

MEMORANDUM

TO: Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)
FROM: Bill Brown, Chair, BPAC
DATE: December 16, 2021
RE: BPAC recommendations that were not put up for vote

Background

Over the course of the year, BPAC discussed several topics that did not result in official motions or votes. Some had been listed specifically on agendas for discussion and for others, the item was discussed tangentially to an agenda item. It is customary to include any official motions and votes on recommendations in the BPAC annual report. The 2021 report will be written and presented to BPAC for approval in early 2022. This memo lists four items that had consensus in earlier discussions which BPAC may wish to officially recommend so that they may be included in the 2021 annual report. This list does not include motions that were already approved earlier in the year, although those will also be included in the report.

Recommendation:

Increase staff support for BPAC.

Justification:

1. A safe bicycle and pedestrian system is important for a healthy, vibrant, and equitable community.
2. By ordinance, BPAC has a voting member from the public works department who provides valuable technical input on traffic safety issues. Because the Urbana quality of life, equity, and economic development depends so heavily on how transportation is conceived, managed, and improved, someone from Planning or Development should be tasked with BPAC/Vision Zero support, as was the custom in the early years of BPAC.
3. Other city commissions (Art, Historic Preservation, Sustainability) have dedicated staff support with interest, knowledge, skills, and experience in advancing progress in those issues and have successfully applied for grant funding to accomplish those goals.

Discussion and consensus in May, no motion made.

Recommendation:

Pursue projects that require intergovernmental cooperation (e.g. connectivity measures that cross jurisdictions) and combine forces on those to apply for Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) funding.

Justification:

1. The ITEP scoring process favors projects with intergovernmental cooperation.
2. Vital connectivity issues remain because many of the "easy" projects where the City already owns all the right of way have already been done and staff has not been available to pursue more complicated projects.
3. Many such projects eligible for ITEP funding are already identified in City, Park District, and other plans.

Discussion touched on this at various meetings including when ITEP grants were discussed, and when initial criteria for Equity Projects was presented, which excluded these areas. No motion was made at the time.

Recommendation:

Increase annual budget for sidewalks and paths maintenance to at least 50% of the annual cost identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (50% of \$500,000 = \$250,000, currently \$120,000) and establish an improvement plan based on sidewalk conditions and gaps identified in the sidewalk inventory (see Pedestrian Master Plan)

Justification:

1. City Code specifies one of the duties of BPAC is to "Review and make recommendations regarding the City's Capital Improvement Plan"
2. Current sidewalk maintenance is mostly responsive to complaints, which are more common from areas and people with access to public officials or who have come to expect quick response.

3. An adequately funded systematic plan will reduce inequities in sidewalk maintenance and improvements based on need.

CIP was presented in June with BPAC discussion, but no motions made

Recommendation:

Evaluate crosswalk visibility and usage at Washington and Race and consider use of a triangular crosswalk as illustrated in IDOT training materials.

Justification:

1. The new perpendicular crossing at this busy 3-way stop near the High School results in poor visibility of pedestrians, although it improves compliance for accessibility.
2. There was a fatal pedestrian crash in this crosswalk in 2015.
3. Many pedestrians already naturally use the angular path of the previous crossing although it is not in the crosswalk because they perceive it as being safer and more direct.
4. The proposed low-cost solution to “paint out” the entire triangle as a crosswalk provides enhanced awareness of pedestrians and allows natural usage.

Public input and a presentation were made in September, no motions made