

August 11, 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 Livingston Far East 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. In the Livingston East neighborhood, 66.2 percent of adults are overweight or obese and 14.1 percent have diabetes. Second, an active living lifestyle means people are driving cars less. This improves air quality which is good for everyone, but especially for those with respiratory diseases which includes the 7.7 percent of adults diagnosed with asthma in this neighborhood.

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.

Specific plan recommendations are as follows:

- Mixed-use development on primary corridors that contribute to a walkable and bikeable urban environment.
- Urban Commercial Overlay and/or the Community Commercial Overlay on segments of Livingston Avenue and Brice Road permanently ensure a pedestrian and cycling environment.

240 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5331

Teresa C. Long, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner

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- Neighborhood scale retail on Livingston Avenue provides close, walkable options to the adjacent housing.
- Natural resources and open space are preserved, protected and sites recommended for new open space providing comfortable places for walking and physical activity.
- The Transportation Development Principle 3.4 elevates mobility by walking, bicycling and public transportation to the same level as a motorized vehicle.
- The Bicentennial Bikeways Plan is recommended for implementation as well as recommendations for additional bikeway facilities.
- Neighborhoods should be interconnected via streets and sidewalk systems to existing and future residential, commercial, civic and cultural areas.
- Roadway improvements should contribute to the pedestrian and public transit-friendly, walkable environment. This includes utilizing the Complete Streets policy, planting street trees, incorporating benches and including traffic calming techniques.
- Commercial and mixed-use development should be designed to contribute to a walkable/bikeable environment. Examples include entrance doors facing the street, outdoor dining and transparent windows.
- Residential houses include front porches and neighborhoods should respect the pedestrian orientation.

Currently in Livingston East neighborhood, only 40.1 percent of adults are achieving the recommended amount of physical activity. The above recommendations and the Livingston East Neighborhood Plan as a whole will help to increase this number by providing an improved environment for walking and biking.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 645-5318 or via email at CGGreen@columbus.gov.

Sincerely,



Christine G. Green
Healthy Places Coordinator

cc: Councilmember Andrew Ginther, Columbus City Council, Development Committee Chair
Dr. Teresa Long, Health Commissioner, Columbus Public Health
Vince Papsidero, Planning Administrator, Planning Division, Department of
Development