



# 2022 BPAC Annual Report

Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission



Bill Brown – Chair  
Audrey Ishii - Vice-chair, USD 116  
Sarthak Prasad - University of Illinois  
Kara Dudek - Urbana Park District  
John Zeman - City of Urbana  
Nancy Westcott - At-Large, PACE  
Dan Saphiere - At-Large, MTD  
Annie Adams - At-Large  
Susan Jones - At-Large  
Bruce Michelson -At-large  
Yousaf Shah - At-Large



## BPAC Background

BPAC was established in 2006 with Ord. No. 2006-06-072, [Urbana City Code Sec. 23-11](#) for the primary purpose of:

- ◆ Analyzing proposed bicycle routing
  - ◆ Operation and safety of bicycles
  - ◆ Recommendations on biking and walking facilities, Capital Improvement Plan and Bicycle Master Plan
  - ◆ Education and public outreach on bike and pedestrian issues
- Urbana's first Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in 2008
  - Urbana received Bronze-level "Bicycle Friendly Community" status in 2010
  - Upgraded to Gold-level BFC in 2014
  - Latest update to Bicycle Master Plan approved in 2016
  - Re-evaluation in 2018 resulted in maintaining Gold-level BFC through 2022, re-applied in January 2023
  - Evaluated on Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity
  - Urbana's first Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted in 2020, as well as a Bicycle Wayfinding Plan

# Importance of Active Transportation

---

Investing in public transportation and bicycle and pedestrian facilities creates opportunities for people to exercise. This helps reduce obesity and the risks for developing costly chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Active transportation facilities are particularly important in low-income and minority communities, or communities with high percentages of new immigrants. People in those communities are less likely to own vehicles, and unsafe streets might pose a barrier to using active transportation.<sup>1</sup>

Urbana residents walk or ride bikes to get to work, school, or shopping in greater numbers than state or national averages. Considering commuting trips alone, census data shows approximately 15-20% of Urbana workers walk or bike to work,<sup>2</sup> **about 5 times the national average.**

Nationally, commutes make up only 20% of all trips (by all modes).<sup>3</sup> More than half of all trips are less than 3 miles – trips that could easily be accomplished by bike. Proximity to work, school, and shopping has a direct impact on people's transportation choice. People walking or riding are more likely to shop at local businesses and make multiple stops when shopping, rather than only patronizing large stores with plentiful parking. **Second to distance, lack of adequate infrastructure (sidewalks, safe bike routes) is the primary reason people cite for not riding or walking more frequently.**

Walking and riding for transportation saves people thousands of dollars each year in fuel, vehicle maintenance and parking costs. Some households can go without a car or reduce the number of vehicles. According to AAA, the average cost of new car ownership is more than \$10,000/yr. including insurance and financing.<sup>4</sup> Providing safe options and encouraging active transportation complements mass transit and improves the stability and upward mobility of communities.

Vehicle transportation also has a societal cost. Only a fraction of the cost of road construction and maintenance is covered by gas taxes. Public Safety resources are heavily focused on responding to traffic events. Parking consumes valuable urban real estate and contributes to runoff and pollution of streams. Fossil fuels also lead to air pollution, warming climate, and hidden costs of protecting global energy production. Encouraging active transportation builds resiliency and sustainability.

Through the vision of previous Mayors and City Councils, hard work by staff and with support from the community, Urbana has obtained gold-level recognition as a bicycle friendly community. This report of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission summarizes some of the topics discussed and City accomplishments during 2022.

# BPAC Goals Adopted

---

In March 2022, BPAC adopted a set of goals that covers 5 broad subject areas:

- 1) Research & Planning
- 2) Evaluation & Response
- 3) Culture & Communication
- 4) Equity
- 5) Applications (for funding or program recognition)

Under each category were several suggested activities that guided our work throughout the year. This report is a brief summary of progress on some of those initiatives. The plan is to evaluate progress, update and refine the goals at least annually. Individual members volunteer to take the lead on the various topics under each goal.

## Culture & Communication

- **Improve existing city culture to better represent the nature of a bicycle and pedestrian friendly city**
  - Recommend changes in department policies to systematically include bicycle and pedestrian concerns, such as bicycle and pedestrian needs when streets are closed for maintenance (*Bill Brown*)
  - Develop public outreach programs on bicycle and pedestrian issues and work with the City's Communications Specialist
- **Assist local businesses in the Bicycle Friendly Business application process** (*Cynthia Hoyle*)
- **Determine continuing education opportunities for commissioners such as workshops**

(*Annie Adams, Sue Jones*)

The full set of goals is available here:

[https://www.urbanillinois.us/sites/default/files/attachments/BPAC%20Goals%20FY2023\\_1.pdf](https://www.urbanillinois.us/sites/default/files/attachments/BPAC%20Goals%20FY2023_1.pdf)

# Infrastructure Improvements

---

1. With the resurfacing project on Lincoln, crosswalks were installed on Lincoln at Main, Clark, and Stoughton. The Main Street crossing also included special treatment for people riding bikes to use the crosswalk, which includes a “refuge island.” (see photo on cover page)
2. Race Street from Washington to Illinois received a long-awaited asphalt overlay. Adjacent sidewalk ramps were installed bringing all corners up to ADA standards. This is a well-used walkway connecting the High School to the library and downtown. Brick sidewalks were preserved unless the property owner requested concrete replacement for damaged areas, per the City policy for this stretch.



South Race Street at Nevada.



3. Utilizing the Sidewalk Inventory completed several years ago, the City has been systematically addressing sidewalk maintenance issues, and using asphalt patching as an immediate remedy for tripping hazards where concrete has shifted.

4. Windsor Road resurfacing from Race Street west to the City limits included new striping and rumble strips to separate bike lanes. The rumble strips did not conform to the design preferred in the bicycle master plan because there are no gaps in the rumble strips to allow people on bikes to more safely



Eastbound Windsor approaching Race St.



Westbound Windsor approaching Lincoln Ave.

cross into left turn lanes or merge into traffic to avoid a “right-hook” situation. Instead, the rumble strips installed are like those used on interstate highways, 16” wide and continuous. BPAC discussed how to better convey preferred designs to contractors.

5. Though not City projects, it’s worth mentioning a couple of newer treatments. For the construction at Clark-Lindsey, they provided temporary motion-activated lights on the sidewalk along Race Street since the former lights that were in the lot there had been removed to make room for the staging area and construction. Also a new multiuse path on south First Street between Windsor and Curtis was installed using ITEP funding, in cooperation with the UI, township and Savoy, connecting newer housing in Savoy to the Research Park. This path also has motion activated lighting.



Ribbon cutting for the First Street path.

# Equity and Quality of Life Projects

---

Recognizing disparities in the way that neighborhood infrastructure is often proposed and maintained, the City Council budgeted \$2M to address small-scale public infrastructure needs in underserved neighborhoods.

In 2021, BPAC assisted in developing a process for submitting proposals. City staff reviewed more than 50 proposals submitted by residents and engaged BPAC to help with final selection.

In the Spring of 2022, staff recommended viable options to BPAC, which chose to recommend 10 projects ready for design and construction, with an additional 6 projects involving traffic calming or safety studies. [An interactive map of those projects](#) is available here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1c4avs46aizU6aK0ywYsQMOdEXEWfQgg&usp=sharing>

Of the recommended projects, approximately \$1.2M was for sidewalks and paths, and the remaining \$800K was for streetlights.



**Future site of multi-use path that will connect the corner of Church & Harvey to Lincoln Ave, north of The Retreat Apartments.**

# Vision Zero

---

The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission applied for a \$19M grant from the federal [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#) (SS4A) program, for implementation of a number of road safety projects in the area. That grant application was not successful. The total awarded for Illinois was \$5.3M for six total applicants (\$3.9M for Chicago). All the SS4A awards in Illinois were for planning projects (action plans), with none for implementation projects in Illinois. This is an annual opportunity for 5 years.

The Regional Planning Commission has fielded a new online dashboard to review traffic crashes: <https://crashdashboard.ccrpc.org/> This data comes from IDOT so is somewhat delayed, with 2021 as the last year available as of March 2023.

There were two fatal pedestrian crashes in 2022 in Urbana. The first was in January on Vine Street in front of Schnucks and the second was in May at Cunningham and Park Streets. Three of the last four pedestrian fatalities have been on Vine St. or Cunningham Ave.

According to Urbana Police data online, crashes with injuries in 2022 included at least 16 crashes involving pedestrians and at least 6 crashes involving bicycles. This does not include crashes that were handled by UI police. Many minor crashes are not reported, especially those involving a bicycle hitting a stationary object or wiping out on loose gravel or a pothole.

With the assistance of interns, BPAC has in place a public [feedback mechanism](#) and has reviewed the Bicycle Master Plan and scheduled a review of the Pedestrian Master Plan with an eye toward improving safety. We regularly discuss crash report updates and support education efforts by Champaign County Bikes (including working with Project Ignition at UHS), the Urbana Park District, and Safe Routes to Schools. We frequently engage with the Traffic Commission and we have also begun to utilize more City outreach resources like “All About U” and social media.

## Other Topics Discussed and Recommendations

---

### Bicycle Master Plan Review

Student interns Brianna Barr and Thomas Valencia prepared a presentation that highlighted completed projects and unmet goals.

### No Parking in Bike Lanes

On numerous occasions, traffic has been using marked bike lanes, particularly on Green Street, for loading and unloading. This creates a dangerous situation forcing people on bikes to merge into faster traffic. In addition, pavement construction of the bike lanes on Green Street is not as hardy as the street pavement so can be more easily damaged by weighty vehicles. BPAC passed a resolution urging Council to prohibit loading, stopping or parking in bike lanes. The full text of the resolution is available here:

<https://app.box.com/s/2twhzpuz3n1l2uoog5f5pu485xvpx3dj>



### University Ave from Maple to I74 (IDOT)

University Avenue from Vine to the I-74 interchange is a state highway scheduled for resurfacing. As part of that process, city staff communicated with IDOT on potential upgrades to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. BPAC voted to recommend adding bike lanes and considering a road diet on this stretch. People on bikes are often seen utilizing this road which serves the

Guardian West plant, several mobile home parks and the MTD and School District offices. IDOT recommends construction of continuous sidewalks on the north side up to the US 150 intersection. This project will include a crosswalk from MTD to Ambucs Park.

## **Other grants applied for – Baker Lane, Florida Avenue**

BPAC discussed and provided letters of support for three grants.

The Florida Avenue project was submitted for a federal *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity* (RAISE) grant. This program is the replacement for the TIGER program that funded the MCORE project. The proposal would have covered reconstruction of Florida Avenue from Vine west to the City limits, including a long-overdue sidepath on the south side to connect the path on Race Street to campus bicycle infrastructure. It also included upgraded intersection designs, traffic lights, and bus pullouts. Unfortunately this project was not funded, but it will be resubmitted for 2023.

The Florida Avenue sidepath alone was subsequently submitted as a separate application for an *Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program* (ITEP) grant.

The Baker's Lane project, connecting Washington Street to Main Street east of Dr Williams School, was a resubmittal for an ITEP grant. Awards for those should be announced in April or May.

## **Budget for Sidewalk and Path Maintenance**

Thank you! For the first time in many years, sidewalk and path maintenance was fully funded in the Capital Improvement Plan. The FY 2023 plan allocated \$680,000 for maintenance and improvements and increased the funding level for future years, from the prior \$150K to approximately \$300K. In addition, \$1.2M from the EQL funds will be used to build new sidewalks and side paths.

## **Increase Staff Support for BPAC**

A frequent topic that comes up when discussing various issues is how much better the committee could function if there were a dedicated staff person that could coordinate outreach and education efforts, and interface with public works and planners to coordinate grant applications and community involvement. Members often compare BPAC to the Arts & Culture Commission or Sus-

tainability Advisory Commission. This has been a recommendation to Council in prior years.

## **Application to renew Bicycle Friendly Community**

Urbana's Gold-level status as awarded by the League of American Bicyclists was up for review. RPC was contracted to develop the final application, with extensive input from city staff, BPAC and community advocacy groups. Results should be announced in May.

## **Three-foot Minimum Passing Signs**

BPAC again urged city staff to consider placing these newly-approved signs in strategic locations, as several other Champaign County communities have done.

## **Traffic Calming Policy**

City engineer John Zeman mentioned that he was considering developing a traffic calming policy that could be used as a resource when addressing citizen concerns at Traffic Commission. BPAC put together a collection of example policies to help with this effort, including an [excellent toolkit used in Naperville](#).

## **eBike Discussions**

Member Bruce Michelson put together a presentation for BPAC defining the various types of eBikes and detailing a number of issues that may need to be addressed considering speed caps, infrastructure usage, etc. This will be an ongoing discussion.

## **Updates on Veo**

Veo Area Operations Manager, Shea Belahi, presented on rider data such as distance traveled and duration of each ride, how geofencing can be applied, and answered questions. BPAC asked about a low income access program that Veo has in other cities that provides a low cost unlimited ride option. This program would require subsidy by the local government or other sponsors.

## Additional Resources

---

<a href="https://www.urbanailinois.us/BPAC">BPAC Home Page</a>	<a href="https://www.urbanailinois.us/BPAC">https://www.urbanailinois.us/BPAC</a>
<a href="https://www.urbanailinois.us/boards/traffic-commission">Urbana Traffic Commission</a>	<a href="https://www.urbanailinois.us/boards/traffic-commission">https://www.urbanailinois.us/boards/traffic-commission</a>
<a href="http://www.cu-srtsproject.com/">CU Safe Routes to School</a>	<a href="http://www.cu-srtsproject.com/">http://www.cu-srtsproject.com/</a>
<a href="https://champaigncountybikes.org/">Champaign County Bikes</a>	<a href="https://champaigncountybikes.org/">https://champaigncountybikes.org/</a>
<a href="https://www.prairiecycleclub.org/about/">Prairie Cycle Club</a>	<a href="https://www.prairiecycleclub.org/about/">https://www.prairiecycleclub.org/about/</a>
<a href="https://rideillinois.org/safety/bike-safety-quiz/">Bike Safety Quiz</a>	<a href="https://rideillinois.org/safety/bike-safety-quiz/">https://rideillinois.org/safety/bike-safety-quiz/</a>

**Choose the online quiz that's best for you:**

**Adult  
Bicyclist**

**Child  
Bicyclist**

**Motorist /  
Drivers Ed**

**Truck  
Driver**

## Footnotes

---

1. <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/active-transportation>
2. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Commuting&g=1600000US1777005&y=2020&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&tid=ACSDT5Y2020.B08301>
3. <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/commute-mode-share>
4. <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2022/08/annual-cost-of-new-car-ownership-crosses-10k-mark>