

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: March 17, 2005
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Urbana City Building
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, IL 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Laurie Goscha, Lew Hopkins, Randy Kangas, Michael Pollock, Bernadine Stake, Marilyn Upah-Bant, Don White

MEMBERS EXCUSED: There were none.

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Tyler, Director of Community Development Services; Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Paul Lindahl, Planner I; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary; Matt Wempe, Planning Intern

OTHERS PRESENT: George Boyd, Susan Butler, Susan Davis, Greg Girolami, Cynthia Helms, Bjorg Holte, John Ison, Vera Mainz, Joyce Phares, Edward Roy, MD Rumi Shammin, Helaine Silverman, Lois Steinberg, Stuart Tarr, Susan Taylor, Maryalice Wu

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m., the roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Stake moved to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2005 meeting of the Plan Commission as presented. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Staff Memorandum for Plan Case Number 1924-M-05
- Updated Zoning Map

- March 10, 2005 Plan Commission Minutes
- Urbana Plan Commission 2004 Annual Report

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case Number 1923-CP-05 – Request by the Urbana Zoning Administrator to consider adoption of the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan.

Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager, presented an update to the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan. He noted that staff had made a few changes to the proposed plan that might help address some of the comments and concerns expressed in the previous meeting.

In the previous meeting, there was a lot reference to a briefing document that was commissioned by the University of Illinois. The University wanted to be clear that this document was only a market study. It was not a master plan or a site-planning document. The City of Urbana was not involved in putting them together or paying for the study. Mr. Kowalski believed that the proposed Comprehensive Plan would really set the stage for the next step, which would be the master planning of the Orchard Downs tract. Staff had designated it as mixed-residential and proposed a few goals, objectives, and policies that included working with the University of Illinois on master planning for both the Orchard Downs tract and the Pomology tract.

The current proposed plan addresses Orchard Downs in three main ways, one of which is as such: The Future Land Use Map on page 85 shows Orchard Downs as mixed residential with an annotation that says “*Work with the University on long-range redevelopment of Orchard Downs tracts. Mix of densities, including single-family and multi-family with supporting neighborhood businesses. Build as a planned development.*” Staff proposed small changes to the language to address the neighborhood a little more as well. The new language for Map #12 would read as follows:

“Coordinate with the University on Long Range Master Planning for the Orchard Downs Tracts as a Planned Development. Master Planning should address the following:

- *Relationship and compatibility of new development to surrounding areas*
- *A mix of residential densities that include both single-family and multi-family*
- *The scale and extent of potential supporting neighborhood businesses*
- *Provisions for community open space and links to open space amenities*
- *Consideration of existing natural features”*

He mentioned that he did check with the University of Illinois representatives regarding the proposed language changes, and they were fine with it.

Another proposed language change was to the Implementation Program Item on page 98 to read as follows: “*Coordinate with the University ~~to develop~~ on redevelopment site plans for the Orchard Downs and Pomology tracts that are consistent with the Future Land Use Maps and achieve the goal of providing taxable development in the City of Urbana while complementing the character of surrounding areas.” The intent of this Implementation Item was not simply to*

foster some kind of development that generates taxes, but one that would really complement the character the area as well.

Mr. Kowalski went on to give an explanation of how the recommendations in the proposed Comprehensive Plan had evolved regarding the High Cross Road and University Avenue interchange. The current 1982 Comprehensive Plan and the 1993 ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdictional Area Plan) identify the completion of the trumpet interchange and identify the plans for the Northeast Area, High Cross Road north of Interstate 74, as a standard residential category. There were a couple of very small spots on High Cross Road, just north of I-74 that were planned for commercial.

He mentioned that when staff first started the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan, they were proposing a Future Land Use Map that showed some higher density residential and even some commercial just north of the interstate. Obviously, this was not well received by residents in the area. During the public workshops, staff received many comments from these residents stating that they wanted to keep the density low and did not want to promote development in the area. Staff considered the residents' comments and then came up with the "rural residential" category, which would promote a rural type of development.

Another aspect that had evolved was the interchange completion. On staff's first cut of a roadway map, they showed a dash line extending over in an arbitrary spot. Since then, staff had taken the line off and annotated the map to illustrate that staff wants the improvement, but they want to study the improvement to decide optimal design, location, feasibility, etc. The goal of the this transportation improvement would be to serve better access to High Cross Road, south of the interstate.

Gregory Girolami, of 2709 Holcombe Avenue, stated that the main issue with a trumpet interchange, no matter where it was put, was that it would run through a special part of Urbana, which was part of the old Big Grove with topological as well as ecological features that were rare in Champaign County. Any sort of additional improvements to the interchange would significantly compromise these features.

At the invitation of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the attendees of the workshops were asked to propose alternatives. Just saying no that they did not want something was not particularly constructive because of the need to provide some additional access from I-74 to the region just south. As a result, 17 residents of the northeast area jointly presented an alternative proposal to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to recommend improvements at Cottonwood Road instead of High Cross Road. They did not hear any counter arguments to say that this was not possible.

Therefore, Mr. Girolami asked the Plan Commission to consider adding to the areas of the proposed plan that addressed the trumpet interchange to include as an alternative the Cottonwood Road exchange. More specifically, on page 26, he suggested that the Plan Commission strike the reference to High Cross Road or include the corridor that extends from High Cross Road to Cottonwood Road. Secondly, on page 75 (Future Land Use Map #2), again he suggested deleting "High Cross Road" or inserting "Cottonwood Road" as an alternative. Lastly, on

Appendix “E” (Mobility Map), under the center column at the bottom of the page, he recommended that the wording be listed as an option and that an alternative option be the construction of an interchange at Cottonwood Road. He believed that for the proposed Comprehensive Plan, it would be wise for the City to keep their options open.

Lois Steinberg, of 306 West Nevada, hoped that the Plan Commission would keep another option open to not build any more roads. She believed the University Avenue interchange to be finished. Having more roads would be a regressive approach to planning a more progressive city. When roads are built, it promotes more car driving and costs a lot of money. It would be nice to take that money and put it into something more progressive like gridding the entire city with a TRAM system, so people would not need cars at all. Promoting more driving was not the way to go. Ms. Stake responded by saying that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan would promote more walkable areas and bicycle paths in the city. Ms. Steinberg stated that she wanted the City of Urbana to become a community that did not rely on cars or the MTD buses. She was surprised that the City did not have a more progressive vision. It was the same old, same old in that let’s build more roads, then everything begins to expand and gets ugly. She mentioned that she was glad to see bike paths planned.

Libby Tyler, Director of Community Development Services, stated that the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan was a much more sustainable plan than the existing 1982 Comprehensive Plan. The City was not growing as far out or as intensively in terms of land use and roads. When comparing the policies of the two plans, the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan was a much more progressive in terms of transit-friendly development, infill development and slow-sustainable growth.

Ms. Tyler further explained that in regards to transit, there were two other plans that were helpful for the City of Urbana. They are the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Greenways and Trails Plan. In the Long-Range Transportation Plan, there was an incredible change in terms of the policies with respect to transit. It had a whole vision of what the future might be for the region with improved transit and multi-modes of traffic. The Greenways and Trails Plan was adopted for the entire area. The City of Urbana has planned an extensive network of bike paths that were not previously planned.

Ms. Steinberg asked if the City could not hold off on building more roads until after we have done the great things Ms. Tyler mentioned. Maybe the City would not need to build the roads. Ms. Tyler responded by saying that the roads were planned consistent with the land uses. She showed using the maps how the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan was more conservative than the existing Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Tyler noted that the Mobility Map was much more constrained as well. Some of the road alignments were still shown as previously been planned; however, there were some future potential roads to be studied such as the trumpet interchange. Instead of showing the alignments for future developments, staff referenced certain areas where it would not be wise to connect roads over the Saline Ditch.

Ms. Tyler commented that there was nothing wrong with where the City was at now. The 1982 Comprehensive Plan was a very standard plan, in which previous City staff and City officials had planned for Urbana's future. However, where we are heading is much more restrained, and the proposed policies reflect that.

Ms. Steinberg asked what the point for the roads was. Ms. Tyler answered by saying that roads were built to serve development with fire access and connectivity. It was responsible to connect roads so people can get fire access to their homes and businesses rather than having firetrucks drive all the way around to get where they need to go. People want the roads to connect. It was not safe to have developments that do not connect to roads. It clogs up smaller residential streets. What would be irresponsible would be to build new roads where you do not need them.

Ms. Steinberg questioned why the interchange at University Avenue and Interstate 74 was not considered ample. Ms. Tyler replied that it was an incomplete interchange and did not have all way access.

George Boyd, of 3705 East Airport Road, asked how many members of the Plan Commission had ridden the MTD in the last week. How many of the audience members had ridden the MTD in the last week? He stated that when he was younger and the City of Urbana was not that much smaller, there were only three bus routes. He was not opposed to public transportation. He was opposed to the way it was run. There was a bunch of buses running around slowing traffic with hardly any riders. On campus, it was a different situation, and they should really have their own transportation system. In the community as a whole in the City of Urbana and in the City of Champaign, we do not need these huge buses. Danville, Bloomington and Peoria have smaller buses. He believed that the City was over bused and the routes needed some more work. Also, people should have a certain amount of responsibility with regard to public transportation to walk a few blocks. We do not need bus stops at everyone's front door.

Mr. Boyd appreciated the cutbacks that City staff had made in the proposed plan. While he empathized with Mr. Girolami's idea to have the trumpet interchange at Cottonwood Road rather than at High Cross Road, he did not feel it was practical for a variety of reasons. The primary reason was for the space that was available. This was why some residents in the northeast area proposed that the City consider 1800 East as an alternative to an intersection with Interstate 74.

With regard to the extension road, it would not save any time over an existing highway that was in use and had been for more than 80 years. 15 seconds was not a justifiable reason to build a road for no purpose.

As far as Interstate 74 and its intersection, people can get on or off the interstate in either east or west directions right now. There was no way that the City could get land-locked in that area.

Regarding the University Avenue and Interstate 74 intersection, Mr. Boyd pointed out that University Avenue followed IL Route 150 going east at the stoplight. He did not understand what Ms. Tyler meant by saying that it was incomplete.

Helaine Silverman, of 108 East Mumford Drive, thanked staff for the proposed language changes regarding Orchard Downs. She felt it was very helpful.

She asked if the single-family and multi-family residential designations for Orchard Downs were intended to be private ownership or rentals. Mr. Kowalski replied that the Comprehensive Plan did not get that specific as to what exactly would be owner-occupied or renter-occupied.

Ms. Silverman mentioned that she met with John Dempsey and April Getchius from the Facilities and Services office at UIUC. They explained how Orchard Downs might be developed in a legal sense, because the University of Illinois owned the land. Mr. Dempsey talked about a legal device of a 99-year lease. From her understanding, this would cause any proposed development to fall under the control of the Plan Commission and the Urbana City Council in terms of zoning. Was this correct? Mr. Kowalski stated that the City went through the exact same scenario as with Gregory Place development. The University owns the land and was leasing it to the JSM Management for 99 years. The University was able to require JSM Management to build it a certain way. To do that project, the City had to make some changes to our zoning. There were special zoning approvals that had to be granted. It did come through the Plan Commission in a public hearing process and was approved by City Council.

Ms. Silverman inquired as to what “promote infill development” would mean. Mr. Kowalski answered by saying that it meant simply to develop in areas that already were generally built up and had infrastructure (roads, sewers, utilities, etc.) rather than building on the edge of town where new infrastructure would have to be provided. The City believed that Orchard Downs was an infill development opportunity. It was bound on all sides by public utilities and infrastructure.

Ms. Silverman referred to Future Land Use Map #12. The annotation spoke about the plan envisioning an urban pattern of development where any new streets would be well connected, as a grid and development would resemble an urban pattern typically found in older neighborhoods. What kind of new streets and grid did this mean? Mr. Kowalski stated that on a site of this size, which was about 160 acres from Florida Avenue to Windsor Road, a proposed development layout would probably need some kind of new streets. The Comprehensive Plan calls for any new street layout proposed for the Orchard Downs area to be done in a grid pattern rather than having cul-de-sacs. It should have a good system of sidewalks and connectivity, which are things found in an older neighborhood.

Ms. Silverman questioned if the new street layout would connect to the streets around Orchard Downs or would Orchard Downs be more self-contained. Mr. Kowalski replied that it would be hard to say without getting into the master planning process. Usually, when there were roads coming out of a development, it was best to line them up with existing roads rather than having offset intersections that create traffic problems.

Vera Mainz, of 2709 Holcombe Drive, referred to page 35, Goal 6.0. She applauded the concepts of preserving natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas in the community. Goal 6.2 talks specifically about protecting sensitive areas such as wooded areas, major drainageways and areas of topographic relief. She pointed out that this specifically pertained to the High Cross Road, Holcombe Woods and Raintree Woods areas. She mentioned at the July

17, 2003 meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, a group of residents who live in the northeast area of Urbana had presented a handout about the unique ecological aspects of the Big Grove Woods Area. She read a paragraph from this handout.

She noted that there were two conflicting points in the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan. If the proposed plan were kept strictly as a trumpet extension to High Cross Road, it would conflict with Goal 6.0, which talked about preserving the environment.

She read the advantages of building a different interchange. She stated that the Mobility Map showed planned roads off of Cottonwood Road. The City was already starting to move east of High Cross Road and were starting to look at would happen when they hit Cottonwood Road. She stated that there would be many advantages to keeping the City's options open.

Maryalice Wu, of 113 West Washington Street, noted that the proposed plan designates her property as being institutional rather than residential. She urged the Plan Commission to change the designation back to residential, because the school district had no formal plan to actual adopt this area. She pointed out that on Future Land Use Map #11 there was a pink area on the corner of Washington Street and Race Street with an annotation saying "Preserve Neighborhood Business". She urged the Plan Commission to preserve the neighborhood as well.

Bjorg Holte, of 1001 North High Cross Road, read from the handout that Ms. Mainz had made reference to. She commented that it was very easy to look at a flat map. She urged the Plan Commission to visit the northeast area of Urbana before voting on the proposed plan.

Mr. Girolami re-approached the Plan Commission to request that the handout be entered into the record. Copies were made and passed out to each Plan Commission member.

Stuart Tarr, of 3605 South Philo Road, inquired about the process for the proposed plan. Mr. Pollock stated that he was not sure if the Plan Commission would vote on forwarding a recommendation to the City Council during this meeting or if the Plan Commission would need another meeting to discuss the proposed plan.

Mr. Tarr commented that he was representing a new organization called Prairie Table, as well as representing himself. He felt that the proposed plan had its progressive elements; however, it was still a 20th century plan. The idea of building a beltway around Curtis Road and U.S. Route 130 may not be the way that the City would want to go in the future, given what energy costs may be doing in the next 30 to 40 years.

He mentioned that Wes Garrell, Department Head for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Department, mentioned they were quite interested in doing some kind of cooperative project interface with some of the plots with the community. The three plots that Mr. Garrell had mentioned were the Pomology site, the Orchard Downs area, and the whole section on the southwest corner of Race Street and Windsor Road. Ms. Upah-Bant remarked that the University of Illinois would still own the land, and the City would not have any control over these properties.

Mr. Tarr stated that when looking at the land map, the Pomology lab had a commercial slice in the corner and was slated for residential development. They were talking about some commercial development in the Orchard Downs area as well. Ms. Upah-Bant stated that it was the University of Illinois talking about commercial in these areas, not the City of Urbana.

Mr. Kowalski pointed out that the City had discussions with the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, but mostly in relation to Curtis Road. They had talked about what kinds of land uses would be appropriate along Curtis Road and about the design of the road itself. These discussions were held mostly through the CUUATS Long-Range Transportation Plan.

There had also been discussions with the University regarding the Pomology site and Orchard Downs. These two tracts were the only properties owned by the University that were planned for something other than institutional. It was recognized by the University that these two tracts would likely be potential, private development with the University ownership and lease in the immediate term or a little more long term. The City was always careful about planning things on properties owned by the University, as well as on other people's properties.

Ms. Upah-Bant pointed out that a planner from the University served as member of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. It was not as if the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and City staff created the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan in the dark. Mr. Pollock clarified that the proposals that Mr. Tarr was thinking might be possible and beneficial did not come up and be discussed in the four years it took the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to create the proposed plan. He explained that the proposed plan was a guiding document. Should the University and the City actually decide on a plan of action for any of these plots, the proposed plan would not preclude the City adjusting it based on mutual agreements, which at this point they did not have.

Mr. Tarr thought that since any redevelopment of either Orchard Downs or the Pomology site would have a major interface that it would affect the City's Comprehensive Plan tremendously. Mr. Hopkins commented that Mr. Garrell was fairly new to the area. Some of the ideas and attitudes that he represents were new. So, the types of discussions that may continue into the future would likely be affected by that. The other key thing that the City was working on and making significant progress on was trying to get the University and all of its parts, including the College of Agriculture, and the City to think about planning as something we do all the time and in different degrees of openness, because things were always changing.

Mr. Tarr expressed his concern that once you get past the goals, objectives and the implementation of the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan, it was still based on building a four-lane beltway along Curtis Road and up IL Route 130 and building detached housing subdivisions. This struck him as a 20th century plan. The City should start looking at more innovative kind of development for this area. South Farms goes all the way to Philo Road. This could be a tremendous amenity for the City of Urbana, particularly if Meadowbrook Park was connected down through South Farms. Mr. Hopkins stated that this was in the proposed plan on page 87.

Mr. Kowalski noted that one of the things shown on page 87 was the concept of expanding Meadowbrook Park into the Pomology tract. It would compliment a mix of residential development with some business at the intersection.

The map also illustrates a dashed red line, which shows where there currently was service availability for sanitary sewers. There were not many areas in Urbana, south of Windsor Road east of High Cross Road that did have sanitary sewer availability. One of Urbana's few growth areas such as the Yankee Ridge area, south of the Pomology site, and where Southridge Subdivision was currently developing still have sanitary sewer availability.

Mr. Tarr commented that it was a growth area, but it was probably not the type of growth that they wanted. The City should rethink how they want the community to grow. When he looks at the proposed plan, he did not really see planning. He saw repeating of what had been done in the past. He urged the Plan Commission to hold off on making a recommendation to the City Council, so that the Prairie Table could have time to respond to the plan in more detail. Mr. Pollock encouraged Mr. Tarr and the Prairie Table to respond in writing to the plan. However, in terms of holding off on the proposed plan, which had been in the making for four and a half years was asking a lot.

Mr. Kowalski commented on the Future Land Use Map #11, which showed Ms. Wu's property as being designated as institutional, by saying that the map was created in 2003. It was understood that the school district had a long-range plan to acquire her property as well as the other residential properties designated institutional in the proposed plan. The school district had a considerable discussion about whether they would keep the high school in its current location or build a new school somewhere else, where they would have more land to grow. He was not sure if the school district had a master plan that illustrated this intention or whether it was a common understanding that the School Board has had over the years. Mr. Pollock asked how many of the properties on Iowa Street and Washington Street had already been purchased by the school district. Mr. Kowalski replied by saying that was a good question. The school district owned more of the houses on Iowa Street than on Washington Street. In fact, he did not think that the school district owned any houses on Washington Street at the moment.

Ms. Stake expressed her concern over this area being designated as institutional. This was another instance for low-cost housing for affordable buyers. She did not believe that the City should allow the school district to tear the homes down. Mr. Kowalski clarified that the school district was not proactively trying to acquire these properties. If there was a homeowner who wanted to sell their property, then the school district was usually the first in line to talk to the homeowner. Ms. Tyler added that staff could do a finer scale of what properties were being used as residential and what properties were owned by the school district and maybe rented out or used for auxiliary uses.

Chair Pollock opened the public hearing up for the Plan Commission's discussion. He asked Ms. Upah-Bant and Mr. Hopkins, who served as representatives on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, to speak about the proposed plan.

Ms. Upah-Bant felt that she had a quite a few opportunities to raise changes and bring quite a few things to the table already in the last four and a half years. She only had one item that she would like to discuss, but she preferred to wait.

Mr. White noted that he had campaigned throughout the entire planning process of the Comprehensive Plan to delete the University trumpet interchange from the proposed plan. He recalled seeing this concept on a map from the 1970s. At that time, it may have made sense. However, realistically, he did not want to dump that much traffic onto High Cross Road. Appendix E shows where people could get off Interstate 74 and still be able to get to the future Walmart without having the trumpet extended.

The real problem would be from Perkins Road to Oaks Road on High Cross Road. Drivers would drop down a hill, cross over the Saline Ditch, and drive between Brownfield Woods and the cemetery. Given the number of houses located in this area and the dip, he believed it would be an extremely difficult road to build. The traffic in this area was already ferocious.

If you go to Oaks Road, it would at least be a flat shot, but you would still pass the Phillips tract and the Trelease Woods. Cottonwood Road already goes through here. The Phillips tract was just an abandoned farmstead that was probably replaceable. There was also an old school that was about to fall down. However, there were some houses along Cottonwood Road that would represent a problem.

1800 East was an interesting possibility. It gets to be wide open-country in this area. Another option would be to have the trumpet interchange between Cottonwood and High Cross Road. This however would take you through Mr. Boyd's house and through the Saline Branch. This would actually be a great spot to have rural residential.

Mr. White really liked the rural residential concept. He hoped to get Champaign County to use the rural residential zoning as well. He would like to see the trumpet interchange deleted from the proposed plan. He also suggested that Olympian Drive only be extended to U.S. Route 45, and not all the way to High Cross Road.

Mr. Pollock inquired if the road proposed to run to High Cross Road was intended to service businesses to the south of the interstate. Did the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and City staff discuss using Cottonwood Road as a possibility for the trumpet interchange? Mr. Kowalski answered by saying that they discussed this possibility, and they decided that by promoting a new interchange on Cottonwood Road, it could ignite additional development further east than they wanted. They wanted to build a system where the City was growing compactly east rather than jumping further east because there would be a new interchange there.

There were comments made at the committee meetings that if the primary goal was to have better access for High Cross Road south of the interstate, then it would be just as easy for anybody to exit off of Cottonwood Road, drive south to U.S. Route 150 and head west to High Cross Road. Staff's initial thoughts were whether the infrastructure along Cottonwood Road south to U.S. Route 150 and along U.S. Route 150 would be adequate enough or would. Also, to what degree would development be enticed on High Cross Road if the most convenient access

was all the over on Cottonwood Road? Certainly, a direct access or even a perceived direct access was something being very important. Staff and committee members believed that by setting up the proposed plan to be clear that the purpose would be to serve High Cross Road south of the interstate, that the completing the trumpet interchange, which was 75% already built, would be a more wise and economically feasible solution than promoting a brand new diamond interchange on Cottonwood Road. Mr. Pollock added that improvements or completion of this interchange could be done without necessarily having the loop road. Mr. Kowalski said that was correct. He mentioned that any interchange would need to be studied. In fact, in the first phase, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) would have a study done to find where the interchange should go and how it work. Ms. Tyler added that IDOT would need to look at alternatives. They would need to do an alternatives analysis, which would likely include a Cottonwood alternative or a no build alternative.

She went on to say that if the City would decide to use Cottonwood Road, then people in that area would want the interchange even further east. Looking at alternatives was certainly a good idea. This major of a road project would need to be assessed in quite a bit of detail to see if it was worth it in terms of time saved, traffic safety, etc. What is shown on the Mobility Map was questioning whether the City even wanted to look at this as a potential future extension. It was not a planned extension.

Mr. Hopkins thought that if they modified the language to include alternative locations to be considered along with the University Avenue/I-74 interchange completion option, then it would be worthy of including them in the proposed plan. Timing would need to be part of the alternatives. They need to be explicit or the intention could be misunderstood at a later date when the City and IDOT determine that an interchange was needed.

Ms. Stake remarked that her choice would be not to build. However, if there was a build, then they needed a justification for an access road. She did not believe that the City had a justification at this point. There were so many people analyze the situation and tell the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee why it would not be a good idea to build an interchange on High Cross Road. She read about the "Unique Ecological Aspects of the Big Grove Woods Area" from the handout.

Mr. Kangas addressed Ms. Mainz concern about their being conflicting ideas in the proposed plan. He mentioned that there were always competing objectives, because these things needed to be balanced.

Regarding more compact development, Mr. Kangas pointed out that on page 5 of the proposed plan; it talks about how there were 35,978 people in 1982 living in 6.5 square miles. Today, Urbana was 12 square miles with only 37,400 people. So, the density had gone from 5,500 people per square mile to 3,100 people per square mile. It seemed to him that there was a competing priority here.

Mr. Kangas reiterated that the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan had been in the planning process for four and a half years, and there were thousands of people who participated in that process by attending dozens of public meetings. The process has consumed thousands of man-

hours. He stated that there seemed to be only two problem areas. So, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and City staff really did a great job! He agreed that the interchange access needed further study. Overall, he felt this was a phenomenal plan.

Mr. White stated the whole concept of rural residential would allow this area to be developed, yet still be maintained. He believed it was a very unique and a nice way to do it. It was a tough balance. Her really hoped that Champaign County would buy into this concept.

Ms. Stake inquired as to what the justification was for wanting a trumpet interchange. Ms. Tyler stated that basically the justification was that the City had discontinuous access over and over again in Urbana, particularly north-south access. So, there was compromised access. It frustrated motorists and commercial development to have to back track from the access point. It creates higher volumes of traffic on roads that were not meant to function that way. Discontinuous access was one of the major economic development impediments to the growth of Urbana.

She believed that they were not trying to promote an interchange access as something that would assist development to the north. However, they were looking to the south, which includes most of East Urbana. She thought that the time analysis really needed to be done professionally as part of the alternatives assessment to see what type of efficiencies and what kind of safety improvements there would be. If they were marginal, then an interchange would not likely be funded. If it would be a true improvement, then hopefully it would be funded.

When you look at development patterns in the City of Champaign, which has much improved interchange access, you can see how interchange access could really drive development. This did not mean that the City of Urbana wanted to like the City of Champaign, but Urbana has two and a half interchanges and one highway. The City of Champaign has three interstates, which was probably the primary reason why the City of Champaign looks and has developed so differently from the City of Urbana.

Ms. Stake inquired if there was any priority for such things as the environment. Ms. Tyler replied that IDOT would need to do an Environmental Impact Assessment. IDOT would look at the impact and the mitigation measures. Ultimately, the best environmental solution would be no people, no roads, and no development. It was a good debate as to whether they should complete the interchange and in which location or whether the City should wait to build an interchange access. She mentioned that it was a competitive environment as well. The City would not just get funded because they show something planned. Rantoul, Mahomet, Champaign have all requested interchanges as well.

IDOT had asked the City if there should funding available for an interchange access. The City of Urbana has replied yes. We want to study this. We did not say that we should build it just to study it.

Ms. Stake felt that the cost to build a road and the cost of the damage to the environment when a road was built was never looked at in the same way. CUUATS want to make roads. They are not interested in preserving the environment. The City has to decide rather than letting some

road builder decide. Ms. Tyler responded by saying that the City was deciding. She did not believe that the roads would be imposed upon the City, because the City had jurisdiction.

Mr. White believed that the problem was that the City only mentioned High Cross Road rather than including alternative locations for the interchange access. He believed that this would limit the study to one location. Mr. Pollock asked the Plan Commission if there was a consensus by the members that other alternative locations should be mentioned in the proposed plan as well as the High Cross Road interchange option. The Plan Commission members agreed.

Mr. Hopkins commented that they would need to create a new symbol and put a #3 in three different locations on Appendix "E" (Mobility Map). There would also need to have wording changes go in various places.

Ms. Upah-Bant stated that she would like to preclude the use of High Cross Road or note that there was a concern of its close proximity to ecological areas.

Mr. Pollock asked if there was a consensus of the Plan Commission to accept staff's recommended language changes to the Orchard Downs area. The Plan Commission agreed.

Mr. Pollock noted that there was a question about various properties on Race Street, Washington Street, and Iowa Street being designated as institutional. Mr. Kangas commented that if the school district was buying and owning properties in this area, then it was a clear message that they need to expand. Mr. Hopkins added that we, the community of Urbana, have invested a lot in the notion that the high school, middle school and aquatic center would remain located in the middle of the City, because we want them there. In order to do this, the City needed to allow the site to be big enough to comprehend these uses. The best way for this to happen would be for them to progress to the northwest. This would mean leaving the properties designated as institutional in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Stake expressed her concern that the school district would want more area to expand their parking for students, who should be walking to school. It would be ridiculous to have parking for high school students, when they were talking about walkable communities and the health of walking. She did not believe that the school district should build more parking lots. Mr. White admitted that he was on the school board when they decided to leave the high school and middle school in their current locations. The concern at that time was that there was no real campus on site. There was a real desire to remain located in the center of town. In terms of parking, students will drive their cars and will either park them in a parking lot on school property or in front of people's homes. He felt it was good that the school district had expanded their parking lot.

Mr. Pollock asked if there was a consensus of the Plan Commission to leave the residential properties designated as institutional. The Plan Commission was in favor with a 6-1 vote.

Ms. Stake commented that the plan should incorporate the following:

1. Ensure goal to have walkable neighborhood design.
Mr. Kowalski stated that they wanted to ensure that new developments have sidewalks on both sides of the streets and pedestrian links to parks and shopping areas.
2. Require developers to set aside land for parks in all developments.
Mr. Kowalski pointed out that Urbana has more park space per capita than the national average. It was discussed during the Comprehensive Plan structure of mandatory park land dedication. There is an implementation program item that states, "Coordinate with the Urbana Park District to determine opportunities for additional park space in new residential growth areas". He mentioned that the City would rather have park areas be maintained by the Urbana Park District than to have homeowner associations be held responsible. In order to do this, the park space must be of a certain size.
3. Encourage conservation district areas in North Urbana, East Urbana, and West Urbana.
Mr. Kowalski mentioned that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was proposing an implementation strategy that would have the City look at conservation district status for certain neighborhoods. A conservation district would be like a historic preservation district light. It would take measures to preserve the overall character and basic fabric of a neighborhood.
4. Encourage more trees in parking lots.
Ms. Tyler remarked that the City had pretty extensive planting requirements for parking lots. There was also an implementation program in the proposed plan to require street trees.
5. Preserve and promote opportunities for rail access for existing and future industrial uses in East Urbana, which was recommended by Chris Alix.
Ms. Tyler stated that there were other people in the community who were not keen on this idea. There were two users of the rail, which are Solo Cup and the Emulsicoat, Inc.; however, Emulsicoat, Inc. was planning to move within two years. The rail access in East Urbana was such that East Urbana did not have enough connectivity. The best rail access in the City of Urbana was along North Lincoln Avenue and North Oak Street, which was one major reason why this area was shown as industrial. City staff had been thinking more along the lines of converting the old rail right-of-way into pathways.
6. Support regional, state and federal efforts to promote high speed and conventional intercity passenger rail connections serving Urbana and Champaign, which was recommended by Mr. Alix.
Mr. Kowalski mentioned that he had asked Mr. Alix to expand on his thoughts and meanings of this request a little more.

Ms. Stake commented that she thought the Goals for the multi-mobile transportation system were great. She liked the ideas about park and ride and also about trail connections. She inquired about what was happening with historical preservation on Main Street. Mr. Kowalski pointed out that there was an annotation on one of the maps that says, "Study historic district in areas

where appropriate”. This did not necessarily call for all of West Main Street from Downtown Urbana to Lincoln Avenue to be one district. However, there may be pockets on West Main Street that would appropriate for historic district status.

7. Busey Avenue needed to stay designated the same as in the Downtown to Campus Plan.

Mr. Kowalski said it does.

8. Encourage preservation of the Mahomet Aquifer.

Ms. Tyler noted that there was a major study under way, which had been on going for a while, and she hoped it would be completed soon. This was a regional issue.

Mr. Hopkins recommended making the following language changes to the proposed 2005 Comprehensive Plan:

1. **Page 26. Trend #3, Second Bullet**

The ~~University Avenue/~~ Interstate 74 interchange access as Urbana grows to the east and south. ~~does not allow for complete access to intersecting roadways and for convenient access to High Cross Road south of the interstate.~~

2. **Page 75. Future Land Use Map #2**

Change the language in the annotation on the map to read as such: Improve interstate interchange access ~~to serve at High Cross Road, Cottonwood Road, or 1800 East when needed.~~ south of interstate. Future study will determine appropriate location. ~~Consider rural boulevard design.~~

3. **Page 105. Implementation Strategy, second strategy listed**

Support ~~and implement~~ the goals and objectives of the Long Range Transportation Plan developed by CUUATS when evaluating transportation projects. ~~as it pertains to the City of Urbana.~~

4. **Page 108. Explanation of the Mobility Map**

Future roadway projects ~~extensions are considered necessary~~ to ensure a connected transportation network ~~though~~ require additional study to determine ~~optimal~~ design, location, and function.

He mentioned that they might need to explain new symbols on the right hand side of page 108 as well.

5. **Appendix “E” (Mobility Map)**

Under Future Roadway Extensions, the middle block at the bottom of the map, change the following:

- A. **Change #1 to read as such:** Anthony Drive connection between Lincoln Avenue and Willow Road
- B. **Change #2 to read as such:** Olympian Drive termination at ~~from~~ U.S. Route 45 or continuation to High Cross Road

- C. **Change #3 to read as such:** ~~University Avenue/ I-74 Interchange completion to serve full access and High Cross Road south of the interstate~~ Interstate 74 interchange alternatives, when needed, High Cross Road, Cottonwood Road and 1800 East
- D. Include a paragraph of explanations under these three items, which include rural residential development area, ecological areas, horizontal and vertical alignments of intersecting roads and desired land use patterns.
- E. **Change the explanation of the box:** Future Roadway Extensions – ~~Connections~~ Projects are identified as ~~being needed~~ needing ~~but require~~ additional study to determine ~~optimal~~ design, location & function.

Mr. Pollock asked if the Plan Commission agreed if they were not sure that they needed any of the proposed road interchanges and road extensions. Mr. Hopkins believed that the difficulty was when looking even at the Anthony Drive connection, it was not at all clear that if the City had budget to spend that they would choose to build the connection. It was more that the City had looked at a map and said, “Where are the gaps?” Therefore, he felt that the “no build” option should be available in each of these cases. He pointed out that it was not meant to imply that there would never be any kind of interchange anywhere east of Urbana. Mr. Pollock noted that this would leave the options open.

Ms. Upah-Bant suggested that they change the title of the box to be “Potential Roadway Projects”. Mr. Hopkins agreed.

Ms. Goscha pointed out another area that should be changed in relation to Mr. Hopkin’s suggested changes. On page 102, Implementation Strategy, the fourth strategy listed should read as follows: Study ~~future~~ potential roadway projects ~~extensions~~ identified on the Mobility Map to determine ~~optimal~~ design, location and function.

Ms. Upah-Bant stated that she was confused about the proposed language changes regarding Olympian Drive and what it would fix. Mr. Hopkins clarified that as originally proposed, the language assumed that there would be a connection from where Olympian Drive leaves off to High Cross Road. The justification for this connection would be that this would be a ring road or a connector, and that High Cross Road would be the north-south east side of the ring road. Therefore, Olympian Drive and High Cross Road should be connected. Mr. Pollock said that it simply means, “Let’s study it before we connect it”.

He went on to point out in Mr. Hopkin’s proposed language changes that there was some deletion of words that identified “south of the interstate”. By making these changes, would it discourage economic development in the area? Mr. Kowalski did not feel that it would discourage a potential developer. The reason this language was included was to make it clear that the City did not want growth north of the interstate. He preferred if “south of the interstate” was left in the proposed plan, because the City did not want to promote development north of the interstate even if an interchange would be built at Cottonwood Road, High Cross Road, or 1800 East. Mr. Hopkins agreed.’

Mr. Pollock questioned what the impact would be for diverging from the CUUATS agreement, which the City helped write and were a party to. Ms. Tyler thought that everything would be good. City staff had brought the Long-Range Transportation Plan back to the City Council, and City Council does want to endorse it. However, the Council wanted to make it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The other important thing to know for road projects in our jurisdiction was that CUUATS would not impose roads on the City. The City would make the decision to put potential road projects on our transportation program funding and Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Hopkins inquired what the current status was of the High Cross Road Corridor study. Mr. Kowalski replied that the study was on hold until this project was completed because it was difficult to manage both the study and the proposed plan at the same time and also because the City wanted the proposed plan to give the study a little more direction. Ms. Tyler added that it was tricky, because they had three planned programs covering some of the same territory going. She felt it was good the 2005 Comprehensive Plan would lead.

Mr. Kangas moved that the Plan Commission recommend approval of this plan case to the City Council with language changes presented by Mr. Kowalski and with the additional recommended language changes made by Mr. Hopkins. Ms. Goscha seconded the motion.

Ms. Stake made a motion to amend the main motion to change the zoning designation for properties on Race Street and Washington Street from institutional to residential. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Ms. Stake made a motion to amend the main motion to designate North Urbana residential area, West Urbana residential area, and East Urbana residential area as conservation districts. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Mr. Pollock pointed out that there was a lot of information that the Plan Commission had not discussed. This was because the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and City staff had done an amazing job in creating the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. There was an incredible amount of work that went into this project. The outstanding job that the Steering Committee and City staff did made it easy for the Plan Commission to address the areas that needed to be dealt with. It was a terrific plan and document, and he believed it reflected what most of the people in Urbana would like to see in the future.

Ms. Stake made a motion to amend the main motion by removing the star on the Mobility Map, which indicates further study of a completed interchange at University Avenue/Interstate 74. Ms. Upah-Bant seconded the motion.

Mr. Kangas clarified that with Mr. Hopkin's proposed language changes, the plan would now show that East Urbana needs some access. The City would now study other alternatives as well as the High Cross Road option, and the City may not end up doing anything at all with the University Avenue interchange. He felt this was good enough. Ms. Goscha agreed. She

reminded the Plan Commission that the plan would require review of the ecological impacts as well.

The amendment failed by a vote of 3-4.

Roll call was taken on the main motion and was as follows:

Mr. White	-	Yes	Ms. Upah-Bant	-	Yes
Ms. Stake	-	Yes	Mr. Pollock	-	Yes
Mr. Kangas	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Ms. Goscha	-	Yes			

The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Kowalski noted that City staff would be present this case to the Committee of the Whole on March 28, 2005.

Mr. Kangas remarked that for all the people interested in the proposed Comprehensive Plan, it was a plan. It did not rezone anything. It did not build any road. It was simply a guidance document for the future.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Plan Case Number 1924-M-05 – Annual Update to the Official Urbana Zoning Map.

Mr. Kowalski presented this case to the Plan Commission. He noted that the Illinois State Law required the City of Urbana to amend and update the Zoning Map by March 31st of each year. All of the changes that have been made to the Zoning Map in 2004 were illustrated on the map before them as well as mentioned in the staff report. Staff’s recommendation was as follows:

Staff recommended that the Urbana Plan Commission recommend approval of the revised and updated Official Zoning Map to the Urbana City Council.

Ms. Stake moved that the Plan Commission forward this case to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Kangas seconded the motion.

Mr. Hopkins questioned why Meadowbrook Park was zoned residential. Mr. Kowalski answered by saying that it was zoned residential, because it had never been rezoned from when it was annexed from the County. Ms. Tyler stated that some of Meadowbrook Park was zoned

CRE, Conservation-Recreation-Education. The newest annexed portion of the park was never rezoned.

Roll call was as follows:

Ms. Upah-Bant	-	Yes	Ms. Stake	-	Yes
Mr. Pollock	-	Yes	Mr. Kangas	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Ms. Goscha	-	Yes
Mr. White	-	Yes			

The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Pollock addressed a comment that had been made during public testimony regarding notification of public hearings and what time each public hearing begins. He noted that at the previous Plan Commission meeting held on March 10, 2005, there were two other cases heard before the Plan Commission opened up the plan case regarding the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Although most of the public audience was there to talk about the Orchard Downs issue, it was not the only issue on the agenda. The other two cases had waited a month to be reviewed by the Plan Commission.

City staff cannot and will not ever put times in the newspaper that the Plan Commission would start a particular item on the agenda. He apologized for any inconvenience this may have caused. However, the fact was that City staff and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee had spent four years working on the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, and he did not feel that having to wait an hour to open the case was unreasonable.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Chair Pollock adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Kowalski, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission