



## **WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Minutes of the Monday, August 22, 2016 Meeting**

**Members Present:** The members present were Michael Bates, Larry Creed, Matt Erickson, Ann Horton, Douglas Knight, John Rist, and Kelly Whalen.

City Support Staff Darren Hurley (Parks and Recreation Director) and Celia Thornton (Project Supervisor) were present. Safe Routes to School Field Services Manager, Kate Moening, and Worthington School Director of Business Services, Mr. Jeff Eble, also attended the meeting.

Minutes from the July 25, 2016 meeting were approved by all present.

**Safe Routes To School Educational Session:** Ms. Kate Moening gave a PowerPoint presentation to the board on the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program in Ohio. Ms. Moening is the Field Services Manager for SRTS in Ohio, has helped to implement SRTS in Gahanna and is on the City of Gahanna's Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Board. Her presentation included the following highlights:

- American automobile culture is an experiment and not typical around the world. Most places/communities are scaled to individuals rather than to automobiles.
- SRTS is celebrating 10 years of improving safety in Ohio while promoting good health habits in our kids.
- SRTS innovations include: school travel plan templates (for large and small districts); data driven programs; infrastructure and non-infrastructure tool kits; Every Move You Make program; Safe Routes Academy; Ohio AAP's "Put A Lid On It" campaign (helmet safety); lesson guides; Girl's in Gear program; and a statewide show choir.
- The goal of SRTS is to improve active transportation safety, implementation, accessibility, and sustainability throughout Ohio. They do this by providing a grant funded application process for training to implement SRTS and active transportation programs, planning and policy advancement in Ohio.
- Since July 2015, 29 workshop awards have been provided in 13 communities.
- Ms. Moening discussed the statewide rolling application that is easy to complete and provides flexible implementation, allowing for multi-sector partnerships (for example- city government and school districts). Local government jurisdictions are eligible to apply. Ms. Moening also shared information about the Safe Routes Academy and how valuable a resource that is for communities beginning the process. These workshops can be customized and tailored to individual communities and their specific needs. These

workshops are free and provide CEU's to professionals. They also provide "Train the Trainer" workshops on topics such as Walking School Bus Implementation, Crossing Guards, School Walking Audits and Girls In Gear, thereby creating experts on each subject within the community.

At the end of her presentation Ms. Moening opened the floor for questions. Mrs. Horton asked whether the Worthington School District would qualify as a large district? Ms. Moening said probably. Mr. Eble confirmed that there were 11 elementary schools and 4 middle schools in the district. Ms. Moening shared that the large district planning process began in urban districts such as Cincinnati, Toledo and Columbus. She said a consultant could help and that it's better to have a comprehensive plan. She then shared that the application process opens in January and closes in March, and chosen districts are announced in July. Ms. Horton asked who can apply. Ms. Moening stated that any jurisdiction can apply but they must be working with key partners. For example, a school plan must include cooperation between schools and cities, and anyone else who needs to be involved. Mr. Erickson asked if it is helpful to have attended the Safe Routes Academy prior to applying for infrastructure funding. Ms. Moening responded that the school district must have a school travel plan and it also helps to have had community events such as "Walk to School Day," etc. Ms. Horton asked if economic need was a factor. Ms. Moening said that yes, equity is a component and a large number of students on free and reduced lunch will equal more points in one category. Mr. Eble shared that he is new to the district, and wonders what the interest and intent of the board is? Mr. Hurley responded that the Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Board came into being as a direct result of a goal by Worthington City Council, who recognized the need for and benefit of planned bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The Board was directed to create and maintain a list of projects and recommendations that would help Worthington be a more bike and pedestrian friendly community. Implementing Safe Routes to School in our community in partnership with the school district was one of the projects that the board is exploring as an option to move forward. Mr. Creed said that the board understands that the next step is to get all the players together and partake in a learning process. Mrs. Horton reiterated that to move this forward we would need the interest of the school district. Mr. Eble let the board know that he hadn't been working for Worthington Schools for very long, but had noticed in this district independence in how each building was run, rather than other districts that took a more comprehensive approach to treating all buildings the same. Mr. Bates inquired how many elementary and middle schools there were in the actual city. Mrs. Horton replied that there were 4 elementaries and 2 middle schools. Mr. Hurley stated that staff could follow up with the school district and see if there is a willingness on the district's part to pursue SRTS, and if so, how quickly. Mrs. Horton mentioned that PTA groups should also be invited to the discussion. Mr. Creed said we can begin listing what needs to be done, who needs to be involved and begin checking off boxes. Mr. Hurley thought it would be best to first discover the district's interest level. If there isn't any interest at this time, then the board can look at smaller pieces that could be easily accomplished. Then, when the district is ready to embrace and move forward the board can begin contacting others who would need to be involved, such as Columbus. Mr. Bates asked what happened with Wilson Hill student pushing for some sidewalks and ways to make it easier for those kids to walk to school. Mr. Hurley

responded that no new infrastructure was built but that the existing structures were reviewed which led to some sidewalks being repaired and trees getting trimmed. Mr. Rist inquired, if the City moved forward, where would the money come from and out of whose budget? He then wondered if this should be part of the CIP discussion? If not, what operating budget would this money come out of? Mr. Hurley replied that the non-CIP projects were placed in a category because they wouldn't be funded as capital projects and funding would have to come from a shift of existing resources or through allocation of new. Other options would include partnerships, grants, or volunteer resources. Mr. Rist asked about the timing of the budgets and Mr. Hurley let him know that CIP was completed first, then the operating budget- they roll from one into the other throughout the fall. He acknowledged that Mr. Rist was making a good point in that the board will need to make considerations as to how to move projects forward since there really is no staff dedicated to focus only on Bike & Pedestrian objectives. Sometimes staff can fit it into their regular duties but to fully embrace forward progress the board may need to allocate money to dedicated people. If the group comes up with a project that pulls on the heart strings of Council, the project may just be prioritized and funded independently. Otherwise, the board will have to figure out how to keep projects moving forward. Mr. Bates asked what was happening on Crandall. Mr. Hurley wasn't sure where things currently stood and deferred to Mr. Erickson (a resident of Crandall). Mr. Erickson said that city staff is still looking at the governing ordinance in the City code regarding when a majority of residents request a sidewalk to be build. He said this ordinance hasn't yet been successfully invoked. Mr. Hurley added that this issue existed prior to the formation of the board and that Council didn't want to throw the policy issue out at a new board. His guess is that if the board is asked to weigh in on this issue it will be more a matter of how to prioritize sidewalks in the City, and not specifically recommending for or against sidewalks on Crandall. Mr. Creed asked if the issue is mostly about costs and who pays for the sidewalks. Mr. Erickson replied that while cost is big a concern, maintenance is also an issue. Older residents haven't had sidewalks and don't see the need for them now. Also, there is the cost and work of keeping them clear in the winter, and the loss of personal property frontage (trees, landscaping, etc.) and how the law is written. No one wants sidewalks to nowhere.

**City Capital Improvement Program Follow-Up:** The board then had some discussion about where and how to move forward on projects. There was discussion about the importance of prioritizing projects for funding using data. This led to the idea of funding some master planning so that the board isn't just doing projects or making recommendations to Council without a solid foundation to refer to. Mr. Creed suggested that a consultant could be of value in this area, adding a lot of information and giving good direction. Mr. Hurley asked if Mr. Creed could work on scope, details and costs with him to get something like this before Council. There was then some talk about various projects: NE Gateway, sharrows in the City, bike & ped access through the Harding Hospital property, how to move SRTS forward in 2017 and replacing bridges on the Olentangy Trail. Mr. Whalen expresses a concern that we need to narrow the focus going forward and figure out what our priority is as a group. What is our focus and mission? He feels that we're going after too many diverse projects and is concerned that

we won't be able to accomplish anything. Mr. Bates is still concerned about how to integrate the board into other city planning processes so it can give timely input or feedback on City projects as they come up. Mr. Rist then brought up Sunday Parkways, that we had prioritized that last January and wants to make sure money gets set aside for it to go forward in the budget in 2017. Mrs. Horton would like to see SRTS walk audits proceed, and wants money budgeted for that project. Mr. Hurley referred back to the discussion about data collection and a master planning process, stating that this will lead to better organization on what the board will do going forward.

**COTA Discussion:** Mr. Rist is interested in seeing if the Worthington community has an appetite for a bus circular, and whether he would have the support of the board in pursuing this with COTA. If so, he'd like to add a work plan adding transit to the focus. If COTA is interested they would be discussing routes, times, etc. Mr. Rist thinks this might be a good pilot project and could help seniors in the community, during Farmer's Market. Mr. Bates said this could be of interest to residents based on their life stage and need to get from Graceland to the northern part of Worthington. He also thinks there is an appetite at Council to focus on commercial districts and to create connectivity among commercial and residential areas. Mr. Erickson likes the idea and the desire, but doesn't see it as part of the focus of this board. He thinks it should be part of a larger transit study, but not necessarily a focus of this board. Mrs. Horton feels that riding a bus starts with someone walking to the bus stop. There are also bike shares and rental bikes in other parts of Columbus for bus riders to use. Mr. Knight said it's a great idea, but possibly more than we as a group can deal with. He agrees with Mr. Erickson- we just heard four people say "we haven't accomplished anything and that it's time to drill down." He can rationalize this as a part of bike & ped, but doesn't see it as a direct charge or focus. Mr. Creed says in order to implement a plan like this, we would need sponsors to get it accomplished. Would we be putting board money towards this project? Mr. Rist said he could see Kroger sponsoring it- have the circular run from Kroger Graceland to the Worthington Kroger. Mr. Hurley framed for the group that Mr. Rist is seeking consensus to pursue this idea further. There was a mixed response. Mr. Erickson and Mr. Knight oppose, all the others voted affirmative- just to have Mr. Rist gather more information, present it to the board, and possibly have a COTA representative come and speak.

#### **Updates:**

1. PHB's – Engineering working on contracts and keeping things on track.
2. Mobility Study – The bike portion of this study is complete, but the pedestrian section still needs work. When complete the draft will be presented to the board.
3. Yay Bikes – Mr. Hurley, Ms. Thornton and three engineering staff participated in a citywide engineering bike ride led by Yay Bikes.
4. Bike Rodeo – AAA is interested in putting on a Bike Rodeo next summer. Emma Lindholm suggested that the board be involved and is assisting in coordinating this event.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.