



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

### **Minutes of the Monday, January 24, 2022, Meeting**

**Note – This meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.**

**Members Present:** The members present were Michael Bates, Danielle DavisRoe, Brian Iarocci, Brian Meilton, and Jordan Schweller.

Also in attendance was Coleman Mahler from Worthington Library, Debbie Cameron (a guest) and City staff members Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director) and Celia Thornton.

Minutes from the November 22, 2021, meeting were approved by all present.

**2022 Project and Sidewalk Gap Prioritization:** Mr. Bates referenced the documents attached to the meeting agenda from Toole, that gave their suggested project prioritization list, as well as the Excel spreadsheet prepared by Mr. Whalen. Mr. Bates suggested moving forward with the list this group had decided upon at the last meeting, unless the board wanted to make changes based on the information provided by Toole. Mr. Hurley thought it might be helpful to review the Toole document and asked Ms. Thornton to put the document up on the screen and give a brief overview, after which the board can decide if they would like to revisit any of the previous rankings or make changes. Ms. Thornton shared that Toole had used some data driven methodology, along with what Ms. Otulana had heard at previous meetings, to suggest some priorities for 2022. Ms. Thornton referred the board to page four of the Toole document so that the members could see Toole's criteria (cost, safety, 2019 master plan prioritization, connectivity), and to Toole's list of ranked projects on page five. She noted that there was a high proportion of bicycle boulevards listed, possibly due to cost and the fact that the board had made clear it would like to try some of these. Ms. Thornton then noted that the board's top three projects also showed up on Toole's list. The 161/315 highway corridor through access is the third project under "Crossing Projects" on Toole's list. The 5-point intersection at Foster and Park could be combined with the third ranked Toole general project list so that an intersection improvement along with a bicycle boulevard along Park Boulevard could both be completed. Finally, a multi-use path along Linworth Road from Snouffer to S.R. 161 is number 19 on Toole's list. Ms. Thornton then asked if there were any questions about the Toole list of projects. Mr. Hurley brought up the board's Excel list of prioritized

projects and criteria and asked if the board wanted to make any changes. Mr. Bates felt that the board list should go forward as presented. Mr. Bates did have some questions about the weighting of the Toole list. He also asked for Toole to come in and do some educational sessions on things like green boxes or how to analyze intersections so that we're all talking the same language. Mr. Hurley said that if this is the year we choose to start implementing bicycle boulevards, there is a need for public outreach and community education on them. The board needs to decide how to approach a neighborhood or street to try this. Mr. Bates asked how the education and information was shared with the neighborhood when the city extended the Olentangy Trail spur up the 161-access road and through the neighborhoods to High Street. Mr. Hurley responded that luckily the Worthington Partnership had done most of the heavy lifting and had given out fliers and gone door to door to discuss the changes with neighbors. He said his preference would be that the board doesn't do anything without community involvement. He doesn't want residents getting caught off guard and pushing back to City Council without an opportunity to educate them, especially when that can be avoided. The question the board should be asking is if there is a solution-oriented way to get community buy in for a trial bike boulevard? Ms. Thornton pointed out that the bike boulevard along Park Boulevard might already have some community support because neighbors have come to the board in the past asking for help finding safe ways to get their children to school on that street. She suggested the Colonial Hills PTA and Civic Association might be good partner options. Mr. Bates asked if the City's communication team could put together some educational information on bike boulevards that could go out to residents as a first step. Mr. Hurley said he needs to consider what that would look like, and that the communication team would need some direction. He asked if Mr. Bates was thinking of something very general as a first step before engaging with the residents of a specific street. Mr. Bates said yes, and that it could be an overview of the board's work, could show some pictures from the Master Plan (of kids in strollers on the road, bikes in uncomfortable areas) and provide information on bike boulevards. Mr. Hurley said staff would look at that and see what could be done. Mr. Bates asked if board members had other specific education ideas to recommend. No one responded so he said with all the new members it might be useful to cover old ground again. Ms. Thornton reminded the board that they had previously discussed having Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart come to overview the results of the multi-jurisdictional S.R. 161 study for the newer members and as a refresher for the rest of us. She also reminded the board that part of Toole's contract is to provide some education sessions. Mr. Iarocci said all the education ideas given would be useful to him as a newer member. He also said he thought when Columbus began putting bike boulevards on streets that neighborhoods were vying for them and that it seemed very popular and supported, and hopefully the same would happen in Worthington. Mr. Hurley thinks that is the goal, to find a win-win so that they are seen as successful. Mr. Bates hopes that due to the pandemic people are more aware of how valuable access to outside fitness is and since we have a member of the library staff on, that maybe they can help us spread the word and gather community feedback. Mr. Hurley asked if there were any further comments on the prioritization list. He then said that sidewalk gaps would be a side project that would also move forward this year and asked if there were any other thoughts on that list, as well. Since Ms. Green wasn't present, Ms. Thornton reminded the group of her comments at the last meeting that perhaps we should wait and see what happens with the construction on Hartford, since that area is currently in flux, and not immediately pursue gaps 9 and 10. Mr. Hurley shared that he and Ms. Thornton had met with Service & Engineering on the gaps for their thoughts and then it would be up to him to follow up with residents. He sees this aligning with the summer sidewalk program and will try and keep it on that timeline. Mr. Schweller requested that the board take a second to discuss the shared use path along Linworth Road. He would like to see Toole, or some other qualified entity, take a hard look at what might be an alternative solution for this area and not just assume that the only answer is a shared use path along Linworth Road. He thinks everyone is looking at the lack of a path along Linworth Road, but that no one has spent enough time looking for a creative solution, such as using the railroad bed or

finding a way through neighborhoods and would like Toole to take a second look. He wonders how long they spent researching these projects. Mr. Hurley said that in his opinion Toole was probably focused on implementation and moving things forward, since that was the direction they'd received from staff. He's hearing that Mr. Schweller might like to better define the problem and possible solutions. Mr. Schweller said he doesn't think Toole took a solution-oriented view of the problem, they just assessed what they were told was the problem. For example, where do sewer lines run and are there path options with right of way? What are possibilities along the railroad track? Ms. Thornton promised to share his concerns with Toole. Mr. Hurley said it is hard because in some ways we've directed them not to get too far outside of the Master Plan because we want to keep its credibility, but in this case we want to think more expansively around the fact that we want a connection along this corridor. Mr. Schweller is open to having a separate meeting on this area with Toole. Ms. Thornton said she shared the board's 2022 priority list with MORPC's Active Transportation group and that there were comments of support around the Linworth connection, not from residents but those who want or need that connection in their commute to Dublin.

**2022 Education and Encouragement Ideas:** Mr. Bates said that the group has done the Stroll & Roll event twice now and that it has been good both times, not great, but good, and since it's now an annual event he thinks we should plan on doing it again. He also thinks there will be continued work on Safe Routes to School initiatives and asked if there was anything else the board thinks they should pursue. Ms. Thornton said that this was a good time to hear from Mr. Mahler regarding a bike and pedestrian themed book display to coincide with one of our outreach events. Mr. Mahler said each quarter the library rearranges their book display to reflect different subjects or themes and he thought that one of those could be focused on biking and walking, and exercise, bike repair and anything else that would be deemed appropriate. The display could be sponsored by the Worthington Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Board. In addition, information about the Stroll & Roll event and the board could go out in the library newsletter or other flyers. He also offered to see what other ways that library could partner or help the board in the form of programming space, information sharing, or volunteers. Mr. Bates said it probably isn't too early to start planning for fall. Mr. Mahler said that the fall display could start in August. Mr. Bates asked if the library had Columbus Bike maps to distribute. Ms. Thornton said that the ones we have are from 2014 and out of date, but that she would check with MORPC to see if new ones were being printed or if there was a way to download new digital ones. Mr. Bates said that perhaps the city or board should consider an app. Mr. Hurley said that is something that the city should start thinking about. Mr. Schweller suggested a citywide step challenge and wondered if the department had done similar things in the past. Ms. Thornton said we had and gave a few examples. Mr. Schweller said there would obviously be some challenges in how to collect data and that perhaps a tax rebate could be the prize. Ms. Thornton said the department usually gives away memberships or t-shirts, but that we could certainly think bigger. Mr. Hurley said that one opportunity we'll have once McCord Park is finished is a half mile trail with some shelters which may offer some possibilities. The program team is also being pushed to capitalize on outdoor spaces since people are using parks more than ever since Covid, and there may be a tie-in there for a bike and pedestrian initiative. Ms. Thornton said that the MetroParks had done some neat programming around getting people to visit each of their parks and wondered if we could adapt that to a citywide biking or walking challenge. She likes the idea of a program that is engaging, can be done on residents own time and doesn't rely as heavily on volunteers and agrees we should consider those types of ideas. Ms. Thornton reminded the board that if we're doing Stroll & Roll, all members are on the hook to volunteer.

## Updates:

1. **Selection of 2022 Chairs** – Moved to February. Mr. Bates said he would be asking for nominations at the next meeting and that his and Mr. Whalen's feelings would not be hurt if someone else wanted to step up and be chair or co-chair for a year or two.
2. **Pingree and 161 Crossing** – The City is still waiting on some solar panel parts to finish up the infrastructure part of the project. The board is aware that the city has been compiling feedback from the public on how the crossing is working and has passed that feedback along to DLZ. It seems to be working well for residents wishing to cross but has received some negative feedback from drivers. DLZ has recommended some very specific breakaway signage that doesn't block crossing pedestrians along with curb painting and possibly road hatching prior to the refuge island to increase its visibility for drivers. Mr. Hurley will email out pictures of the recommendations to the board. There haven't been as many complaints lately, but Mr. Hurley reminded the board that if drivers are hitting the pedestrian refuge hard enough to pop tires, they probably aren't driving within safe or legal limits. He also reminded the board that this was a 2019 project and expects that there will be approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 left over that the board can use towards future projects.
3. **Linworth Road Crossings** – The City is working on an inter-governmental agreement that allows Columbus to design and construct the intersection, and then Worthington will pay for their portion of the project. Mr. Hurley and Ms. Thornton had a meeting with the City Service and Engineering Department about moving forward on the Beechview crossing. As some of you may be aware, the City Engineer took a new job elsewhere so the City doesn't currently have one but has signed a contract with a consulting firm who we will utilize to design the Beechview crossing. The challenge at Beechview is that the sidewalk on the park side doesn't align perfectly with a north or south crossing and there is a ditch and drain where the crossing should go, so there are some challenges, but Mr. Hurley thinks we're in good shape to still get this done during the upcoming construction season.
4. **Possible Partnerships** – Ms. Thornton and Mr. Hurley had received an email from Coleman Mahler, who previously represented the library and participated during the 2019 Bike & Pedestrian Master Planning process. He attended the meeting and already shared his ideas. Mr. Hurley shared that the new leadership on the School Board is very Safe Routes to School (SRTS) conscious, so the facilities manager at the school has reached out to him and Ms. Thornton, both generally and around some specific ideas, especially at Perry Middle School. Mr. Hurley said this reflects well on the board and former Council Member Dorothy in elevating these issues within the community. Ms. Thornton said she wished Ms. Horton, Ms. Green and former board member Ms. Lindholm were present to hear this as they have all done a lot of SRTS volunteer work.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.