



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

### **Minutes of the Monday, February 27, 2023, Meeting**

**Members Present:** The members present were Mike Bates, Danielle DavisRoe, Ann Horton, Brian Iarocci, and Whitney Sullinger.

City staff members Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director), John Moorehead (Service & Engineering Director) and Celia Thornton (Parks & Recreation Project Supervisor) were present. Also present were residents David Insley and Emily Brown.

Minutes from the January 23, 2023, meeting were approved by all present.

**Visitor Comments:** Mr. Insley wanted to share some bike safety concerns with the board. His first comment was that FedEx and Amazon trucks often park on the wrong side of the street and are very boxy and big. They create a potential sight hazard to bikers and pedestrians who need to walk or ride in the road. His second concern was he thinks the City should consider closing the section of Olentangy Trail that goes under S.R. 161 and emerges on the ramp of S.R. 315. He feels the steepness of the incline and ending up on the highway ramp to cross is too dangerous. Mr. Hurley shared the crossing of the north ramp of S.R. 315 by bikes and pedestrians is on the board's project list for improvement. Mr. Insley's last suggestion was the pedestrian crossing button for High Street at the Dairy Queen is very difficult, if not impossible, for bikers to reach and push. The one for North Street is well placed, but this is not the case for the High Street crossing. Mr. Moorehead explained why the buttons are placed where they are (for pedestrians and according to ADA regulations) and shared with Mr. Insley how cyclists can trigger the light to change by properly placing their bikes on the detector embedded in the road. Ms. Horton shared with Mr. Moorehead that on the northeast corner of that intersection there is always a puddle at the bottom of the ADA ramp, and she is concerned about wheelchairs having to wade through the puddle. Mr. Moorehead said that is a common problem due to ADA design requirements, and that often water and debris collect. The City tries to keep the areas free of debris, but that there is not much they can do about the water. Ms. Horton doesn't believe it was the intention of the ADA to create puddles at wheelchair ramps. Mr. Moorehead agreed, but said that in a built out community like Worthington, where ADA ramps were added to already built intersections, it's very difficult to build them in such a way where that doesn't occur. It would require completely re-doing and re-grading the entire intersection which often isn't feasible. When this intersection is under

construction, due to the Dairy Queen improvements, engineering will try and remedy the situation as much as possible.

**Election of Officers:** Mr. Hurley shared that Ms. Green and Mr. Meilton were willing to volunteer as chairs again if the board wished to reappoint them, but they were also happy to have new people take their places if there was interest. Ms. Horton nominated Ms. Green for chair again. Mr. Iarocci seconded the nomination. Mr. Iarocci then nominated Mr. Meilton for the position of co-chair. Ms. DavisRoe seconded the motion. Both motions were approved by all in attendance.

**Crossing Concerns (North Street and Evening Street) from Emily Brown:** Ms. Brown came to the meeting to share a safety concern from the neighbors in her neighborhood. She has lived on W. North Street for ten years. In that time, many of the homes have turned over and there are many more young children on the street and many more pedestrians, particularly children, are crossing Evening Street to get to the elementary school. It is nerve wracking to see some of the behavior, of both walkers and drivers, and she wonders if anything can be done to make the area safer and avoid a potential accident. Mr. Hurley said Ms. Brown's concerns have already been shared with the city's safety team and some ideas were considered there. He also noted the board has discussed uncontrolled intersections in the past and that the City Engineer has taken a look at that area and can share his thoughts. Mr. Moorehead shared traffic camera videos of street crossings from the month of January. He said that there have been discussions around whether there should be a stop sign and what can be done to enhance safety. To help determine the best course of action, engineers use metrics that include traffic volumes on main and side roads, sight lines, crash data, number of people crossing, etc. According to the metrics, a stop sign is not warranted at this intersection. The winter data showed 10 to 22 pedestrians crossing during the peak hours of 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. That does not mean he hasn't looked for other ways to mitigate neighbor concerns. Mr. Moorehead will do another count in the spring when more people might walk due to nicer weather. He also shared that some studies show that putting in crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections increase pedestrian accidents because they don't change driver behavior but make pedestrians feel more comfortable crossing and so they use less caution. He also fears that putting something out there that isn't consistent with what is done throughout the rest of the city can create driver confusion. Sometimes more harm can be done when making a change that seems helpful and obvious, which is why this seems like an overly long and drawn-out process, but he promises that the city is discussing the problem thoughtfully and will continue to look at the crossing and monitor behavior. Another factor seen as a reason not to do something big is that there is a crossing guard and school staff to help children and families safely cross during peak school hours. Ms. Horton noted that this is not just a school issue because this intersection brings together two roads suggested as bike boulevards in the Master Plan. Mr. Moorehead said he realized that and thinks what might be most helpful is to fill in the sidewalk gaps in the neighborhood, which might change where people choose to cross. There was a little further discussion on the number of children present on the street, overgrown shrubs that obscure sightlines, and traffic patterns. Mr. Hurley said he didn't need a motion or recommendation from the board at this time and that Mr. Moorehead will bring back an update on the situation at a future meeting. Mr. Bates wondered if there was a way for the board to provide resources to the school to help educate children on how to cross safely and possibly get some Safe Routes to School (SRTS) money to help. Ms. Horton and Ms. Thornton said this is a topic that the SRTS sub-committee could work on, along with the parents on the street.

**Olentangy Trail/Chip Trail Concerns from Susie Kneedler:** Mr. Hurley overviewed for the board the thought process behind creating the chip trails (to provide some separation for dog walkers and runners from bikers, alleviating congestion, conflict, and potential accidents on the Olentangy Trail) along the Olentangy Trail in the Olentangy Parklands. He then shared Ms.

Kneedler's concerns around bikers now using the chip trails despite signs that prohibit such use. She has spoken to the Parks and Recreation Commission about this and intended to speak at tonight's meeting, but changed her mind due to the weather. Mr. Hurley feels that her concerns fit nicely with the board's Olentangy Trail etiquette project. He thinks we can also reach out to Metro Parks and see if they have any ideas on how to deal with enforcement issues. Mr. Insley pointed out that the Tucker Drive entrance required bikers to use the chipped trail, at least until they could connect to the paved trail. There was some discussion about the park rules, who can create them, and whether and how police could be engaged to enforce them (and the difference between rules and codified ordinances). Mr. Hurley said at this juncture his main objective was to make the board aware of the issue and that staff would research potential solutions and bring the issue back to the board at a future date, likely with the trail etiquette project.

**Project Scoping and Consulting Services Update:** Mr. Moorehead shared that we are due to get our final project scoping with cost estimates from Toole Design. Those will be shared with the board and then he will begin to utilize Burton Planning Services (BPS) to help him with future bike and pedestrian project scoping. They will start by reviewing how the 2022 and 2023 Street Improvement Projects (SIP) intersect with bike boulevard recommendations. He will then have them comb through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to identify what connects to the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan so they can start to scope and recommend changes/improvements. Mr. Moorehead is currently in the process of bidding the Beechview and Linworth crossing project and expects construction to take place in mid to late summer (depending on how long it takes the custom poles to be delivered).

**Group Picture – Annual Report:** The board decided not to take a picture since five of the members were missing. The previous year's picture will be submitted for the annual report.

#### **Updates:**

**SRTS Travel Plan for Perry Middle School** – Toole Design is working with the school district on SRTS improvements around Perry Middle School.

**Olentangy Trail Paving between S.R. 161 and Antrim by City of Columbus** – The City of Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks will be re-paving the Olentangy Trail this summer from S.R. 161 to Antrim Park. A portion of this belongs to the City of Worthington, but they will re-pave our portion as well.

**Olentangy Trail Closures during West Wilson Bridge Road Bridge Construction Project** – During the bridge construction project, West Wilson Bridge Road will be completely closed for an estimated 90 days this summer. A section of the Olentangy Trail running under the bridge will need to be closed at certain points during the construction. A detour will be established and posted and staff are hopeful the trail closures can be minimized as much as possible.

**Trail Etiquette Project Next Steps:** Staff, in coordination with Mr. Whalen and the Board Chairs, will attempt to put together a presentation for the March or April meeting outlining some ideas to move the trail etiquette project forward. Ms. DavisRoe suggested that the plan address all user behavior, which would include walkers as well as bikers.

**Other** – Ms. Horton thanked Ms. Thornton for adding nature programming that encouraged activity, such as backpacking and particularly the Senior Nature Walks. She then said it was time to reconvene the SRTS sub-committee and be intentional about the group's goals and objectives.

Ms. Thornton shared that she had recently spoken to a Wilson Hill Elementary parent who said there is still interest in that school for a SRTS program and that she could put the board in touch with some parents who might be advocates. Mr. Iarocci said he learned that Wilson Hill Elementary parents had started a bicycle bus (parents escort a group of student bikers to school, picking up children along the way) which had been going for two years now. Mr. Bates asked Mr. Moorehead when the rest of the NE Gateway amenities would be added to the finished project. He had thought there was to be a gazebo or shelter with a bike fix-it station. Mr. Moorehead promised to investigate it.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.