DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, PhD, FAICP, Director

DATE: May 12, 2011

SUBJECT: White Street & Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis

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Introduction

The Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD) is preparing a Mobility Implementation Plan (MiPlan) on behalf of the Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS). One element of MiPlan is to define mobility enhancing development opportunities in the Champaign-Urbana region. This element has been met in part by studying how future development in two existing transit corridors – White Street in Champaign and Springfield Avenue in Urbana – can advance transit, bicycling, and walking, and reduce reliance on automobiles.

At the May 16, 2011 City Council meeting, City staff will present the findings of the *White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis* study. This document is available for viewing or download at http://www.urbanaillinois.us/government/community-development/planning/planning-documents
It is requested that you review this study online. Should you wish to have a copy on paper or on disc, please feel free to contact Teri Andel, Planning Secretary, at 384-2440 or tmandel@urbanaillinois.us.

The City of Urbana has participated with MiPlan and the *White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis* by providing guidance through the Mobility Implementation Plan Steering Committee and attending public input exercises such as Neighborhood Transopoly. The City of Urbana has not contributed financially to the planning process or study.

MTD would like to include this study to support a Very Small Starts Grant application to the Federal Transit Authority. This grant could be used to improve public infrastructure along MTD's high capacity bus network.

Background

The Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS) has charged the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD) with developing strategies and services to meet the goals for non-single occupant vehicle travel in the region as set out in the region's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. To meet these regional transportation goals, MTD applied for and received a major Federal appropriation to prepare a regional Mobility Implementation Plan. Element 3 of the work plan for this project is to define mobility enhancing development opportunities in Champaign-Urbana.

In July 2008, City staff requested, and the Mayor and City Council agreed, for the City of Urbana to participate in a study of mobility enhancing development opportunities in the Springfield Avenue corridor, to be prepared under the direction of MTD. (See attached Resolution No. 2008-07-018R.) The study before you now -- *The White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Study* – is intended to show how development and improved infrastructure within the White Street (in Champaign) and Springfield Avenue (in Urbana) corridors can advance transit, bicycling, and walking, and reduce single-occupancy automobile trips. This study was prepared for MTD by the Center for Neighborhood Technology of Chicago.

In preparation of this report, the Center for Neighborhood Technology was guided by the Mobility Implementation Plan Steering Committee, including representatives from the City of Urbana, City of Champaign, University of Illinois, Regional Planning Commission, and MTD.

Discussion

This study shows how public infrastructure and future development in the Springfield Avenue corridor can reduce reliance on automobiles within the parameters of existing City plans and policies such as the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and zoning.

It should be noted that this report is a study and not a plan. The City of Urbana is not being asked to adopt the *White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Study* as official policy. Following Plan Commission review at their April 7 and May 5, 2011 meetings (see attached meeting minutes), the Commission expressed its interest in sharing the results of the study with the City Council without the Council formally "accepting" the study.

An immediate benefit of this study will be that MTD can use it as part of a planned application to the Federal Transit Authority for a Very Small Starts Grant, due in the fall of 2011. Securing a Very Small Starts Grant could bring up to $60 million in Federal funding to construct public infrastructure improvements, including upgrading City streets, on MTD's newly implemented high capacity bus system.

Staff Recommendation

The Urbana Plan Commission reviewed this study at their April 7 and May 5, 2011 meetings and provided detailed feedback which is included with this memo. City staff is now presenting this study to City Council for informational purposes and for their input.

By:

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Robert Myers, AICP
Planning Manager

cc: Cynthia Hoyle, MTD consultant

Attachments:

- Resolution No. 2008-07-018R: A Resolution Supporting the Study of Mobility-Enhancing Development Opportunities in Champaign-Urbana.
- Future Land Use Map No. 8, Urbana 2005 Comprehensive Plan
- Building a Mobility Infrastructure to Support Champaign-Urbana becoming a Micro-Urban Community
- Excerpt from the April 7, 2011 Plan Commission minutes
- Excerpts from the May 5, 2011 Plan Commission minutes

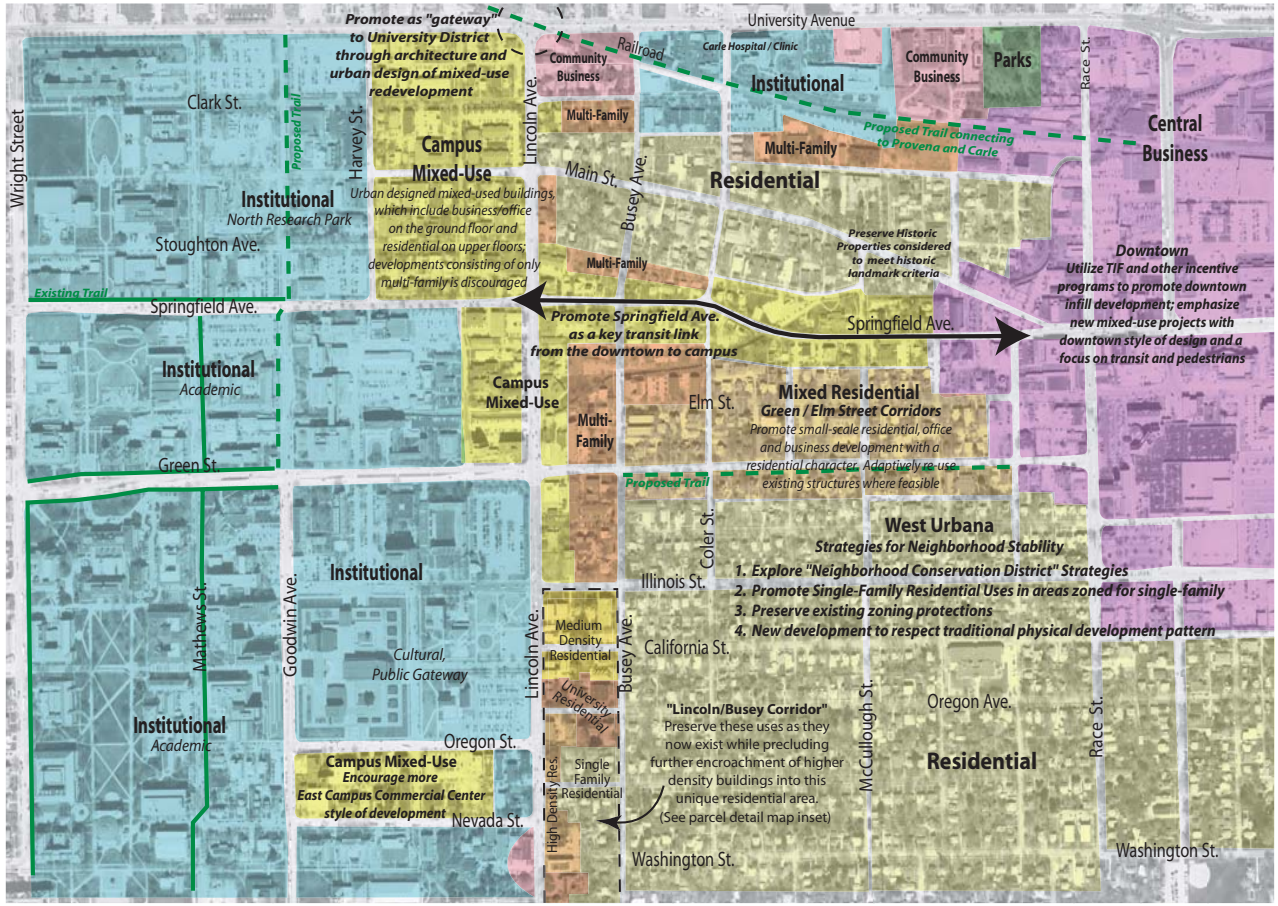
Future Land Use Maps
Map #8

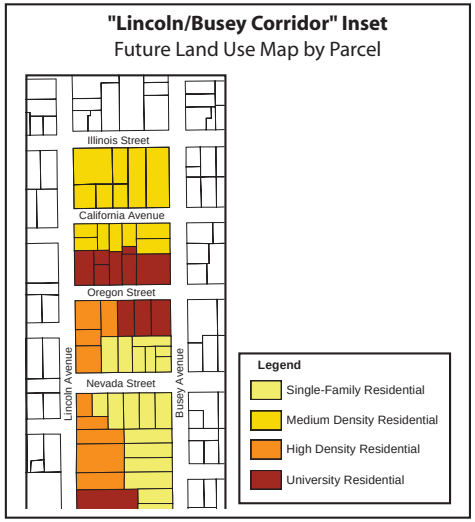
West Urbana (North Half)

ADOPTED

April 11, 2005

Map Created by City of Urbana
Community Development Services Dept.



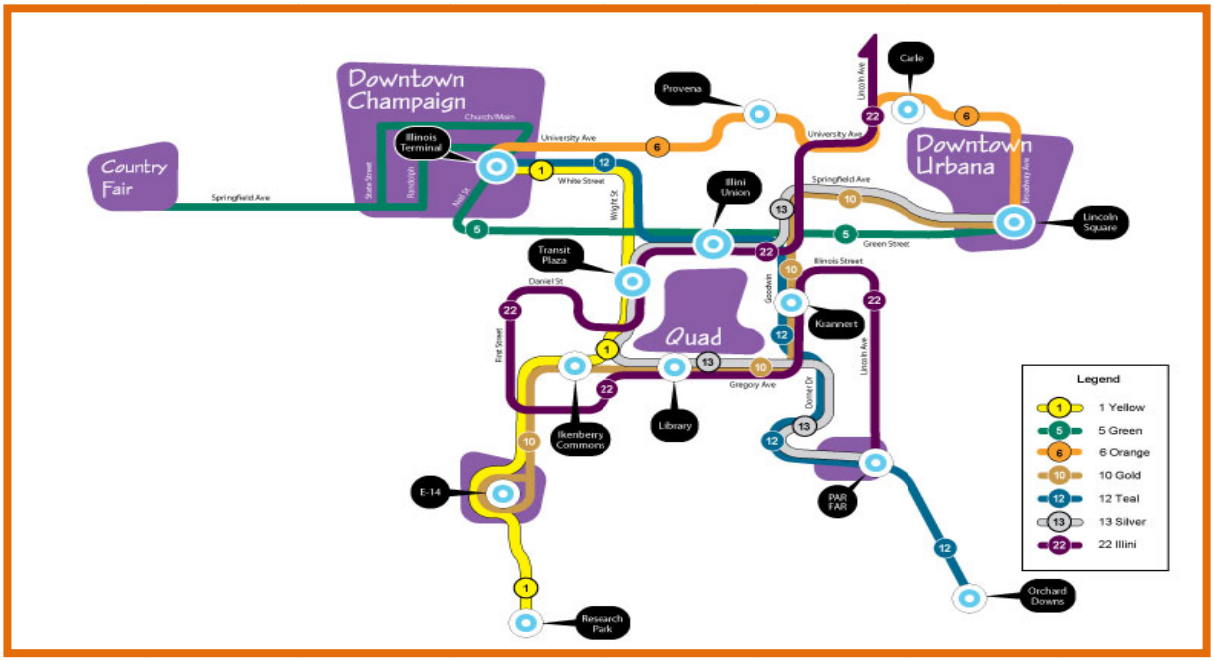


Building a Mobility Infrastructure to Support Champaign-Urbana becoming a Micro-Urban Community

At the heart of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's (CUMTD) mission is the creation of an efficient and effective mobility system that provides options for residents, students and visitors within its service district. To that end CUMTD has in the last few years made major improvements in its already highly effective transit service, and actively been engaged with community partners to improve community "walk-ability," provide a car share program, expand biking infrastructure and encouragement programs, manage the C-U Safe Routes to School Project, reduce auto congestion in the urban core and promote mobility safety. CUMTD has also instituted a very successful annual transportation bus pass for only $60.

These mobility improvements have been done within a transitioning land use framework in which the cities of Champaign and Urbana along with the University are focusing increased efforts to redevelop portions of the urban core and expand live / work / play opportunities for the near future. It fits within a rubric evolving in our communities called "micro urban" where people enjoy the benefits of urban lifestyle with the attributes of living in a smaller community.

In 2009, CUMTD modified its core service to create a **High Capacity Service Network** that has proven extremely effective in increasing ridership for both University students and residents. Ridership within the network has increased x% in the last two years and every indication is that will continue. The Network is supported by an expanded IT system and creates a basic building block for facilitating mobility enhanced development along its corridors.



The High Capacity Service Network Meets Most FTA Very Small Starts Criteria

The FTA Very Small Starts program was designed to provide communities the opportunity to implement lower cost, lower risk investments of federal dollars into higher capacity programs which meet a series of warrants regarding performance and can provide both valuable improvements to the transit network as well as provide enhancements for community and economic development.

CUMTD has created and implemented a service model that fits small to mid-size cities by expanding upon the traditional concept of "corridor development" to link multiple corridors through a service network that greatly expands service/mobility choices for an expanded population base and offers a far larger and richer pallet for urban reinvestment.

The challenge now for CUMTD and the communities it serves is to:

- upgrade the street infrastructure on which this Network operates. Without these upgrades service levels and service quality will rapidly diminish. Paving failures have already begun to occur.
- expand service and stimulate development by building additional modal stations. In addition to improvements at Illinois Terminal, two additional terminals are required.
- provide Network branding that enhances service quality and reinforces the Network as a development attractor. Studies done by the cities and the MPO have already confirmed the value of increasing densities and activity within the area served by the Network.
- improve and expand the IT service interface.
- increase service performance by implementing signal prioritization / pre-emption.

In reviewing the warrants and criteria for the FTA Very Small Starts Program (VSS), it was recognized that the High Capacity Service Network already meets the critical warrants of ridership and service levels. CUMTD has already proven that the Network produces in excess of 3,000 daily trips on nearly all of its routes. With minimal additions, CUMTD is able, within existing operational resources, to provide service levels that meet these warrants.

CUMTD and its partners are now desirous of applying for the FTA VSS Program to up-level and make permanent the High Capacity Service Network. Within two months the alternatives analysis and ridership projections required by the VSS will be completed. Within three months the complete capital investment requirements will be defined, along with operational enhancements and a "branding strategy" that is approved by the Cities and University. Our preliminary estimate is that this initiative will reach nearly $50,000,000. The Cities, University and CUMTD are prepared to participate with our "fair share" of this project and in fact have already made substantial improvements that should be considered in the equation.

CUMTD and its partners are also very interested in exploring with Congress and FTA the viability of using the VSS as a component of a Livable Communities initiative to leverage and maximize the use of federal resources within the urban core being served by the High Capacity Service Network. There are housing demands, brown field sites and energy utilization /conservation and sustainability initiatives that would greatly benefit from a coordinated investment of federal, state and local government resources to support redevelopment and the garnering of private resources.

CUMTD is seeking your assistance and guidance in assessing these two opportunities. To that end, we start this dialogue with the objective of submitting formal applications within the next six months to further enhance Champaign-Urbana as a Micro-Urban community.

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION **APPROVED**

DATE: **April 7, 2011**

TIME: **7:30 P.M.**

PLACE: **Urbana City Building – City Council Chambers**
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tyler Fitch, Lew Hopkins, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Marilyn Upah-Bant

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Jane Burris, Andrew Fell, Ben Grosser, Dannie Otto

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Graham Berry, Bryan Bradshaw, Rebecca Rodgers, Susan Taylor

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1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Pollock called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum was declared present.

11. STUDY SESSION

White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, gave a presentation on the White Street-Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis. This study was prepared as part of the Mobility Implementation Plan, a component of the Long Range Transportation Plan funded with a major Federal grant and managed by MTD. When the White Street Springfield Avenue Corridors Study was first proposed in 2008, the City Council was asked for approve a resolution (Resolution No. 2008-07-018R) to indicate their support for City staff participating in the study. The City Council approved that resolution, and now City staff is closing the loop by presenting the study results to the Plan Commission and City Council.

The Mobility Implementation Plan is presently in the second of three phases. Phase 1 included collection of background information and multiple data collection studies were conducted such

as onboard bus surveys, neighborhood Transopoly sessions, employer surveys, and stakeholder surveys. Phase 2 has number of components, including a White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Study prepared by the Center of Neighborhood Technology (Chicago).

Chair Pollock assumed that a consulting firm was hired to work with staff from the City of Champaign and the City of Urbana. Was the University of Illinois planning staff involved in the process? Mr. Myers replied yes. The University of Illinois did not want this study to lead to development of a cross campus corridor which would increase traffic say along Springfield Avenue. They want to avoid increasing traffic on campus to reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists. Consequently the concept is to study two development/transit corridors linking the two downtowns to campus, but not a continuous cross-campus corridor.

Chair Pollock asked whether there was any disagreement from the two cities about this. Mr. Myers stated that he was at first skeptical that having two corridors offset by the campus would not lead to increased cross-campus traffic. Chair Pollock commented that he assumed the University of Illinois was quite influential because here is a corridor study without an actual corridor. Mr. Myers remarked that there are two corridors. The White Street corridor is already a high bus usage for the Mass Transit District (MTD) and has higher density residential already. In Urbana, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Map 8, shows Springfield Ave. between downtown and campus with a notation "Promote Springfield Ave. as a key transit link from the downtown to campus."

Mr. Myers continued his presentation by reviewing:

- Corridor Opportunities
- Transportation and Land Use
- Retail Opportunities Tomorrow
- Development Scenarios, including representative blocks
- Visualizing the Development Process
- Practices & Policies to Promote Mobility Enhanced Development (MED)
- Recommendations for MED Implementation, including form-based Zoning.

Chair Pollock asked how long the White Street-Springfield Avenue study has been going on. Mr. Myers replied since 2008. The next step would be the City Council to accept the report.

Chair Pollock inquired as to how much the study cost in terms of consultant fees, etc. Mr. Myers said that he did not know how much the consultant fees were; however, the entire miPLAN process was carried out with a substantial federal grant for several hundred thousand dollars.

Mr. Hopkins stated that his major concern is that the plan relies heavily on developing Springfield Avenue as a mixed use corridor. There are already several mixed use corridors across the two cities that are failing, such as the University parking garage along University Avenue, Lincoln Square Mall, South Neil Street, Green Street MOR Zoning District, etc. We are talking about something that is being imagined in almost total isolation from what is going on in the rest of the City so it probably does not make sense. Before starting a new mixed use corridor we need to support and redevelop what we already have.

Chair Pollock commented that he understands the University of Illinois' influence and the necessity of them being involved in this process. We have what looks like two corridors that are not connected. He would hope that a study like this for the twin cities would be connected because it is one community in terms of transportation. He was concerned about the separation because it is almost like two entirely separate studies, which is probably the only way they could use the federal money, come up with a plan for each city and have the University of Illinois approve of it.

Ms. Stake remarked that she was impressed with all of the work that had been done. There are a lot of good ideas in the report. However, she is disappointed in that the City is not thinking about light rail. Light rail is so much better for the environment. She does not understand why other countries can provide light rail and our country cannot.

Chair Pollock inquired what will happen if the City Council accepts the report as a recommendation of good ideas. What would be needed to begin redevelopment of Springfield Avenue? Mr. Myers replied that he believes the City of Urbana might want to partner with a developer and offer incentives to jumpstart a demonstration development.

Chair Pollock wondered if there were any ideas in the proposed plan that the City could do if there is Tax Increment Finance (TIF) money available and could find developers interested that could be done without the plan. Mr. Myers said yes. One complicating factor is that consolidation of lots to create redevelopment sites is complicated and takes time. Many developers just don't want to deal with this because it can take years.

Chair Pollock questioned if the entire Springfield Avenue area, which is the City of Urbana's segment of the plan, is all located in a TIF district. Mr. Myers answered no, only the eastern portion of Springfield Avenue (east of Coler Avenue) is in a TIF district.

Ms. Stake wondered what the City's main objective is with the proposed analysis. Mr. Myers explained that the main objective of the plan is to show the benefits of the City building up rather than out and doing so in a way that supports transit, walking, and bicycling rather than relying on single-occupancy vehicles. Ms. Stake commented that the City has worked very hard with ideas for bicycling.

Mr. Fitch stated that although he likes the concepts proposed in the plan, he wondered what the point of the plan is. Is the point to have Springfield Avenue be redeveloped or is it to promote traffic into Downtown Urbana so it could be redeveloped? If the point is about Downtown Urbana, unless we punch a hole through campus, it will have limited value. In order to punch a hole through campus, every pedestrian overpass would need to be lifted up; otherwise, vehicle drivers and bicyclists would be driving a block and stopping, drive another block and stopping. The changes that would have to happen for this plan to have an impact would have to be quite profound. We would have to move all the parking off the street, which would be sensitive. He is supportive of the concepts but he is not sure of the point and he is not sure how realistic the plan is.

Chair Pollock fears the point is that there is a giant pool of money available to prepare planning studies, and that although we have got a really nice look at these issues there may be virtually no practical application or financial ability to actually see these things happen. The plan is done. It does have some good ideas in it, but as Mr. Hopkins said this is in some sense going down a road that the City has been on for a long time. Mr. Fitch agreed.

Mr. Hopkins said he was tempted to send this to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation to accept the report, but that the implication that a focus on Springfield Avenue for mixed use development initiatives by the City is inappropriate at this time. In addition, other initiatives by the City of Urbana that are already underway should have priority. He is trying to say that the plan is done and we will accept it, but he wants to make a statement that says the City should not do what the plan on the surface implies we should do. Chair Pollock believes that the City should also not do it necessarily where the plan says we should do it. There are some really good ideas in the plan that might be appropriately attempted elsewhere. Mr. Hopkins felt that the City is already trying to do these ideas elsewhere like on North Broadway, at Lincoln Square, across Green Street from the City building, and elsewhere. His key point would be that the City should not focus significant redevelopment efforts on Springfield Avenue at this time. He has trouble accepting the plan report with the implication that by doing so they are accepting its contents.

Chair Pollock inquired what it means if the City "accepts" the plan. Mr. Myers interpreted "accept" to mean that we received and acknowledged the information. Mr. Hopkins said that he is not willing to leave it at that because for the general public if the City accepts a plan then it can be seen as approving the contents.

Chair Pollock asked what the Plan Commission would like to do at this point. Ms. Stake did not feel that they have studied the report enough. Chair Pollock pointed out that there are four members absent from the meeting that he would like to get their input as well. It was the general consensus of the Plan Commission to hold this item over until a future meeting to allow all the Plan Commission members to study it and provide more comments. Chair Pollock asked if City staff could mail each Commissioner a paper copy.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Myers, AICP, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION **DRAFT**

DATE: **May 5, 2011**

TIME: **7:30 P.M.**

PLACE: **Urbana City Building – City Council Chambers**
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Burris, Andrew Fell, Tyler Fitch, Lew Hopkins, Dannie Otto, Michael Pollock

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ben Grosser, Bernadine Stake, Marilyn Upah-Bant

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Manager; Zach Woolard, Planning Intern; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Cynthia Hoyle

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1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Pollock called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The roll was called and a quorum was declared present.

11. STUDY SESSION

White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis

Robert Myers, Planning Manager, followed up on the discussion from the previous meeting. He shared some comments that were exchanged during a conversation that he had with Cynthia Hoyle, consultant with the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD).

The White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis document is not a plan and does not include goals and objectives. It is actually a study. The study explains how development within the two existing transit corridors (White Street and Springfield Avenue) can support transit and how the two downtowns of Champaign and Urbana can be linked to the University of Illinois campus. The study builds on Urbana's adopted Comprehensive Plan and existing

zoning. He talked about how the level of transit infrastructure could be raised in these corridors if development if adjoining development supported it. Transit infrastructure could include kiosks at high traffic use areas, bus shelters, burs turnouts, etc. He explained that MTD also anticipates applying for a Very Small Starts Grant which could provide major infrastructure funding within their new high capacity corridors. He asked Cynthia Hoyle to address the Plan Commission to explain more about the grant.

Ms. Hoyle began by telling the Commission that MTD applied for one of the Federal stimulus grants under Livable Communities/Sustainable Communities process last year. There was a limit on the grant for $30 million. MTD did not receive the funding. They found out later that the majority of communities receiving funding offered a 70% local match.

One of the things that happened along with the study process is the City of Urbana had designated Springfield Avenue as a transit corridor in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. With MTD overseeing preparation of the Mobility Implementation Plan, that process gave MTD a lot of feedback and input. Based on some of the feedback and input, MTD has revamped the transit routes for the first time in a very long time. Springfield Avenue now has daytime bus service during the semester every five minutes. White Street has a similar level of service. The infrastructure along these streets in some locations is not capable of handling a lot of the traffic so MTD needs the infrastructure to be able to support their service.

Along with doing that MTD reviewed what else needs to be in place such as providing a multi-modal corridor, sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, what kinds of land use and design would support this, and what opportunities are along these two routes.

We already meet many criteria for a Very Small Starts Grant. However, the Federal Transit Authority is looking for a dedicated right-of-way for transit. MTD has thought that Green Street between Lincoln Avenue and Wright Street would be a candidate for consideration. The proposed Corridor Analysis provides MTD with a good foundation for a Very Small Starts Grant application by showing what the two communities have already done. Although this is not a new idea and it is something that we are already doing, we need help getting it done because neither of the cities right now have the funds necessary to improve the streets.

The needs for each street are different. White Street needs to be widened enough to include bicycle lanes. Springfield Avenue cannot be widened because there already constraints such as uses that are not going away, including Park District property. The proposed analysis took a look at each street's needs.

The limit for any grant application is $60 million dollars. MTD anticipates applying for up to this amount. Compared to other communities that are making applications for trolleys, light rail or commuter rail systems, this project is very small. This grant has more often been used for linear corridors and bus rapid transit applications around the country. MTD has not yet submitted a grant application and plans to submit one to the Federal Transit Authority in the fall of 2011.

Mr. Myers explained that the map on the handout *"Building a Mobility Infrastructure to Support Champaign-Urbana becoming a Micro-Urban Community"* shows MTD's high-capacity service

network. As a result of creating a high level of service on for these bus routes, we need the infrastructure to support it.

Chair Pollock asked if the study was driven by improvement for MTD routes more than anything else. Ms. Hoyle replied by saying no. The Mobility Implementation Plan was about implementing the non-single occupancy vehicular portions of the Long Range Transportation Plan. In fact MTD has already been implementing some of the preliminary recommendations from the Mobility Implementation Plan process. The Mobility Implementation Plan has not been finalized because MTD is still updating the transportation model. For example, the High Capacity Service Network concept was in the Long Range Transportation Plan, and it is now in place. The proposed White Street and Springfield Avenue Corridors Analysis is part of the larger Mobility Implementation Plan process.

Chair Pollock explained that one of the issues the Plan Commission had with the proposed analysis at the previous meeting was that it is entirely about two separate corridors. He understood that two separate corridors are being studied because of the influence and wishes of the University of Illinois in not wanting to promote cross town routes through their campus. However, an important question posed at the previous Plan Commission meeting is whether Springfield Avenue is where the City of Urbana wants to put its efforts, funding and redevelopment. Or should the City concentrate on other redevelopment areas first?

Ms. Hoyle responded that choosing Springfield Avenue as one Champaign-Urbana corridor isn't practical, in addition to the University's concerns. Springfield Avenue's right-of-way through the center of campus is narrow and has high pedestrian volumes. In fact MTD has removed the bus routes off of this section of Springfield Avenue so that segment would not be a major bus corridor.

Chair Pollock asked if MTD is looking for infrastructure improvements so they can put bus routes back on that segment of Springfield Avenue. Ms. Hoyle stated that MTD had not looked at this option. There are a number of issues including safety. MTD does not believe that the ability to widen Springfield Avenue exists the same way it does along White Street.

Chair Pollock questioned how Springfield Avenue got chosen as the corridor in the City of Urbana to concentrate on in the proposed analysis. Ms. Hoyle explained that the City requested Springfield Avenue. Some of the first analyses utilized Green Street, but that brought push back from the Urbana City Council. They did not want Green Street between downtown and Lincoln Avenue to be the high capacity service corridor for MTD. Mr. Myers added that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan shows Springfield Avenue as a future transit corridor. Ms. Hoyle commented that the zoning along Springfield Avenue lends itself better to the possibility of redevelopment because there is already commercial zoning. Whereas on Green Street, there is clearly a stated desire on the behalf of the neighborhood to maintain a residential feel.

Chair Pollock asked if the Plan Commission was being asked to accept the proposed analysis or send a recommendation to the City Council. Mr. Myers answered that staff is not asking for the study to be made part of the Comprehensive Plan or officially adopted by the City. Instead City staff would like the City Council to receive and consider the study and use it as a point of

reference for future plans. Chair Pollock wondered if City staff wants the proposed document to drive development decisions to some degree. Mr. Myers replied that it could be a point of reference that could be used in decision making, but it would not be a policy because it is not a plan that would be adopted. He considers it to be more of a collection of good ideas that the City could draw from.

Mr. Hopkins asked how much of a grant that MTD would request. Ms. Hoyle responded that they are looking at the possibility of rebuilding the streets where needed, branding the bus stops to identify them as being higher level service area, providing some kiosks, extending bike lanes on White Street and fixing the sidewalks.

Mr. Hopkins wondered if the University of Illinois could use some of the grant funds to fix the pavement in front of the Florida Avenue Residence Hall where the buses stop. Ms. Hoyle explained that this is the type of improvements they would like to make. MTD will look at what improvements are needed and choose the ones that are a higher priority. MTD's proposal could reach $60 million. $60 million is the limit that one party can request in a grant application.

Mr. Hopkins questioned what the match would be to win this grant. Ms. Hoyle answered that this grant program has been in existence and has not had the sort of competitive level of applications that the Federal Stimulus funding had. She does not know what the match will be. Mr. Myers pointed out that for the Federal Stimulus grant application the City could use money that we were already programming for our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to repair and upgrade streets and infrastructure.

Mr. Hopkins feels that there are two things that are pertinent for the City of Urbana to prioritize. One is the missing sidewalks along Springfield Avenue. He does not know if this is already in the CIP. If the City can participate in getting funding for this, then it is a good thing. However, he feels that this concern is 95% independent of the redevelopment notions that are implied in the study. He does not feel that land use redevelopment on Springfield Avenue is a priority for the City of Urbana. The second relative item is pavement improvements for bus routes.

Ms. Hoyle clarified that the study was prepared with the Very Small Starts Grant program kept in mind. Although the study mainly supports the Mobility Implementation Plan process, it also provides MTD and the City with a good foundation for the grant application. It provides a lot of useful information.

Mr. Hopkins replied that most of the study information is not the kind of information that the City of Urbana wants in order to justify spending money on Springfield Avenue. In other words, he doesn't believe that the City wants to refocus effort of attracting mixed use in Urbana onto the Springfield Avenue corridor. If using the CIP match requires reprioritizing existing capital improvements schedule to bus routes, then he did not feel that they could make that decision separate from the whole CIP programming process. There may be reasons improvements to Springfield Avenue is not a high priority. Mr. Myers did not feel that as a result of this study the City would reallocate funds from other CIP projects to make funds available for improvements to Springfield Avenue. In other words we're not proposing to "take from Peter to pay Paul."

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that he did not want the City Council to use the proposed document as a point of reference due to the analysis suggesting mixed use, suggesting a retail products gap, suggesting that it should focus on Springfield Avenue, etc. Although the analysis may not come out and say these things, it is basically the message given to readers. Ms. Hoyle noted that based on the existing zoning, if a developer wanted to build a mixed use development, then she would assume that the City would be in favor of that. Mr. Hopkins stated that he understands what the zoning is, but the two examples of development projects mentioned in the proposed analysis are not even located in the corridor. So, the implication of the way the proposed analysis is presented as a quarter analyses with a study boundary, a set of objectives and criteria, and implications of priority is not what they want to recommend to the City Council. Ms. Hoyle explained that the two examples were used at the recommendation of City staff. They are within the area that the study incorporated even though they are not on the corridor itself. Ms. Hoyle mentioned that the City's Public Works Department already plans to rebuild Springfield Avenue so this study wouldn't cause money to be shifted from other street projects.

She went on to say that she does not understand the Plan Commission's concerns because the analysis only provides some recommendations and suggested ideas to look at for implementation strategies. They do not seem to be in contrast or conflict with the City's existing plans and priorities.

Mr. Fitch is not sure that the study helps to justify that improvements to Springfield Avenue are very important. At the previous meeting, he had asked Mr. Myers about some of the population growth scenarios. There are four growth scenarios. There is a baseline, an optimistic, a baseline with mobility enhanced development, and a really optimistic scenario. When you look at the retail opportunities built around these scenarios, the only one that pays off using the numbers is the really optimistic population growth scenario. This might be why the Plan Commission is hesitating to spend money in this area. He stated that if he thought it would help with the grant application to get some funds for the City of Urbana to help with the infrastructure, then he would be in favor of it. He is not sure though that the proposed analysis does, and it detracts from what he believes is the most realistic need in the area, which is pavement.

Mr. Myers believes that the study sees Springfield Avenue as an existing transit corridor with opportunities for adjoining development to support transit and benefit from it. Mr. Fitch agreed that the concept is attractive. He is not sure that the numbers he looked at would pan out to be realistic in the Springfield Avenue corridor.

Mr. Hopkins explained that because of the framing as a corridor analysis, and because of the apparent focus of much of the analysis on the question of retail, it appears to be about emphasizing mixed use development in the corridor. Again, even though the analysis doesn't specifically say this it is the overall message that the analysis sends. The City of Urbana wants buses on Springfield Avenue to keep them off of Green Street. We also want buses on Springfield Avenue to get people from campus to the Downtown Urbana area. The City of Urbana is trying to get empty vacant lots in the downtown area developed and new businesses in existing buildings. So, in a sense, the City of Urbana's interest in improving Springfield Avenue has to do with the pavement, the sidewalks and the bike lanes. The land use surrounding it can come along when it comes along. The land use is not high priority. The zoning is there and the

potential is there, but filling up another corridor with empty store fronts on the first floor just does not make sense when we already have mixed use areas which are not yet successful.

Ms. Hoyle responded that she did not get the same implications for Springfield Avenue from reading the study. The focus is more on higher density residential development. It does not recommend that the City provide financial incentives for redevelopment along the corridor. The recommendations are to encourage the City to look at creating overlay districts to leverage the transportation options where possible and to provide design guidelines. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that most of the recommendations are about development, and he is reluctant to recommend it to the City Council, even as a point of reference.

Chair Pollock suggested that the Plan Commission could mention the pluses of what the analysis does do and the possibility of capturing funds to do a lot of infrastructure rebuilding that the City needs. They can distinguish the recommendations that they think are inappropriate. However, they need to send a message of some kind about the proposed analysis.

Mr. Hopkins commented that rather than making a formal recommendation, they could send the item to the City Council and have them listen to their discussion. If the study is not a plan then he does not know what they are recommending to the Council. If the Plan Commission wants to recommend that the Council use the study then he would have to vote against it.

Mr. Myers suggested that City staff share with the City Council the results of the study and pass along the Plan Commission's concerns and comments without asking the City Council to formally "accept" it. Mr. Fitch agreed that the Plan Commission explained their position on the study at both the previous meeting and at this one. He feels that they should let the minutes speak for themselves to the City Council.

Ms. Hoyle mentioned that the study talks a lot about parking standards and density limitations, which are the kinds of things that the City might be able to do that do not require any financial investment but would perhaps provide incentives for developers to redevelop properties. Those are instances in which those specific recommendations would come before the Plan Commission as a plan case for a formal recommendation to City Council.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert Myers, AICP, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission