

February 18, 2009

Councilmember Charleta Tavares
90 W. Broad Street
Second Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Councilmember Tavares,

The Columbus Public Health Healthy Places program has a mission to increase healthy and active living by establishing development policies and practices to reduce negative health impacts and by creating places that foster physical activity as a part of everyday life. Neighborhood plans are a key component to ensuring the future built environment includes active living features through pedestrian and bicycle amenities, infrastructure and design.

This letter is to express Columbus Public Health's support for the Clintonville Neighborhood Plan. The Healthy Places program has reviewed the plan and found several positive and innovative development principles, guidelines and strategies that support a built environment for safe active living.

Active living is important to Columbus Public Health for a number of reasons. First, there is an increase in obesity and chronic diseases- both of which can be reduced or prevented with physical activity. Second, an active living lifestyle means people are driving their cars less. This improves air quality which is good for everyone, but especially for those with respiratory diseases. In addition, as we improve infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists we make the built environment safer and therefore reduce injuries and fatalities. Finally, while we want everyone to adopt an active living lifestyle by choice, for some there is not an option. Improvements to make it easier to walk, bike and use public transportation also make it easier and safer for those residents who do not have access to a car.

Clintonville neighborhood statistics show that 62.4 percent of adults are obese, which is higher than the Franklin County average. However, 56.6 percent exercise the recommended amount (30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week) which is also higher than the Franklin County average (2005 Franklin County Community Health Risk Assessment). The Clintonville Neighborhood Plan contributes to improving public health both in lowering obesity rates through increased physical activity and continuing to provide a built environment that fosters active living. Examples of this include:

- Mixed-use development to include retail, housing and office space that promote a close proximity of uses for people to walk or cycle.

240 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5331

Teresa C. Long, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner

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health@columbus.gov
www.publichealth.columbus.gov

- Density that supports public transit and a walkable environment.
- Development that promotes a sense of community through front porches, plazas and open space. This encourages neighbors to get out and walk to see each other. Also, when people are visible in their neighborhood, the neighborhood is safer.
- Multifamily development that includes universal design and accessibility features, which enables persons of all abilities to live in the community.
- Park and recreational facilities within a half mile of all residents.
- Sidewalk, walking and multi-use paths that connect the ravines, the bike trail and neighborhood destination places.
- People will be able to get around by walking, car, transit and bicycle. The plan identifies locations for infrastructure and signage to make active living safer.
- Development and public improvements should be walkable and bikeable and encourage personal interaction. Specific features include bike racks, texturized/painted sidewalks, building entrances that face the public street, outdoor dining spaces and connections to adjacent development.
- Context sensitive road improvements that contribute to a pedestrian friendly, walkable and bikeable environment to include very visible crosswalks, planted medians and handicap accessibility features.

Moreover, it is important to note that the Clintonville Neighborhood Plan had a large public input component. The fact that residents of the Clintonville neighborhood asked for these active living principles shows our community is ready and waiting for improved infrastructure and development that supports pedestrian and cyclists activity.

I look forward to seeing this plan come to fruition and making Columbus even more of an active, vibrant city.

Sincerely,

Christine G. Green
Healthy Places Coordinator

cc: Dr. Teresa Long, Health Commissioner, Columbus Public Health
Vince Papsidero, Administrator, Planning Division, Department of Development