 5.6 Offer walking tours that highlight the City's architecture and landmarks.
- Added Metric:
  - 5.6.1 Number of annual walking tours
- Added Little Move:
  - 11.14 Encourage adaptive reuse and historic preservation of existing buildings.
- Added Metrics:
  - 11.14.1 Number of buildings reused/preserved
  - 11.14.2 Dollars invested in reuse/preservation projects
- Added an event to the year 2020 in the "Events that have shaped Urbana since 2005":
 

Zoning Ordinance amended to allow many more options to reuse existing buildings in the R-7, University Residential district, which includes around 20 historically significant fraternity and sorority houses.

An HPC member also made a comment to add design guidelines downtown; however, staff believe that this could be addressed by updating the Zoning Ordinance, per Big Move 2.

### **Development Opportunities Map**

- Split Philo and Windsor into two distinct areas
- Added a Boneyard Creek corridor (aligns with 1978 and 2008 Boneyard Creek Master Plans)
- Made UCSD and City borders a little easier to read/less distracting
- Lightened parcel lines and green spaces

### **Place Types**

- Split "City Center" into three categories: "Downtown", "Corridor Neighborhood", and "University Neighborhood". Added descriptions for each.
- Updated map with these new place types.
- Added notation to Gregory Place indicating 5-story buildings heights there versus taller buildings in the other "University Neighborhood" to the north.

## **Other**

- Updated the *Imagine Urbana* timeline graphic.
- Added Review and Approval section to Process
- Added 2024 Special Census to Events and updated Trends-Population text
- Corrected printing issues – space, photos, matrix shading, etc.
- Added “zoning” to the description of what the plan is:

“Imagine Urbana also serves as the City's primary long-range planning document, guiding the future of the community. It gives direction for decisions related to community-wide land use, **zoning**, economic development, transportation systems, social dynamics, the environment, arts and culture, and overall quality of life.”

## **Options**

Staff recommend that the Plan Commission continue to receive public input at the March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, review the plan, and make suggestions to refine the plan to staff.

The Plan Commission may then:

1. Continue the public hearing to the Plan Commission on April 3, 2025; or,
2. Recommend adoption of the plan to City Council.



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning Division*

m e m o r a n d u m

**TO:** The Urbana Plan Commission  
**FROM:** Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner and Zoning Administrator  
**DATE:** March 20, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** **Plan Case 2502-CP-25:** A request by the Zoning Administrator to adopt the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan.

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**Introduction**

The Zoning Administrator requests that the Plan Commission continue their review of the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan, and ultimately recommend adoption of the plan to City Council. *Imagine Urbana* represents more than four years of work by City staff, the Plan Commission, and hundreds of individuals who have given their time to participate in the planning process.

The draft plan, which can be found online at <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/urbana-il/>, was initially released to public in August, 2024, and has been refined since then through a series of study sessions at the Plan Commission, and subsequent revisions made by staff.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommend that the Plan Commission continue to receive public input, review the plan, make suggestions to refine the plan to staff, and continue the public hearing to a Special Meeting of the Plan Commission on March 27, 2025, at which time they may recommend adoption of the plan to City Council.

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## Place Type: Corridor Neighborhood

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### General Description

Corridor Neighborhoods contain a mix of housing types, with mostly low- to mid-rise apartments, and may include some businesses and institutional uses. They are located along corridors that connect to activity centers.

### Land Uses

Mostly residential uses, with some businesses serving mostly nearby residents. Mixed-use buildings are appropriate in these places.

### Building Form

Mid-rise (three- to five-story) buildings, typically set back slightly from the sidewalk. Small buildings, single-story buildings, and long, monotonous buildings are discouraged. Buildings have entrances facing the street and no blank walls facing public spaces.

### Streets & Connectivity

Streets are low-speed, but have higher traffic volumes (of all types) due to these places connecting activity centers. Wide bike lanes, physically separated from travel lanes, are encouraged. Streets do not have on-street parking; parking is in lots and structured parking behind buildings. Ample bike parking is provided. Sidewalks are wide to accommodate larger volumes of people, and to provide more opportunities for sidewalk dining and retail for businesses.

### Open Space

Most open spaces are private, but wide sidewalks, pocket parks, plazas, and courtyards may provide open space in this place type. Landscaping and architecture play a prominent role in making the public realm feel welcoming in these places.

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## Place Type: Downtown

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### General Description

City Centers are the highest-density places in Urbana, with a mix of shops, restaurants, businesses, offices, housing, and institutional uses. Buildings are multi-story and front directly onto sidewalks.

### Land Uses

Commercial, serving the needs of neighborhood residents, surrounding neighborhoods, and the City at large. High-density residential. Entertainment and nightlife. Research and development, small-scale manufacturing, office uses, and some institutional uses. Different uses are often mixed in the same building.

### Building Form

Multi-story buildings, typically close to the sidewalk. Solitary buildings on single lots are discouraged. Single-story buildings are highly discouraged. Buildings have entrances facing the street and no blank walls facing public spaces.

### Streets & Connectivity

Streets are low-speed, but have higher traffic volumes (of all types) due to the amount of activity this place type generates. Streets typically have on-street, metered parking, with longer-term parking handled in parking lots and structured parking set behind buildings. Ample bike parking is provided. Sidewalks are wide to accommodate larger volumes of people, and to provide more opportunities for sidewalk dining, retail, and performances. Block sizes are small, and alleys often serve as internal connections for people walking.

### Open Space

Most open spaces are public, with alleys, wide sidewalks, pocket parks, plazas, and courtyards providing open space in this place type. While living ("green") landscaping may be less prominent here than in other place types, landscaping and urban design play a prominent role in making public open spaces attractive here. Public art is more concentrated here than in other place types, with murals, sculptures, and street performances contributing to the vibrancy of the area.

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## Place Type: University Neighborhood

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### General Description

University Neighborhoods are areas close to the University of Illinois campus that contain a mix of high-density housing, shops, restaurants, businesses, and offices geared toward University students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

### Land Uses

High-density residential. Commercial, serving the needs of neighborhood residents, surrounding neighborhoods, and the City at large. Entertainment and nightlife. Research and development, small-scale manufacturing, office uses, and some institutional uses. Different uses are often mixed in the same building.

### Building Form

Multi-story buildings, typically close to the sidewalk. Solitary buildings on single lots are discouraged. Single-story buildings are highly discouraged. Buildings have entrances facing the street and no blank walls facing public spaces.

### Streets & Connectivity

Streets are low-speed, and typically have on-street, metered parking, with longer-term parking handled in parking lots and structured parking set behind buildings. Ample bike parking is provided. Sidewalks are wide to accommodate larger volumes of people, and to provide more opportunities for sidewalk dining, retail, and performances. Block sizes are small, and alleys often serve as internal connections for people walking.

### Open Space

Most open spaces are public, with alleys, wide sidewalks, pocket parks, plazas, and courtyards providing open space in this place type. While living ("green") landscaping may be less prominent here than in other place types, landscaping and urban design play a prominent role in making public open spaces attractive here.

**LIST OF COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED**  
***Imagine Urbana Comprehensive Plan 2025***

***Since March 13, 2025***

Barenberg, Nancy Pogue

Email sent Sunday, March 16, 2025 @ 4:02 pm

Cylkowski, Bob

Email sent Wednesday, March 19, 2025 @ 11:43 am

R. Janice Sherbert

Email sent Friday, March 21, 2025 @ 9:59 am

**From:** [Pogue, Nancy J](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC INPUT  
**Date:** Sunday, March 16, 2025 4:02:42 PM

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

For the planning commission meeting Thursday, March 20, 2025. I would like to have my comments included in the public record.

My primary concern begins on p. 3 of "Big Moves"

"Welcome and invest in affordable housing development and make policies that attract developers of affordable houses."

One of the primary goals is to increase housing density which will require revision of zoning ordinances that would restrict housing density. This would include adding small dwellings in back yards with no limit on uses...they could be used for older family members, rented to university students or used as air BnBs...AND/OR add duplexes or apartment buildings where they are not currently allowed without special use permits. If covenant restrictions are not upheld, in my Beringer Commons neighborhood that would decrease the number of people interested in building single family residences, changing the character of the neighborhood, and decrease our home values and thus the property taxes.

It is not clear what data or surveys of what areas and which individuals or groups were used to establish the need for more "affordable" housing, nor what limits will be to the price to rent one of these "affordable" properties. Simply increasing housing density does not ensure increased affordability.

"Big ideas" p. 3

My other concern is the #1 big idea.

"Ensure the City's government, economy, and infrastructure can withstand and thrive in the face of challenges and disruptions."

Note that there is no mention of service or cost to Urbana residents. This Urbana government attitude was clearly demonstrated at the City Council meeting in the discussion about possible loss of federal funds. The only plan discussed was how to raise more taxes!! There was no mention of cutting budgets or concerns about the already heavy tax burden imposed on Urbana residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns and suggest this plan could use additional public discussions!

Nancy Pogue Barenberg

**From:** [Bob Cylkowski](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Plan Commission - Public Input - March 27, 2025  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:43:06 AM

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**\*\*\* Email From An External Source \*\*\***  
Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

This is some input for your upcoming meeting on the Imagination Urbana plan.

The plan is very long and contains a lot of buzzwords that sound nice, but where is the substance? Will the metrics chosen actually show the success or failure of a particular initiative.

My #1 concern is the safety of the citizens of Urbana. There is an unacceptable level of shootings in this town and I do not see the plan adequately addressing that. Alternatives to police being used in all situations is needed, but we still need to support the police and I don't think that is being done enough. We need more police officers. There are known areas of town that have a high rate of violence. It is not acceptable to the innocent people who own houses in those areas to have to live like this, see their property values decline, etc.

Bob Cylkowski

  
Urbana

**From:** [J Sherbert](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Plan Commission - Public Input - March 27, 2025  
**Date:** Friday, March 21, 2025 9:58:53 AM

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**\*\*\* Email From An External Source \*\*\***  
Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

To the Urbana City Council and Planning Commission,

You have not informed the city residents adequately regarding this project.


Concerns:

1. Federal funds????? It is unrealistic to expect Federal funds for projects in Illinois at this time nor for several years.
2. You have not planned any parks in the eastern section which can be developed in the future. A golf course is not readily available as public green space but a park would be.
3. What is your plan for development of business in downtown Urbana? There are too many vacant areas.
4. The council has already let down the folks in the Yankee Ridge area with a similar plan and we all saw the decline!
5. Plan wisely for something that will help the city and not tear the community apart! (I was at the recent Planning Commission meeting.)
5. What are the long range plans?

Please slow this approval process down until the public has an opportunity for meaningful meetings where all questions can be answered.

Thank you,

R. Janice Sherbert

  
Urbana, IL 61802