



MINUTES

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

JOINT SESSION MEETING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

109 EAST OLIVE STREET

BLOOMINGTON, IL

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021 5:00 P.M.

THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY. LIVE STREAM AVAILABLE AT:

www.cityblm.org/live

Prior to 15 minutes before the start of the meeting, 1) those persons wishing to provide public comment or testify at the meeting must register at www.cityblm.org/register, and/or 2) those persons wishing to provide written comment must email their comments to publiccomment@cityblm.org.

Members of the public may also attend the meeting at City Hall. Attendance will be limited to 10 people including staff and Board/Commission members and will require compliance with City Hall COVID-19 protocols and social distancing. Participants and attendees are encouraged to attend remotely. The rules for participation and physical attendance may be subject to change due to changes in law or to executive orders relating to the COVID-19 pandemic occurring after the publication of this agenda. Changes will be posted at www.cityblm.org/register.

The joint session meeting of the Planning Commission and Transportation Commission convened in virtually via Zoom conferencing with City Planner Katie Simpson, Transportation Engineer Phil Allyn, Chairperson Reenie Bradley, and Chairperson Megan Headean in-person in City Hall's Council Chambers on Wednesday, February 10, 2021. The meeting was live streamed to the public at www.cityblm.org/live.

ROLL CALL PLANNING COMMISSION

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Ms. Megan Headean	Chair	Present
Mr. Tyson Mohr	Vice Chair	Present
Mr. Justin Boyd	Commissioner	Present
Mr. Thomas Krieger	Commissioner	Present
Ms. Megan McCann	Commissioner	Present
Mr. Mark Muehleck	Commissioner	Absent

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Mr. David Stanczak	Commissioner	Present
Ms. Sheila Montney	Commissioner	Present
Mr. John Danenberger	Commissioner	Present
Mr. George Boyle	Assistant Corporate Counsel	Present
Mr. Craig McBeath	Information Systems Director	Present
Ms. Katie Simpson	City Planner	Present
Ms. Kimberly Smith	Assistant Economic & Community Development Director	Present
Ms. Caitlin Kelly	Assistant City Planner	Present

ROLL CALL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Ms. Reenie Bradley	Chair	Present
Mr. John Corey	Commissioner	Present
Mr. Ed Breitweiser	Commissioner	Present
Ms. Elicsha Sanders	Commissioner	Present
Mr. Adam Heenan	Commissioner	Absent
Ms. Rickielee Benecke	Commissioner	Present
Mr. David Stanczak	Commissioner	Present
Ms. Sheila Montney	Commissioner	Present
Mr. John Danenberger	Commissioner	Present
Mr. Phil Allyn	Transportation Engineer	Present
Mr. Craig Schnokweiler	City Engineer	Present
Mr. Kevin Kothe	Public Works Director	Present

ELECTION OF MEETING CHAIR

Mr. Boyd motioned for Ms. Headean to chair the meeting. Ms. Montney seconded. Roll call vote Planning Commission: Mr. Stanczak - Yes, Mr. Danenberger - Yes, Mr. Boyd - Yes, Mr. Krieger - Yes, Mr. Mohr - Yes, Ms. Montney - Yes, Ms. McCann - Yes, Ms. Headean - Yes. Roll call vote Transportation Commission: Ms. Bradley - Yes, Mr. Breitweiser - Yes, Mr. Corey - Inaudible, Ms. Benecke - Yes, Ms. Sanders - Yes. The motion carried (12-0-1).

PUBLIC COMMENT

This meeting is being held virtually via live stream. Public comment will be accepted up until 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. Written public comment must be emailed to publiccomment@cityblm.org and those wishing to speak live must register at <https://www.cityblm.org/register> prior to the meeting.

No public comment.

REGULAR AGENDA

Note, due to COVID-19 social distancing considerations, this meeting is held virtually. Those wishing to testify or comment remotely regarding a public hearing listed below must register at <https://www.cityblm.org/register> at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

- A. Brief presentation by staff summarizing potential options provided by IDOT for reconstruction of the Empire Street (IL Route 9) and Veterans Parkway (I-55 Business Route) intersection followed by discussion with the Bloomington Planning and Transportation Commissions.

Chairperson Headean called for the presentation. Mr. Allyn outlined the proposal and mentioned that each variation includes a 10' sidewalk for bike and pedestrian accommodations.

Mr. Breitweiser explained that his position on the committee is as a pedestrian safety advocate. He stated that the diverging diamond is his preferred option from that perspective. Mr. Corey stated that his priorities are similar, but that he is uncertain about the diverging diamond option.

Mr. Mohr asked whether the 2009 traffic study could be summarized as to the cause of the crashes. Kevin Kothe, director of Public Works, stated that some of the short term mitigations have been implemented, like amending the signage, but that the long term recommendation involved a feasibility study for an alternative intersection configuration. Mr. Mohr asked if the accidents were caused by unfamiliarity with navigating the intersection. Mr. Kothe said this was partially true. Mr. Mohr indicated a hesitation with the diverging diamond due to its potential complexity and stated his belief that dedicated right turn lanes seem incongruent with pedestrian and bike safety.

Mr. Boyd asked whether the safety column in the chart refers only to vehicle safety. Mr. Allyn said he was not sure, but that pedestrian access was taken into account overall. Mr. Boyd asked whether the cost would be to the state or to the city. Mr. Allyn replied that the streets are state routes, but that parking and sidewalk access would fall to the city to pay for. Mr. Boyd asked whether including a sidewalk on the south side would be cost prohibitive, since it would aid in pedestrian crossings. Mr. Allyn wasn't sure. Mr. Boyd expressed a preference for the echelon and the diverging diamond.

Mr. Stanczak stated that most of the crashes at the intersection are rear end accidents, and that factors contributing to that sort of accident don't appear to be addressed by any of the options. He expressed a preference for the no build option.

Ms. Bradley expressed hesitation with the standard intersection as well as the throughabout. She indicated a preference for SPUI and stated that her concern with the diverging diamond relates to visitors unfamiliar with the community, but that she is open to other opinions on it.

Kevin Kothe, city engineer, stated that left side ramps are no longer preferred and put the center turn overpass and echelon at a disadvantage. He stated that SPUIs and diverging diamonds are emerging in popularity and seem effective and added that these are his preferred options.

Mr. Allyn stated that the unfamiliarity of some of the configurations is outweighed by the reduced severity of the crashes. Regarding rear end crashes, he mentioned that the diverging diamond and other options reduce the potential for rear ends because it separates traffic. Mr. Allyn also stated his belief that the implementation of the alternative is at least 10 years away.

Chairperson Headean expressed a preference for roundabouts and stated the Planning Commission's orientation toward increasing the walkability of the city.

Mr. Mohr stated that these roads used to be on the outskirts of town and are oriented toward vehicular access, making a pedestrian oriented approach difficult. He stated his belief that most of the crashes are caused by the speed of traffic, and that a balance needs to be struck between efficiency and deaths.

Ms. Bradley indicated that reducing the frequency and severity of crashes would be significant.

Mr. Boyd stated that he believes the diverging diamond look and throughabout look best aesthetically, and that separating Veteran's Parkway from Empire should encourage travelers on Empire to slow down. Mr. Boyd advocated for a pedestrian crossing in whichever option is chosen, as well as for green space.

Ms. Simpson asked whether the Commission has any opinions on the economic development aspect of each proposal. Mr. Mohr stated that the bigger the footprint of the intersection, the less useful it is from a financial standpoint. Ms. Simpson clarified that she was wondering about impacts of visibility for existing businesses and how that factors into other considerations.

Mr. Boyd expressed his belief that it is important, but that other considerations take priority as well as the fact that visibility is related more to signage than to infrastructure. Chairperson Headean stated that businesses shouldn't be impacted by the design of these alternatives. Mr. Mohr stated that efficiently moving vehicles should be the main economic consideration of the project.

Mr. Allyn mentioned that no parcels in their entirety would be lost. Ms. Bradley stated that Carmax may lose frontage, but that Pizza Ranch would not.

Ms. Benecke stated that walkability and pedestrian safety should be a consideration regardless of when the alternatives will be built. She expressed a preference for the SPUI and diverging diamond.

Mr. Krieger expressed a preference for the diverging diamond.

Craig Shonkwiler, City Engineer, summarized the Commissions' preferred alternatives.

Ms. Sanders pointed out that the aerial images may drastically differ from how the alternatives look on the ground. She mentioned that adapting to new alternatives may be more difficult for some groups than others, and that all groups should be kept in mind when considering the logistics of the proposed alternatives.

Ms. Benecke added that, similarly, pedestrian access should also include those with disabilities.

OTHER BUSINESS

No items.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boyd motioned to adjourn. Mr. Krieger seconded. All agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM.