



MINUTES

**Downtown Master Plan Advisory
Committee
Wednesday, September 3, 2014
Carbondale Main Street, 6:30 p.m.
Old Train Depot 111 S. Illinois Ave.**

Mr. Langowski called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Members Present: Bleyer, Boeckman, Bukowski, Carter, Cole, Colombo, Gorton, Langowski, Dr. Pink-Harper, Ramseyer, Dr. Reddy, Schachel, Sheffer, Sigler, Stevens, Terry

Members Absent: Clow, Gregory,

Staff Present: Baity, Price, Sergeev, Williams

1) Bring to order:

Opening comments by **J. Langowski**

2) Roll Call and member/facilitator introductory remarks:

G. Sheffer stated he is on this committee to try and grow jobs and the community and to help create a vibrant downtown.

M. Bukowski stated she is on the committee to bring the arts community into the plan and use their input to help beautify the Downtown.

B. Bleyer stated he is on the committee to help build the student relationship with the town and help to return vibrancy to the downtown.

D. Terry wishes to continue to invest in downtown and help encourage other developers to invest in downtown.

E Ramseyer wishes to help build a stronger community.

D. Boeckman was there to represent the hospital and see how they could help. He felt the overhead utilities should be installed underground and the infrastructure should be improved.

S. Carter wants to bring vibrancy back to downtown.

Dr. Pink-Harper wants to help the committee understand the universities impact on the local economy.

M. Cole wishes to improve and promote downtown.

Dr. Reddy wants to ensure that health care and SIH are interfaced with downtown and also to have technology integrated into the plan as well.

K. Schachel is happy the city is installing bike trails and wants to find ways to incorporate them into the plan.

N. Colombo is going to work to provide the youth perspective on the plan.

J. Sigler wished to help build the business ecosystem to help retain students in Carbondale.

T. Stevens wishes to provide his incites as a resident of downtown.

D. Gorton wishes to ensure our housing stock is restored and the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown are represented in the plan making.

A. Miller wishes to get the student input incorporated into the plan. He also hopes the plan will make the downtown more student friendly.

J. Langowski would like to change the downtown.

J. Langowski introduced **John Washburn** who is a professional facilitator and would help lead the meeting, take notes and control the public comment portion of the meeting.

John Washburn introduced himself and made a few comments on his qualifications.

3) **City Staff presentation: ongoing transportation projects, actions and plans:**

J. Langowski introduced **Gary Williams**, the Economic Development Director, for the City of Carbondale.

G. Williams presented the City's transportation plans and planed improvements. These included the approved Bike Path Phase 1 that is along the railroad tracks from Main Street to Mill Street and Bike Path Phase 2 is from Mill Street to the pedestrian crossing over Highway 51 through a path by the student recreation center.

G. Williams presented activities that are occurring in New Orleans, Louisiana; Memphis, Tennessee; Washington, D.C.; and Cape Girardeau, Missouri as examples of what Carbondale could accomplish and he discussed the Bicycle Friendly designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

G. Williams discussed the broken nature of the bicycle lanes and explained that the on street bicycle lanes are being implemented as funding is available and projects are taking place. There will be bicycle lanes on University Avenue from Chestnut St. to Mill St. and on Illinois Avenue from Mill St. to Walnut St.

G. Williams noted that the Jackson County Health Department has a Built Environment Action Team that is suggesting many changes to the downtown to make it more pedestrian friendly.

G. Williams began discussing the multimodal transportation needs in our community. The current station was built in 1980 and was designed to process 175 passengers a day. Amtrak currently processes 380 passengers a day through the station for a total of approximately 135,000 riders per year. Amtrak projected, based on current ridership trends, in 20 years, Carbondale's ridership would be 221,000 riders per year.

G. Williams stated there will also be several public transportation options that will be housed in the multimodal transportation hub. The RIDES mass transit system operates 5 daily buses; the Smart buses operate 5 daily buses; Jackson County Mass Transit has a bus every 45 minutes; the Saluki Express operates a bus every hour; and Greyhound has 5 daily stops in Carbondale. The preliminary plan for the multimodal transportation center was shown.

4) **Current transportation issues as seen by the theme organizers:**

J. Langowski introduced **K. Schachel** and explained she would be talking about transportation modes.

A) **K. Schachel** reported several results from the Southern Illinois Metropolitan Planning Organization's (SIMPO) transportation and safety report. She noted the bicycle paths in town were very disjointed. She suggested coordinating the laws of Carbondale with the campus laws as far as where bike riders are permitted to ride. SIU is installing bike fix it stations and she thought they might be a great idea to use in our downtown or along the bike paths. She noted the Saluki express provided transportation for 559,000 riders last year. She also requested that car sharing and spaces for electric cars to park and recharge might be good to include in the plan.

J. Langowski introduced **N. Colombo** and explained he would be talking about how different modes of transportation interact with one another.

B) **N. Colombo** discussed how transportation modes interact with one another. He focused on vehicle traffic's interaction with bicycle and pedestrian traffic. He suggested the addition of a foot or bicycle patrolling police officer. He also suggested a better way finding system so you would know where you are headed in downtown.

J. Langowski introduced **M. Cole** to present on Parking in Downtown Carbondale.

C) **M. Cole** discussed a book by Jeff Speck called "Walkable City How downtown can save America, one step at a time". She also discussed the Complete Streets initiative. She addressed both sides of the "is there enough parking" argument. If there is too much parking, we need a greater business mass and to try and focus the community on walking or biking instead of driving. If there is too little, we need to realize that people visit us from other communities with homes too far from the services to walk or bike. She stated a better parking plan is required in the City of Carbondale. She stated that parking lots make the public feel less safe about being downtown. This may just be a perception but the public tends to believe perception.

J. Langowski turned the meeting over to **John Washburn (facilitator)**.

5) Comments from the public

John Washburn (facilitator) laid the ground rules for commenting and gave the process for considering the comments.

Jesus Ponce Deleón (audience member) Consider a plan to build a multi modal system that includes a commuting system for the students, to allow for families looking for recreation, and to allow transit to the eastern commercial areas.

Karl Rexro (audience member) Turn 51 into a two way street. Asked when it became one way street. He believed it was before 1988.

A discussion was had between committee members and the audience to create a complete

idea regarding the changing of Highway 51 from a one way to a two way street.

Larry Weatherford (audience member) Discussed creating a central parking garage.

Mike Burns (audience member) What are the population numbers based on? Amtrak needs a reliable passenger train schedule.

G. Williams population numbers based on an Amtrak projection based upon ridership increases and regional population increases.

Jane Adams (audience member) There is a pedestrian barrier that exists between her home and the downtown and that is the blight that exists between the downtown and Poplar Street. She stated the downtown should be looked at as part of a city not as a freestanding entity. This plan needs to address parking, the areas between parking and the downtown and areas adjacent to the downtown. Fracking is going to increase freight train traffic through Carbondale and that needs to be considered in this plan. The process needs to be started to make all crossings in Carbondale a quiet zone.

Annie Malark (audience member) Make the downtown look nice and clean and improve litter and trash pickups.

Michael Frick (audience member) Recommended the UBER car system and noted that mass transit reduces car ownership.

A discussion occurred regarding the specifics of the UBER car system.

Gale White (audience member) feels the industrial type of traffic is a detriment to the downtown area. He stated transportation engineers are required to move traffic and planners are tasked with growing the town. He feels these two positions are at odds in this particular situation. He discussed the walkability score of his home.

Jay Danson (audience member) loves the idea of Bike Share. Wishes to expand high speed internet networks as we grow.

sp? **Kareim Sherriodd (audience member)** wishes committee would improve access to the Northeast section of town. He recommended a possible Willow Street to Willow Street connection. He made note of the lack of interconnections between the rest of Carbondale and that neighborhood.

Jacky Schmidt (audience member) pointed out that day businesses use the parking differently than night businesses. Day parking is primarily employees close to the building and night parking is primarily customers. An overnight parking for customers of businesses should be implemented in the downtown.

Cinnamon Smith (audience member) Amtrak is a big plus and the new station would allow the city to introduce the visitors to what the city has to offer. Feels the rerouting of 51 would serve the downtown well and allow a lot of new events downtown.

Susan Ferinbacker (audience member) the plan must include improvements and considerations for the disabled population of Carbondale.

Lee Fronabarger (audience member) suggested an outside expert to assist with the downtown parking plan. He supports turning highway 51 into a two way street again. It should be presented to IDOT as the community as a whole is requesting this and not just the city.

Nick Samallago (audience member) agrees with an additional entrance to the northeast neighborhoods. He believes the downtown vibrancy went east when the mall and strip centers were built. He feels bicycles are important because cars are hurting the environment. He wants the committee to dream at least half as big as planners did 50 years ago. He also suggested the committee should do everything in its power to create reasons to not drive cars in the downtown area.

Diane Baine (audience member) feels the city should remove all parking meters.

K. Baity stated the meters support the downtown parking lots that are city owned.

Shyler Beets (audience member) suggested using roundabouts to smooth traffic flow.

Patrick King (audience member) suggested parking on both sides of the strip with a roundabout, a bicycle lane and a buffer between the bicycles and traffic. He also feels there should be a pedestrian crossing bridge at Lincoln Street and that traffic speed should be significantly slowed.

M. Cole noted some items that can be used to slow traffic; vegetation islands, roundabouts, narrower traffic lanes, lower speed limits and projections into the traffic flow. We need to pay attention to vehicle and traffic calming measures.

Jesus Ponce Deleón (audience member) asked what the budget was for this plan so we could dream within a budget and know what we can and cannot accomplish.

Angie Bailey (audience member) She represents the Jackson County Health Department's Built Environment Action Team (BEAT). She stated BEAT's mission is to promote Healthy Environments, Healthy Economies and Healthy People. Sidewalks, improving crosswalks, providing safe opportunities to bike and walk, providing bike racks, benches, lights, plants and safe interaction with cars all allow for a more healthy community. She suggested adopting a "Complete Streets" approach.

Jennifer Johanson (audience member) feels that any removal of 51 from the downtown would kill Carbondale. She also feels that hiding the parking is a great idea.

Dr. Reddy feels that transportation organization is lacking in Carbondale. Buses should link all areas of town. Parking is vital to the downtown in order to thrive. Technology needs to be implemented and added to our downtown. The community needs to plan for the additional transportation burden fracking is going to place on the community.

Mike Dismore (audience member) he felt that there should be more protection of pedestrians and vehicles should be forced to stop at all cross walks when a person is waiting to cross.

Dean Reese (audience member) feels the disabled community must be cared for in the new plan. A taxi service for the disabled should be considered as well.

G. Williams plans for the transit center include a parking garage as well it was just not shown.

Bernard Hennaburger (audience member) suggested the city pick a direction to head and then brand the city with that direction. He suggested a green city slogan might be “0 Carbon Carbondale”. He also suggested the new transit center should be a 0 net energy use building.

Don Monty (audience member) He addressed the crowd and discussed the problem with going from plan concept to plan feasibility. He informed the group that the roundabouts use a lot more land than a normal intersection. Increasing the use of the roundabouts will cost corner businesses their location. He also mentions the railroad crossing into the northeast neighborhood had been dismissed in the past and would require a bridge that extended from two blocks into the northwest neighborhood to two blocks into the northeast neighborhood.

A discussion was had regarding when highway 51 became a one way street.

Jane Adams (audience member) The downtown has an issue with flooding that needs to be addressed in a manner that would potentially benefit and promote the downtown.

John Washburn (Facilitator) called for a recess as no one else had comments to add to this portion of the discussion.

6) Brief Recess

Recess began at 8:55 pm.

7) Comments from the committee members

The meeting was called back into session at 9:00 pm by **J. Langowski**.

A. Miller stated he believed the public parking lots should allow overnight parking for those that had too much to drink the night before and were trying to do the right thing by not driving home.

D. Boeckman feels that burying the overhead utility lines should be one of the first projects. Stormwater control should also be a major project in the plan.

A discussion was had regarding how the utility lines are part of a complete street system.

E. Ramseyer feels that children bicycling to school should be part of our plan.

T. Stevens feels that our buses should have bike cradles on the front of them to support bicyclists. He also requested real city buses not school buses. He wishes to rebrand the Saluki Express to Carbondale Express. He suggested making the bus routes two directional. He also noted that roundabouts take a lot of training for the public to use.

K. Baity stated all routes are centered on the student center and there are multiple routes.

E. Ramseyer suggested turning Illinois Avenue into a pedestrian only zone.

B. Bleyer suggested expanding the sidewalks to allow for on street cafes and other street activities.

Dr. Reddy suggested drastic code changes were required to grow our downtown. He also asked for beat cops on foot or on bicycle be deployed to the downtown area.

M. Cole said we should have sidewalk cafes and alcohol sidewalk sales.

A. Miller suggested a parking garage at Highway 51 and Mill Street and to expand public transportation. Saluki Express is called Saluki Express because it is paid for by the students and a \$1.00 fee from city riders.

D. Gorton asked that the sidewalks be fixed and brought to modern standards.

G. Sheffer asks that we keep our planning to a doable plan. He also states that investors must support the plan or it won't happen. Students must be drawn to our downtown. Control over Illinois Avenue is critical.

A discussion was had over where the new residents will park from the 710 lofts development.

J. Sigler stated that who controls Highway 51 will determine the outcome of the plan. How do we judge if the downtown is better because of the plan? Do we want a green community, a better business community or something else?

S. Carter stated all future plans hinge on ownership of Illinois Avenue. She asked who can answer the Highway 51 question and if the transit center funded.

K. Baity stated IDOT would answer the Highway 51 question and that the design shown for the center is 4-5 years from being shovel ready.

S. Carter asked should the group assume that that parcel of land should be considered out of use for anything else?

K. Baity discussed the issues with moving the station.

G. Williams stated the conversation with Amtrak requires the station to stay where it is

or an entirely new location would have to be selected and the process started as if a station never existed.

G. Sheffer stated the project has to be ready to go to get funding.

John Washburn (facilitator) asked Mr. Baity about what is under development regarding Highway 51.

K. Baity described the discussion with IDOT and he said IDOT will look at the conversion.

S. Carter asked if it becomes a top project and we would then need to look at how it would affect the town really closely.

Dr. Reddy stated we should just assume the two way Highway 51 will happen and that the transit center will happen and plan based on that.

D. Gorton stated he feels we should determine where we are going and then act. He feels creating a green city is the way to go. Green city initiatives and Business friendly city initiatives are able to work together and can coexist in the same city.

John Washburn (facilitator) suggested the committee get together and create guiding principles for the committee.

G. Sheffer asked if the items that were not selected as top five, will they be discussed as well.

John Washburn (facilitator) stated the vote will be over all 33 items and will create priorities for the committee.

J. Langowski stated all ideas are important and all will be included in the reports to City Council.

8) Summary of major recommended actions and member selection

John Washburn (facilitator) asked the committee to review the options presented tonight.

9) Approval of Minutes

No action

10) Review of mission statement

A. Miller made a motion to table item 10 on the agenda.

D. Gorton seconded and received a unanimous voice vote in favor of the motion.

11) Announcement of next meeting

J. Langowski announced the next meeting September 17, 2014 6:30 pm at the Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center.

12) Adjournment

G. Sheffer made the motion to close the meeting

E. Ramseyer seconded the motion

J. Langowski closed the meeting at 9:35 p.m.