



WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Monday, Sept. 23, 2019 Meeting

Members Present: The members present were Mike Bates, Ann Horton, Emma Lindholm, Jordan Schweller, John Stephan and Kelly Whalen.

City Support staff Darren Hurley (Director of Parks & Recreation) and Celia Thornton were also present.

Minutes from the July 22, 2019 meeting were approved by all in attendance with one clarification. On page three the 600 people refers approximately to the number of people who responded to the online Wiki Map that was part of the master planning process.

Safe Routes To School:

a. **PTA Presentations** - Mr. Hurley thanked the board for their flexibility with the August meeting. The focus tonight will be on our current biggest initiative- Safe Routes To School (SRTS). Mr. Hurley recognized Ms. Horton, Ms. Lindholm and Ms. Thornton for the additional work they have contributed to this initiative, including coordination meetings and PTA meetings. He thought it was a good idea if the board saw the presentation being given at the PTA meetings in case board members receive questions from the public. Ms. Thornton gave the board the power point presentation that was used and she, Ms. Horton and Ms. Lindholm shared the reactions at the four schools they've visited thus far (Worthington Estates Elementary, Kilbourne Middle, Wilson Hill Elementary, Colonial Hills Elementary). Wilson Hill Elementary School was very interested and emailed Ms. Thornton that "there has been enough parent interest expressed, that Wilson Hill Elementary is forming a SRTS Committee. Chris Jolley will be chairing and will be the contact person for Wilson Hill, aside from Dr. Girard." The board went ahead and identified next steps to keep this initiative moving forward:

- Follow up with Worthingway Middle School (which hasn't yet responded)
- Send Phoenix Middle School some educational information/flyers (as requested)
- Loop in Worthington School Administrators
- Send follow up emails to schools that have received presentations

- Begin planning Education and Encouragement initiatives to push out to Worthington Schools as a follow up to the PTA presentations (including such proposals as school handbook revisions, Walk To School day events, AAA Safety Patrol information, etc.)
- b. City Council / School Board Meeting** – Mr. Hurley shared that this joint meeting will be held on October 14th at the Worthington Education Center at 7 or 7:30 pm. He stated that the agenda will be very full but hopes that there will be some time for a brief Safe Routes To School (SRTS) discussion. Since there may not be much time, he wanted to present the board and Council members with a memo prior to the meeting outlining implementation options. He's also not sure yet, but will get clarification, on how this information may be presented, whether by the board, by himself or by the City Manager. Ms. Lindholm suggested that the memo be changed to reflect recent board activity- the schools visited and the interest expressed by Wilson Hill Elementary. Mr. Bates also suggested that the memo should include actionable bullet items, for example Community Engagement or School Task Force. The schools are very busy and have a lot of change coming, so SRTS may not even make their top 10 list. Therefore, we need to make our request as simple and actionable as possible. Mr. Bates also wondered if there was a way to audit why children weren't walking to school and a survey is another actionable item. Mr. Stephan suggested a crossing guard at Larrimer to help students cross High Street. He also observed that Wilson Hill Elementary makes it much too easy for cars to drop students off at school, rather than walk. Mr. Hurley said that he wanted to be careful that the City and board don't push too hard too fast and thinks we can present a request for them to engage which should lead to the outcomes desired over time. He said the memo needed to find a balance between how much information to add so that it's enough to be helpful but not overwhelming.

Citizen's Academy Input: Mr. Hurley gave a brief overview of the City's Citizen Academy. On the evening that the participants spent learning about the Parks & Recreation Department, Mr. Hurley gave an overview of the Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan to the 24 residents enrolled in the Academy and asked them to briefly brainstorm ideas for projects or areas of concern and mark them on a map. While this information won't lead to changes in the Master Plan, it does provide additional information to the board. Ms. Thornton had created a list of the mapped projects and linked six of them to existing Master Plan projects. Three of the suggestions were not in the Master Plan. The project list was included in the board packets and there were a few clarification questions. Mr. Bates asked to discuss the City's budget process and the Bike & Pedestrian allocation. Mr. Hurley said that he requested an increase to \$150,000 for the next two years, then to keep the approved \$250,000 in last year's CIP for the three years after that. Mr. Hurley suggested that by next year's process for 2021-2025, the board consider submitting specific projects instead of just asking for a flat allocation of funds. This is the approach that has been taken on Parks Master Plan projects and it seems to work and not necessarily restrict projects to the annual allocated amount. The hope would be that certain projects would gain support and get pushed through even if they exceed the flat allocation for the year. Mr. Stephan stated that the board has a Master Plan with a list of projects and thinks we should use it. Mr. Hurley said that traditionally the board has scheduled annual planning meetings in January to identify and prioritize projects for the upcoming year but suggests that the board consider moving this planning session to our upcoming fall meetings, which would allow us to be planning for projects and potentially get them moving during the summer construction season.

Update:

1. **S.R. 161 / Pingree Crossing** – Mr. Hurley has stayed in communication with Mr. Whited on the Pingree crossing. DLZ is still looking into resolving some of the issues brought up at the last meeting (cleaning up the corner with all the utilities, flashing suggestions, etc.) and are considering all the questions asked and don't yet have a final plan. Mr. Hurley will keep the board in the loop. Once a design is completed they will be sent to the board for a final viewing prior to sending the project out to bid. It's still too early to know the total cost of the project and due to the concrete refuge island, the best projection for completion of the project is spring 2020, since concrete requires certain temperatures. Mr. Whalen asked whether the crossing in the island had remained a "jog" or if it had been straightened out due to comments at the last meeting. He expressed that he didn't want the pedestrian island features changed unless there were good engineering reasons to do so. The island was changed to have a pedestrian path straight through, but Mr. Whited had agreed with some of the comments and felt the reasoning was sound, so some changes were made.
2. **Collins Drive Citizens Request** – Mr. Hurley shared that the board has received two requests for crossing improvements in the Potters Creek area. The first is for a crossing on Collins Drive at the entrance to Perry Park. There are sidewalks on the opposite side of the street from the park (on the south side) and some on the north side to the left of the drive, but none in front of the soccer fields. The request was for a crossing from the south sidewalk over to the park. The City's stance has always been not to paint marked crosswalks without some type of signalized control. Therefore, based on that philosophy the City wouldn't recommend a marked crossing at that location. There is also some debate about the need at that location- it hasn't bubbled up as a concern before and isn't in the Master Plan. Mr. Hurley just wanted to make the board aware of this request. The second request is from residents in the Potters Creek area via Council Representative Bonnie Michael and is in the Master Plan (#15 out of 20 under intersection improvements). The request is for a crossing from Collins Drive across Linworth Road to Loch Ness Ave. There is no signal at this location currently and once you make the crossing this could become a multi-jurisdictional project since it would link Columbus and Worthington neighborhoods. Mr. Schweller said this is a high priority for that area. Mr. Hurley stated that it is also the best way for Worthington residents in that area to access to the Olentangy Trail. Mr. Schweller stated that it would be his "Safe Routes To School" route, though there is another project in the Master plan for a multi-use trail along Linworth Road, which would be much more expensive and complex. However, both projects would have a big impact in that community. Mr. Hurley said that since Mr. Schweller had joined that board and is from that area, we ought to dedicate some time to really looking at that section of Worthington and hearing more from Mr. Schweller. Staff will frame and prioritize this conversation for an upcoming meeting. Mr. Schweller doesn't see how we, as a board, can ever afford to pay for some of these projects. The cost is huge and there is nothing out on the west side of Worthington, it's not just about paint on the road or a better intersection. He believes that it is the board's responsibility to come up with projects and prioritize and frame them, and then Council must figure out how to fund them, possibly with the assistance of ODOT.
3. **Construction Updates** – Mr. Hurley wanted to point out that on the City's website, under the Service and Engineering page, they have a construction projects link that lists streets and has a map of where projects are being done each year. It also has a description of what each project entails.
4. **Trail Connections** – Ms. Thornton attended a multi-jurisdictional trail connection meeting and wanted to share the information with the board. The meeting was set up at the suggestion of Mr. Tim Maloney (Director of Metro Parks) through the Mid-Ohio Regional

Planning Commission (MORPC). The cities of Worthington, Westerville and Columbus were asked to participate since his project idea would affect all jurisdictions. The point of the meeting was to look for more east/west connectors in the region and to find a way to link the Olentangy Trail with the Alum Creek Trail. As current and completed projects were shared the group realized that with what Westerville has already done, and what Worthington (in the NE Gateway Project) and Columbus have started it is feasible to create two east/west connectors and link some major neighborhoods and employment centers. The first route would be from the Olentangy Trail along Wilson Bridge Road (and Highland Ave. temporarily) then up through the NE Gateway to Sancus Blvd. From here trail could be constructed along Worthington Woods into Sharon Woods Metro Park which will have a trail connection to the Alum Creek Trail. The other route would continue trail all the way north on Sancus Road up to the Chase Bank Complex at Polaris and then out Lazelle Road connecting all the way to Highbanks Metro Park. There would also be another east/west spur of trail halfway up Sancus connecting Park Road to Sharon Woods. Connecting to Chase would not only connect a big employer, but also allow the group to apply for \$3 million dollars of Chase "Advancing Cities" grant funding. Ms. Thornton shared a map of the proposed routes and noted that two main COTA lines would also be included. She also said that Mr. Maloney had promised that if these trails were built, the Metro Parks would promise to maintain and police these sections of trail in perpetuity.

Ms. Lindholm asked to quickly give an update on the Mature Operators Program run by AAA that Mr. Bates had brought up at the last meeting. She had spoken to the director of AAA and they are open to including specific Worthington or Central Ohio bicycle and pedestrian information. She thought the board could brainstorm a list of items we thought could be included. Mr. Bates suggested using the "Bicycling Street Smarts" pamphlet he had as a starting point. Mr. Hurley asked how often they provided this class to senior drivers. Ms. Lindholm said that due to its popularity every six to eight weeks.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.