



WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Monday, September 27, 2021, Meeting

Members Present: The members present were Michael Bates, Danielle DavisRoe, Rebecca Green, Brian Iarocci, Brian Meilton, Jordan Schweller and Kelly Whalen.

Toole Design Group's Tobi Otulana and David Shipps attended, along with Council Member Rachael Dorothy, City Staff Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director) and Celia Thornton.

Minutes from the August 23, 2021, meeting were approved by all present.

Linworth Road Crossing Recommendations Review: Mr. Hurley reminded the board of the background for these projects (resident concerns). Columbus also received resident concerns from their side of the road, and the expressed desire for a safe crossing to Perry Park. Columbus offered as a partner to evaluate the Collins crossing in conjunction with Worthington's City Engineer and their recommendations for improvement were passed on to the board at the last meeting. The board was uncomfortable with the level of service suggested and so Toole Design was asked to review the recommendations with an eye to pedestrian safety, and to provide more background information. Toole Design was hired by the city to help with project development, pilot projects, education sessions and to keep projects moving forward. Mr. Hurley introduced Mr. Shipps and Ms. Otulana to the board. Ms. Otulana has worked with the city previously in her capacity with MORPC helping Worthington craft a Complete Streets Policy. Ms. Otulana proceeded to present the reasons that Toole Design concurs with the City of Columbus on Linworth Road intersection improvements. The key considerations included annual average daily traffic counts, number of lanes, speed, and traffic volumes. Mr. Hurley said that this was an opportunity for the board to ask Toole engineering questions and that the decision before the board was to make a recommendation to move forward on the improvements as proposed, or to request more research. Mr. Schweller asked a clarifying question about the speeds at Collins Drive. Toole felt confident in the Beechview recommendations but did ask for more time to review the Collins Drive crossing since they had not had adequate time to review the Collins data collected by Columbus. Mr. Hurley suggested Toole be given additional time and return next month with a more comprehensive recommendation. There was some group discussion around pedestrian safety, speed concerns, and other traffic calming techniques. Mr. Shipps stated that the City of Columbus, who is partnering on this project, has strict codes they follow based on

intersection data. Mr. Whalen then invited Ms. Dorothy to speak. Ms. Dorothy shared concerns that the guides referenced when discussing crossing treatments are geared more towards moving vehicular traffic and less about pedestrian safety and comfort. She also expressed her opinion that people aren't using this crossing now as much as they would because of the level of traffic and speed. She would like to see the types of designs and shared use spaces created in other countries that equally balance the needs of vehicular traffic with pedestrian and bicycle users. Mr. Shipp concurred with her assessment and said that often pedestrian infrastructure isn't built because not enough people walk in a particular area, but they don't walk because the infrastructure isn't in place. Mr. Bates referenced what happened at High Street and Stafford where pedestrian use has significantly increased since the crossing was improved whereas no one would cross there before because it wasn't safe. Mr. Hurley suggested that the board give Toole Design more time to review the data now that they've received questions from members and proposed that we invite them back to a future meeting. The board concurred.

Sidewalk Gap Filling: Mr. Whalen reminded the board that sidewalk gaps have been brought to their attention by multiple residents recently and that there has been some discussion about ways to approach filling sidewalk gaps. Mr. Whalen and Mr. Bates have been speaking with City Council Members Dorothy and Kowalczyk, who have requested that the board bring ideas on how to prioritize the gaps and other options for city sidewalk policy to City Council. Mr. Hurley referenced the sidewalk gap material included in board packets (maps and cost estimates). He noted that the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process for 2022 is starting with City Council. If the board would like to recommend more money to work on filling gaps, or an annual appropriation for this purpose, then they need to make that recommendation tonight and can work through policy and prioritization considerations at later meetings. Mr. Schweller asked how old this data was and how accurate the cost estimates were. Ms. Thornton answered that they were from 2018 and are only based on linear feet of pavement. Mr. Hurley added that the pavement costs were estimated on bids from that year and that the notes reference additional costs. He added that he did run the 2018 numbers by engineering staff prior to this meeting and they felt they were still viable estimates based on recent costing. Mr. Bates stated that these gaps present walkability issues for children, seniors, and all residents. Multiple plans point to this as a priority and since it's the board's role to advocate for pedestrians, he thinks the board should ask City Council to either give us an increased budget or set aside an annual amount in a separate fund each year to address gaps. Mr. Iarocci asked if the board would just concentrate on gaps, or also on places where sidewalks are desperately needed. Mr. Hurley said that gaps are easier to fund and achieve, but that is a decision the board needs to make. Mr. Meilton said this is a good opportunity to put sidewalks where there aren't any and doesn't want to ignore that in favor of just sidewalk gaps. Ms. Dorothy mentioned that Westerville had recently just changed their rules around sidewalk repairs, which are now the sole responsibility of the city. Mr. Meilton feels that Worthington needs a policy that doesn't create more conflict. Mr. Bates requested that staff give the board samples of policies from other cities (Westerville, Upper Arlington, Dublin, etc.). Mr. Hurley replied that staff can get the board policy information from other municipalities. He stated that addressing sidewalk gaps is straight forward and suggested that the board considers addressing those concerns first and then longer term can review sidewalk policy. The board had some discussion around Mr. Hurley's suggestion and how much money to request from City Council to adequately fund gap projects each year. The board crafted the following recommendation to be forwarded to City Council:

Due to City Council's acceptance of the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, unanimous acceptance of the Visioning recommendations, and the Resolution supporting the Age Friendly Initiative, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board recommends City Council allocate \$200,000 annually in addition to the current annual bike and pedestrian project

allocation in the Capital Improvements Program to fund a sidewalk gap filling program which would be fully funded by the city to expedite the connection of sidewalk gaps around the city.

Mr. Bates made the motion, Ms. Green seconded, and all in attendance approved. Ms. Dorothy said she would try and get some information from Westerville for Ms. Thornton.

Stroll & Roll Recap: Ms. Thornton shared that the event went well with approximately 25 people participating, which is a big increase from the previous year. She appreciated the board members who volunteered their personal time. Suggestions for improvements included printing a map of the route on the back of the flyers, considering a designated starting point, looking further afield for volunteers, and providing water at each of the stations for participants.

Updates:

1. **Pingree and 161 Crossing** – Mr. Hurley said the project is moving forward, despite supply delays. The work timeline has been communicated as 4 to 6 weeks total.
2. **McCord Park Construction** – Mr. Hurley encouraged board members to look at the City's website for this project and to visit the site. The multi-use trail addition, when fully constructed, will add some nice connections. Paving should start next week.
3. **COVID Meeting Protocols/Format** - Mr. Hurley thanked board members for their input on the meeting format and said that members can continue to decide each month whether to meet in person or virtually. There is the potential to do hybrid meetings, though that can be technically difficult. Mr. Schweller said he liked meeting in person and particularly liked the Griswold location. There seemed to be consensus around that. Mr. Hurley encouraged board members to reach out to him or the chairs if they have any concerns going forward.
4. **Other** – Mr. Whalen has concerns about the construction occurring at the Worthington Gateway site (former Holiday Inn). He's noticed that it is difficult for pedestrians to navigate the area and that it's virtually impassable. He wondered how the board could best advocate for pedestrians and make sure this doesn't happen in future at construction sites. Mr. Hurley said he would speak with Mr. Whited (Service and Engineering Director) and Mr. Brown (Planning and Building Director). He asked board members who see these types of issues to please let staff know so we can share and track their concerns. Reasonable accommodations or detours should be made for pedestrians and cyclists, as they are for vehicular traffic. Mr. Whalen also reminded board members that November is typically the month when priority planning occurs for the following year and asked everyone to start thinking about 2022 priorities. Additionally, Mr. Whalen wanted to make the board aware that the UMCH property has come up for review again by the Planning Commission. Mr. Hurley advised that the plan is still conceptual and that there would be a lot of opportunity for input before it would be finalized. Mr. Bates shared where the information could be found so that members could review the proposals. There was some discussion around density concerns, walkability scores, and metrics that could be applied to help the board form a recommendation about the proposal. Mr. Schweller asked if there was any more information on the Worthington Mile concept. Mr. Hurley said it's still out in the community and should eventually come before City Council with additional information.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.