

## MINUTES OF A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION  
URBANA BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMISSION  
URBANA SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** October 30, 2014

**TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

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

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**MEMBER PRESENT:** (*Urbana Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission*) Brandon Bowersox-Johnson, Cynthia Hoyle, Audrey Ishii, and Susan Jones; (*Urbana Plan Commission*) Corey Buttry, Tyler Fitch, Bernadine Stake and David Trail; (*Urbana Sustainability Advisory Commission*) Marya Ryan, Bart Bartles, Morgan Johnston, Todd Rusk, Andrew Stumpf, Rachel Vellenga, and Stephen Wald

**STAFF PRESENT:** Elizabeth Tyler, Jeff Engstrom, Christopher Marx, Teri Andel, Bill Gray, Craig Shonkwiler, Scott Tess, Femi Fletcher-Washington

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Rita Black, Bill Brown, Ashlee McLaughlin, Prateek Mittal, Dennis Roberts, Charlie Smyth, Susan Taylor, Matt Yoder

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Fitch, of the Urbana Plan Commission, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Everyone around the dais and the table introduced themselves and announced which commission they serve on.

### 2. COMMUNICATIONS

- Weekly Newsletter of the Midwest high Speed Rail Association, Article on “What Japan Started” submitted by Bernadine Stake

### 3. STUDY SESSION

**Presentation by the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission staff on the Draft 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

Chair Fitch opened this item on the agenda. Jeff Engstrom, Interim Planning Manager, introduced Rita Black and Ashlee McLaughlin, members of the Champaign Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS), as the presenters for the proposed plan.

Ms. Black began by explaining that the first time they gave a presentation to the Plan Commission, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and the Sustainability Advisory Commission regarding the proposed plan, they only had half a plan to propose. Since then, CUUATS staff has finished the last five chapters and were there to present those chapters to the three commissions.

She also talked about the purpose of the proposed plan. It is a federally mandated document that CUUATS has to prepare every five years. The main purpose is to show how the community will evolve in the next 25 years regarding the transportation system. Once they submit the plan and it is approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation and by Federal Highway and Federal Transit, then CUUATS will be able to get federal funding for transportation planning projects and for transportation infrastructure projects. Without the approval of the proposed plan, they will not be able to get funding for the next five years.

The proposed Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will not replace any particular transportation plan adopted by each jurisdiction who is a member of CUUATS. The proposed plan basically put together a common vision for the development of the transportation system in the future and to identify the major regional transportation projects that may perhaps require federal funding. This is how the Federal Highway Administration becomes aware of possible upcoming projects.

She mentioned that the proposed plan has been available for public comment since October 1<sup>st</sup> and the comment period will end on October 31<sup>st</sup>. CUUATS staff has already presented it and received approval from the MTD Board, the Champaign County Board, and the Village of Savoy Board. They presented it to the City of Champaign City Council and should receive a resolution of approval in November. The City of Urbana is the last entity to review the proposed plan and hopefully approve it.

Ms. McLaughlin proceeded with a presentation on the last chapters of the proposed LRTP plan, which was as follows:

- Previous meeting covered Background Data and Existing Conditions
- Present meeting will cover Planning for the Future and 2040 Vision
- Planning for the Future
  - Public Visioning
  - Agency Projects
  - Reference Studies
  - Planning Pillars
  - Statistical Models
- 4 Visioning Meetings – Hired an outside facilitator and a graphic recorder
  - General Public
  - Business Developers
  - Youth

- Social Service Employees
- Project Voting Board
- Local Transportation Plans relevant to LRTP
- LRTP 2040 Planning Pillars
  - Safety and Security
  - Balanced Development
  - Multimodal Connectivity
  - Accessibility and Affordability
  - Healthy Neighborhoods
  - Resilient Economy
- CUUATS Statistical Models: Defining Development Scenarios
  - Traditional Development
  - LRTP 2040 Vision
    - Mobility
    - Accessibility
    - Regional Connectivity
- CUUATS Models
  - Population Projections
  - Employment Projections
  - 6 Models
    - TDM – Travel Demand Model
    - LEAM – Land-Use Evaluation and Assessment Model
    - SCALDS – Social Cost of Alternative Land Development Scenarios
    - MOVES – Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator
    - LAMA – Local Accessibility and Mobility Analysis
    - HIA – Health Impact Assessment
- LRTP 2040 Vision
  - Project Maps
  - Funding
  - LRTP 2040: Sustainable Choices Vision Summary
    - Mobility
    - Accessibility
    - Regional Connectivity
  - 2040 LRTP Pedestrian and Bicycle Vision Map
  - 2040 LRTP Transit, Air and Rail Vision Map
  - 2040 LRTP Roadway Vision Map
- Fiscally Constrained Projects in the FY 15-18 TIP: \$145,000,000 Map
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Constrained Projects
- Table 13.1 Future Funding Projections
- Next Steps
  - Agency Presentations September-December
  - Public Comment Period October 1-31
  - Final Approval – December 2014

Mr. Engstrom asked Ms. Black and Ms. McLaughlin to comment more on specific roadway projects especially in the City of Urbana. Ms. McLaughlin talked about the MCORE Projects in the City of Urbana, which are improvements on White Street, two sections of Green Street, Wright Street and Armory Avenue. Ms. Black added that the improvements on Green Street include exclusive bus and bike lanes between Wright Street and Lincoln Avenue. Other projects in the City of Urbana are the extension of Florida Avenue to High Cross Road, the extension of Olympian Drive from Lincoln Avenue to US-45, the improvements of IL-130 from University Avenue to the future extension of Florida Avenue and then continuing improvements up to Curtis Road, and improvements on Curtis Road from IL-130 to US-45. They have not decided what type of improvements to make on Curtis Road. CUUATS staff recommends improving arterial roadways surrounding the communities to have complete streets with bicycle pathways and to make them safer to use. Ms. McLaughlin added that the extension of Florida Avenue is carried over from the 2035 LRTP Plan but it was also a public priority project in their voting process.

Ms. Johnston inquired as to what the circles on the map represent. Ms. Black explained that the blue circle on IL-130 represents a possible interchange location with I-74, which came from discussion during the creation of the IL-130 Corridor Study that was performed several years ago. It does not mean that an interchange will be developed, it just shows where a possible interchange could be located if the need arose.

Ms. Stake wondered how much CUUATS considered the rail in creating the proposed plan. There are too many cars, and there should be some way for people inside the City to travel without using vehicles. She mentioned an article she found and handed out about transportation in Japan. Ms. Black stated that they are not considering rail as a way for people to travel within the community, but rather they have considered rail for outside modes of transportation by increasing the number of trains coming through the community with the current Amtrak service and by promoting high-speed rail. A few years back they made an attempt to study a possible inter-city rail system between the City of Champaign, the University of Illinois and the City of Urbana, but it did not go over well with the public. In terms of moving people, they encourage people to switch from cars to biking and walking and by improving the bus service in the community. The Draft plan proposes four different areas to have transit hubs, which as a result would better serve these areas.

Ms. Ishii commented that there is an increase in people using Curtis Road while Windsor Road has tons of capacity and sits empty. She wondered why this is. Could it be because there is a much higher speed limit on Curtis Road? If the City is more interested in infill development and not having a ring road or urban sprawl, then why don't we consider lowering the speed limit on Curtis Road and making it a lot less convenient to use it to cut around the City? If we make it convenient for cars to drive there by having a higher speed limit, then that will be where development goes. Ms. Black responded that CUUATS does not control the speed limit on the roadways. Speed limits are the control of each municipality or township. Also, CUUATS is not proposing a four-lane road on Curtis Road in Urbana. They are only proposing to improve the roadway and include facilities for all the different modes of transportation to make it safer.

Ms. Hoyle stated that she did not see the current mode share and the future mode share. Ms. Black replied that the current mode share is in the Existing Conditions section of the proposed plan. Ms. Hoyle commented that 35% of the work trips in Urbana are non-auto. The overall

mode share percentage changes because we average in Savoy and possibly Tolono in the future. Ms. Black explained that they separated each average, so the average of 35% is only for the City of Urbana.

Ms. Hoyle said that being a member of the Steering Committee for the LRTP, she feels that the LRTP has been a foundational document in changing the City's developmental patterns. Since she moved to Urbana in 2001, there has been a significant decrease in fringe development and fringe roadway building and a significant increase in infill development. She believes that the LRTP played a big role in this.

She mentioned that there was much opposition which made it hard to get the LRTP approved the first time. Other entities in CUUATS felt the plan was too oriented towards bicycling and transit, while the City of Urbana is complaining about road building. So, clearly there is a diversity of opinion. In order to pass a plan there has to be some degree of compromise to be able to get our federal funding.

The progress that has been made has been noted. The City of Urbana recently came in No. 4 on the list of car independent university neighborhoods. Thousands of students attend the University of Illinois and do not bring their cars with them. Smart Growth America issued a report called "Measuring Sprawl in 2014" in which Champaign-Urbana ranked No. 4 nationally as a smart growth community. The City of Urbana will not rest on our laurels. By American standards, we are doing well; however, comparing us to international standards, we are not doing well. Part of this is a result of funding and governmental structure. So, she wanted to draw attention to the City's mode share.

She agreed that people are driving at excessive speeds on Curtis Road. Curtis Road was not built to support excessive speeds. Lower the speed limit is not effective in lowering speeds. They would need to change the roadway design. So, she hoped as they look to design improvements to Curtis Road in the future, that they would look to explicitly design the road to provide for lower speeds so we can increase safety.

Mr. Bowersox-Johnson stated that he feels Windsor Road is an adequate arterial road on the south side of the City of Urbana for now. If Curtis Road was developed as an arterial street too soon, then it might encourage leap frog development and sprawl. Given that the proposed plan is a 2040 plan, Curtis Road may become the edge of the community by the year 2040. Upgrades in time are important. He asked City of Urbana staff if the City is adequately prepared. Will our land use plans, the Comprehensive Plan and our own infill priorities control development along Curtis Road even if Curtis Road gets an upgrade, so that it won't automatically unleash a bunch of development patterns that we don't want? Do we have adequate controls as the city to make our south side growth sustainable? Mr. Engstrom replied that this is no sewer service available very far south of Windsor Road. It will take a very large capital project to extend sewer service out there. In addition, the City's documents call for more densification and try to limit the leap frog growth as well.

Ms. Ishii expressed concern about the proposed plan being for 2040 and the reference documents are the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Bicycle Master Plan for the City of Urbana, and the City of Champaign Plan for 2008. So, she feels that the proposed plan is leap frogging the City's plans. There is no reference to the Climate Action Plan or the future Bicycle Master Plan

Update nor is greenhouse gases mentioned in the proposed plan. Ms. Black explained that proposed updates such as the future Bicycle Master Plan is not included because the updated plan has not been approved. With regards to the Climate Action Plan, CUUATS staff provided comments to Scott Tess, Environmental Sustainability Manager for the City of Urbana, regarding the bike trips in the future and about the greenhouse gas emissions. The problem is that the LRTP is a regional plan, not just a plan for the City of Urbana. So, their goals need to be more regional to include Champaign, Savoy, Urbana, Tolono and Bondville. They used the 2005 Comprehensive Plan because it is the latest version of the City of Urbana.

Mr. Engstrom stated that there is not anything mentioned in the proposed LRTP plan that is not already mentioned in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. There was much effort in updating the Comprehensive Plan, and it took two years to complete. It only gets updated every decade or so. The previous version was 1982. City staff feels that CUUATS is really taking the City of Urbana plans into account in the proposed LRTP plan. As Ms. Black explained, CUUATS cannot formally include plans that have not been adopted. He pointed out that while the Regional Planning Commission was collecting information for the LRTP, they were also collecting information that will be included in the updated Bicycle Master Plan.

Chair Fitch commented that it may be time for the City of Urbana to start thinking about updating the 2005 Comprehensive Plan again. He pointed out that the City adopts other plans as extensions of the Comprehensive Plan to keep it current. Sometimes plans do jump over each other. He liked the statement made by Ms. Black in the beginning that the proposed plan will not trump any of the City's plans.

Ms. Johnston wondered when the next round of the LRTP would begin. Ms. Black answered that the next LRTP will need to be done by 2019. They started 30 months before the proposed plan needs to be done, and CUUATS staff does not feel that they have had enough time. So, they may start on the next update 36 months before the plan needs to be approved, which would be around January of 2017. Ms. McLaughlin added that they do annual report cards by checking in with the LRTP and other relevant plans to see if the goals in the LRTP are relevant, to see how much progress they are making on them, and to see if they need to make any adjustments.

Ms. Hoyle wondered if the City currently has designated truck routes. Ms. Black said no. Ms. Hoyle stated that this was something called for in the 2035 LRTP plan. Ms. Black said yes. It is one of the strategies to develop a freight plan and to designate freight routes within the community. Funding has prevented them from achieving success with this strategy.

Ms. Hoyle noticed that there are new roadways listed in the report card. The roadways had primarily been built within the existing municipal boundaries. She wondered what the definitions are for constructed, improved and annexed. Do we know which roadways were constructed, improved or annexed? Ms. Black replied that they know this information but do not provide all of the details in the report card. Ms. Hoyle felt it would be helpful to know how much roadway is new construction. It seems that there has been a significant reduction in new construction of roadways since she moved here. Annexed roadways are existing roadways that became part of the municipal roadway system once an area is annexed, correct? Ms. Black said yes.

Mr. Trail commented that the report is projecting into the future and is based a lot on economic assumptions that seem to be based on the concept that the next 25 years will be a lot like the last 25 years. For instance, there is a projection that there will be more new jobs than there will be new citizens over the next 25 years. He questions how accurate this could be given the changes in the labor force participation rate in the country. He understands that CUUATS staff keyed the projection off the unemployment rate, which the unemployment rate increasingly don't seem to mean much because we don't have the labor force participation that we use to.

He went on to talk about a beltway around the community. When he looks at the proposed plan, he sees a beltway forming, and it is the fastest way to get development completely out of control. The section on inter-community transit appeared weak to him. The bus network is not a significant transit option. You want to make transit attractive if you want people to use it. He did not see any transit orient development in the proposed plan. He sees a lot of willingness to invest speculatively in road projects. He would expect to see some investment in transit projects that will draw development to the areas we want them. If you want infill development, then invest in transit, and amenities will make that infill development attractive and economically viable for developers.

His first impression of the community was that this is a great place because there is no traffic. The road system is overbuilt. He learned from the presentation that a lot of the proposed plan is driven by highway funding. He would like to see more about the rail in the proposed plan. Ms. Black responded by saying that they just received \$50.6 million for transit improvements. They only receive \$250,000 a year for highways.

Ms. Stake asked how other countries afford constructing the rail system. You can go anywhere in other countries without a car. She does not understand why the United States cannot start to think about installing rail.

Ms. McLaughlin responded to Mr. Trail's points. With regards to the economic projections, they are pretty optimistic. They are more conservative than they were to begin with. A couple of the tricky things about doing projections in this area are that the health industry and the education industry are the two fastest growing industries right now. This is the biggest portion of employment in the area, so they had to taper off the rates significantly. Despite this, they are still seeing pretty huge numbers. They used all of the regional and national measures that they could. They measured them against the few years between 2010 and present day and that is how they got the projections.

In addition, she agreed that we have a great road system. There are only two new construction roadways being proposed, which are the Florida Avenue extension and the Olympian Drive extension. They are both pending development and would have to be funded by development in those areas. Also, they are not proposing any new improvements outside of the core area. They are trying to focus investments on existing infrastructure.

Ms. Hoyle understands and agrees with Ms. Stake's frustration with how the transportation system is funded and built in this country. One has to look no farther than the last re-authorization of the country's transportation bill in which Congress eliminated dedicated funding for safe-routes-to school programming and eliminated dedicated funding for enhancements

which funds bike and trail. They also tried to eliminate dedicated funding for transit. So, we as a community deal with the fallout of the decisions made at the federal level.

Given the perimeters of which we are operating, the proposed plan will help the community continue to move forward in becoming a community that has transportation choices and housing choices for people that are not seen in other places. There are people who choose to live here because they know they do not have to drive everywhere.

Mr. Bowersox-Johnson inquired about interstates being barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists. It is one of the biggest issues that they hear about so he appreciated it being mentioned in the proposed plan, which is the guide for federally funded projects. What else can they do to bolster desired projects? Ms. Black responded that they have guidelines for installation of accessible pedestrian signals and countdown signals. One performance measure when they do evaluation of the plan every year is to point out how many new accessible pedestrian signals and countdown signals are in the community.

Regarding bridges, it is a concern of CUUATS staff. The map in the proposed plan shows that it is a priority project for the community to provide complete streets on the bridges over the interstates. She mentioned that she just came back from Brazil where they have bike facilities along the interstate system there. The United States is more developed than Brazil, and we have not been able to do that yet. It is frustrating.

Mr. Trail asked CUUATS staff to talk about some of the assumptions that went into the vehicle miles travelled model. Nationally, we are still below the total vehicle miles travelled from seven years ago. It is showing no signs of increasing at this point because more people are discovering that cars are expensive and they can do without them. So, looking at the numbers it seems to track with population and he wondered if they were unreasonably high. Ms. Black stated that when they developed their model they took all the factors into consideration. Projections are projections.

Chair Fitch asked what the next steps were in reviewing the proposed plan. Mr. Engstrom explained the process. He mentioned that the proposed plan would be presented to the Committee of the Whole in a special meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> and to City Council for adoption of a resolution on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Ishii wondered if there is a change to the proposed plan, would it be best for the City Council to not endorse the plan until the changes were made. Ms. Black said yes; however, CUUATS has already received approval of the proposed plan as presented from the other agencies. They can put as a recommendation from the City of Urbana. If they were to make major changes now, then it would require that they start over with the approval process and take the plan back to the other agencies to be approved again with any changes. CUUATS does not have time for that. They need to give the document to the Federal Highway Administration in December of this year.

Ms. Hoyle wondered when updates or amendments to the plan could be made. Ms. Black answered by saying that once the proposed plan is approved, then any agency can submit an amendment. It would need to be discussed by CUUATS and presented for approval to all the agencies.



Ms. Black went on to point out that there have not been any decisions made about the type of improvements to be made to Curtis Road in Urbana as of yet. They are only proposing that a corridor study be performed and have extended the study area to the IL-130. A corridor study can better define what the community wants for their portion of Curtis Road. Mr. Bowersox-Johnson stated that he likes this concept a lot. If the University of Illinois is not going to be cooperative in changing the character of Curtis Road, then there is no reason for the City to build Curtis bigger on our end. It really all matters in its entirety. Ms. Black noted that she applied for funding for the study to cover Curtis Road from First Street to IL-130. A small piece cannot be studied independently.

Mr. Rusk suggested that CUUATS and the Sustainability Advisory Commission (SAC) interact on the Climate Action Plan. One effort could be focused on modeling the transportation effects on carbon emissions. Also, SAC does not have the expertise to consider all of the other kinds of benefits. So, when they talk about incorporating actions and strategies into the Climate Action Plan, there is a constraint on what is the economic benefit of that. If there was some way to work with CUUATS, then it would be really helpful. Ms. Black stated that CUUATS has been working with Mr. Tess. They are open to working with City staff and SAC. Ms. McLaughlin added that it has been difficult to monitor air quality stations. This would be a great limitation that they would like to work together to overcome.

Ms. Hoyle suggested that they add to items to the proposed plan, which are as follows: 1) the City of Urbana develop a Pedestrian Action Plan and 2) create a Smart Trips program. These both are things that as a community could undertake doing that fit a lot of the other goals that we have on a broader scale for sustainability.

Mr. Fitch addressed concerns about Curtis Road by pointing out that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan shows Curtis Road as a major arterial road from High Cross Road to a certain point, then it shows it as a minor roadway. The land uses designations are residential suburban pattern around it. There are some notes that reference “CUUATS High Cross Road Regional Transportation Plan link” and “Carefully consider roadway design to be compatible with South Farm uses”.

Mr. Bowersox-Johnson commented that he really appreciated the creative public input session with the graphic facilitator and the artwork because it is hard to get people to come to public input meetings and to stay engaged to give input. He appreciated that the proposed plan does talk about sustainability and the community’s values. It is clear that a lot of work went into the proposed plan. Ms. Stake appreciated the work done on the proposed plan.

#### 4. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- **CHARLIE SMYTH** stated that there is one inconsistency in the proposed plan. Referring to Page 166, Item 7, he read the following, “***Curtis Road improvements between IL-130 and Race Street (Choices 2035): This segment of Curtis Road is proposed to be constructed as a four-lane section to match improvements made on Curtis Road from Staley Road to Prospect Avenue in Champaign This project will include off-street facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.***” The 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the discussion during the Study Session talk about a two-lane rural with complete streets (bikeable shoulders and sidewalks). What is written in the proposed plan is wrong. Ms.

Black responded by saying that the excerpt that Mr. Smyth read is from the 2035 Plan. CUUATS is currently only proposing a corridor study for the Curtis Road area, which is why for the proposed 2040 Plan, they are not proposing any specific design for Curtis Road. Mr. Bowersox-Johnson suggested adding a small change in the wording in the proposed plan to clarify this. Ms. Black stated that CUUATS staff will add that clarification.

- **DENNIS ROBERTS** stated that the proposed plan is very comprehensive plan and has taken a lot of thought for the different agencies to compile this. The City of Urbana will be looking at the plan, but are heavily indebted to the input of other agencies in the Champaign area. The concern has come up that if the community of Urbana sees weaknesses in the plan as far as the direction in which the City of Urbana wants to go (for example, adding the concept of interurban rail) and it cannot be added to the plan as a vision, even though it is a vision plan, then it is very upsetting. It is possible that the United States Government could have a change in conscience and there could be funding for interurban rail in 2040.

It appears that the expectation is for the City Council to approve the proposed plan because there is no way to change it without going to five other agencies that have already accepted it. In other words, the City Council is being asked to rubber stamp something that we as a city will not be able to massage into something that matches the vision that we have for our future. If the City Council does not endorse the proposed plan, then what happens? Libby Tyler, Director of Community Development Services, stated that the proposed plan is still in the public comment period, so the plan can be modified and improved. The point of this meeting is not to rubber stamp the proposed plan, but to make comments. There will be further comments from the City Council and from the public at large. Ms. Black replied by saying that the public comment period ends on October 31, 2014. They are still taking comments, but significant changes to the plan will require them to take the plan back to all of the agencies for approval.

With regards to the interurban rail, they went through extensive public comment through the last 30 months of creating the plan, and people requested high speed rail but not rail inside the community. CUUATS staff based the proposed plan on input from all of the agencies and input from the community. They received comments from more than 1,500 people. They took all of the comments into consideration, and based on the comments they defined the pillars of the community and defined the projects for the community in consultation with all of the agencies who are members of CUUATS. They held steering committee meetings every month with the agencies to discuss the process of the plan, which is why at this point they felt that the different agencies had provided substantial input during the 30 months of developing the plan. This is why at this point in time, if they need to make major changes, then they will not be able to do it without consultation with all of the agencies. All of the other agencies have given approval to the plan and feel that this is the plan that they want. If the City of Urbana does not want to improve the proposed plan, then that is fine. They only need the majority of the agencies to approve it.

Ms. Stake stated that at one time there were trains to every single small town in Illinois. Oil companies and car companies did not want trains, so they bought up the trains and tore them out because they were greedy.

Ms. Ishii stated that she understands that they cannot redo the plan at this point; however, she feels that there is some wordsmithing that needs to be done. On Page 155, it states, *"Since some of the regionally significant projects from the previous plan have not been funded or constructed as of 2014, and are still high priority projects, they remained as part of the vision for 2040, (noted with 'Choices 2035' in the Sustainable Choices 2040 Vision project lists)."* When reading this and the section that Mr. Smyth read out loud, it is not clear that specific improvements for Curtis Road are no longer a priority for 2040. In fact, it appears to be a higher priority since it is leftover from the 2035 Plan. Ms. Black said that wordsmithing these sections are not considered significant changes. Members of the Plan Commission, the Sustainability Advisory Commission and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission can send her comments and CUUATS staff will make changes before the Urbana Committee of the Whole meeting on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. However, completely changing the vision of the proposed plan to include rail cannot be done at this time.

Mr. Trail stated that at the one public input session he attended, public rail was discussed quite a bit. The only specific project discussed was high speed rail because that was the only one they knew about. So, it is not exactly accurate that no one asked for public rail. He believes it is that no one has heard of any projects that they can be in favor of or against. Ms. Black clarified that people asked for increase in Amtrak service and high speed rail, but CUUATS staff did not hear or receive any written comments about rail as a system in the community.

Ms. Hoyle stated that the City needs to change the 2005 Comprehensive Plan before we have a solid case to go forward and say that we do not want Curtis Road to be mentioned as a major arterial street in the proposed LRTP plan.

She went on to say that when she first moved to Urbana, the City was discussing the installation of a trolley system in the community. The Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD) wanted to do an alternative study and was soundly beaten up. That project never made it past the point of suggesting a study. MTD never got to looking at alternatives and whether or not it was viable. It was a very ugly and unpleasant conversation. People were very nasty about not wanting to discuss it. This is why it was not included in the proposed plan. She feels that the communities need a trolley system of some sort in our high density areas. We are essentially operating as a light rail system on our high frequency corridors for transit. MTD buses are operating at capacity. Many times of the day, the MTD buses are stuffed even with articulated buses on the routes.

Mr. Engstrom stated that on the Mobility Map, Curtis Road is shown as a minor arterial road. He believes that there is an erroneous note on the Future Land Use maps.

Mr. Bowersox-Johnson stated that he was one of the people who went to Portland, Oregon to look at their trolley system. He felt that it would have been a great fit for the dense, college campus core community in Urbana, Champaign and the University of Illinois campus. He felt that the best strategy for now would be to support the MCORE project that will upgrade us to a bus rapid transit scenario with stations, shelters, stops and easier 0 grade platforms to step on and

off the buses quickly. Bus rapid transit is going to be a great improvement here. Over time, the City of Urbana will have to think about if the first segments of this works well, then how do we extend bus rapid transit to other places in Urbana that are the key traffic generators, the key educational, job or housing spots that for Urbana's economic development we would want upgraded transit in. Maybe if bus rapid transit proves to be successful here, then it will become the basis for someday saying that it would make sense to use a light rail because there would already be stations and stops setup. He believes for now bus rapid transit is the mechanism for getting us there, so we should be part of that investment and be really strategic on how we extend it into Urbana.

Mr. Trail stated that he would expect to see "bus rapid transit" language in the proposed plan if this is what we really want. Ms. Hoyle replied that we are not using bus rapid transit vehicles as defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) so it is not technically a bus rapid transit system. Another thing is that MTD had a difficult time getting funding through FTA because the City of Urbana does not fit their models of long, straight corridors. Instead the City of Urbana is building a system of interconnected streets. MTD went through TIGER to get funding, which is highly competitive. Ms. Black added that this is why some of the terminology is not mentioned in the proposed plan.

Mr. Trail stated that it takes years to work this kind of funding. He assumed that what would work in our favor is that CUUATS has shown a long-term specific interest in trying to make their case and how they are going to decrease road traffic. He is surprised to see a lot of specifics about roadways, some specifics about regional rail, and no specific mention of transit orient development. Ms. Black replied that they have four transit hubs where there will be terminals. They had to submit applications three times to receive funding. Mr. Fitch interrupted the conversation and reminded them that the study session was already closed.

Ms. Stake stated that when she first came to Illinois, there were trains to Chicago. They could eat on the trains. The train system decreased for a while. Now the train system is filled with people again, so there is a possibility to get things going in the City of Urbana again.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeffery Engstrom, Secretary  
Urbana Plan Commission