

# Walkable West Bluff gaining supporters

## Campaign kick-off event a walkability audit

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**PEORIA** - A more "walkable" West Bluff seems to have broad appeal for many residents, who responded to a call to attend a meeting and discuss the proposal.

"I'm all for it," said Judy Stalling of the Moss-Bradley neighborhood.

"I think it would help make the area more of a neighborhood when we can visit with each other casually. The opportunity to run into your neighbors casually helps strengthen the fabric of your society."

Three Uplands neighborhood residents got the campaign going. Anne Bartolo, Jennifer Brady and Lisa Ferolo say their plan is in line with the city's push toward new urbanism.

Before the group members approach the city to discuss what modifications need to be made to make the city more neighborhood-friendly, Brady said they need to have specific information. So the campaign is planning a kick-off event that's basically a walkability audit.

"We want to see what you observe as you walk, how many people, what's the sidewalk like or how easy is it to walk right now?" Brady said. "We need to scare up some tools to collect the information so we can record it and present it to the city."

She was encouraged by the positive response they've received from the eight neighborhoods that comprise the West Bluff.

"It's been great," she said. "People have been giving us other input like, 'Let's try to market the businesses on Main Street.' We're really trying to capitalize on the momentum to show we can really make a difference."

The timing for the campaign is also in line with what the city is planning. The group already has the support of 2nd District Councilwoman Barbara Van Auken, who has said their grass-roots work will be far more effective and gain more popular support than anything the city government could force on people.

The city has engaged a professional company to do a traffic study to gather data and develop a "travel demand" model of traffic flow in the area surrounding Main and University streets.

"The ultimate goal is to see if we can get a more walkable Main Street with perhaps less traffic (or) slower, calmer traffic in that area so people can walk around with some degree of comfort," Van Auken has said.

The study would also focus on the impact on surrounding neighborhoods if Main Street traffic is calmed.

Main and University, along with the surrounding neighborhoods in the West Bluff, are part of a form district that will espouse the principles of new urbanism, which include traffic-calming and making streets more pedestrian friendly.

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