



1.1 Background

The City of Urbana contracted with the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) in January 2007 to create a Bicycle Master Plan for the City. This study originates from the Urbana City Council goal to “Get Urbana Bicycling.”

Council Common Goal: *Get Urbana Bicycling*

Implementation Strategy:

Staff and Council will implement bike committee recommendations on new and improved routes and regional connections, bike maps, designated routes, signage, improved off-street and on-street bike routes and facilities, increased bicycle parking, as well as creation of bike safety and public education programs.¹

The Bicycle Master Plan builds on the 2004 Champaign County Greenways and Trails Plan by identifying bicycle transportation improvements throughout the city. This mode of travel is intended to be safe, efficient, and a practical travel option for all residents and visitors in the city. The plan defines the bicycle network and will also provide a strategy for the provision of this travel network.

The study area is bounded by the City of Urbana Municipal Limits, and includes the streets but not the off-street paths in the University District. However, the plan includes recommendations for connections with surrounding communities, based on Champaign County Greenways & Trails proposals. A map of the study area is shown in Figure 1.1, with the city limits shaded in tan, and red lines representing existing bicycle facilities as of the beginning of the study in spring 2007.

1.2 Study Purpose

Bicycling attracts a variety of users, who have different purposes for using this mode.

- Recreation: Bicycling is a very popular activity, a moderate form of exercise within the physical capabilities of most people.
- Alternative transportation: Bicycling is also used as alternative transportation for short, local trips throughout town. At the national level, 27% of all car trips are one mile or shorter; and 40% are less than two miles.² These are reasonable distances to bike if it is safe and convenient.
- Transportation necessity: Besides those who bicycle by choice, there are residents who depend on bicycling as a transportation necessity, including children, many teenagers, and some workers.

The demand for bicycle facilities continues to grow around the country. Nationally, 52% of bike travel is for recreation and exercise, but 43% is destination-based². A bike-friendly town is also associated with a high quality of life and a sense of community. This plan outlines recommendations that the City of Urbana can implement to improve bicycling for both recreation and transportation.

¹ http://www.city.urbana.il.us/urbana/city_council/Council_Goals.pdf

² 2001 National Household Travel Survey



Introduction

1.3 Study Methodology

Through a strong public involvement process and advanced modeling techniques, the plan identifies the facilities and policies necessary to ensure that bicycling remains a viable travel option for all residents and visitors in the City. Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) was used as the standard for quantifying the “bike-friendliness” of a roadway, or the perceived comfort level of bicyclists on a roadway. This measurement tool is described in more detail in Chapter 7.

1.4 Study Products

The following products were created during the planning process, and are included in the final plan:

- Public Input on preferred routes, bicycling issues, and recommendations
- Existing data on physical features in the built environment that affect bicycling
- Explanation of Recommended Bikeway Types
- Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) modeling explanation and results
- Recommended Locations for Bikeway Treatment
- Photo renderings of existing streets and paths with Bikeway Treatment
- Street plans for bicycle facility inclusion on upcoming roadway projects
- Cost estimates for Bikeway Treatment
- Implementation Strategies, including non-construction methods

