

September 12, 2011

Councilmember Zachary M. Klein
90 W. Broad Street
Second Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Councilmember Klein,

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. Area 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 Broad-Blacklick Area Plan. This plan is tentatively scheduled for a second reading on September 19, 2011. 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.

Broad-Blacklick neighborhood statistics show 59% of neighborhood adults are obese or overweight and 3.4% have diabetes. The obesity prevalence is comparable to Franklin County which is 59%, though diabetes is lower than Franklin County (7.3%). The asthma prevalence for the neighborhood is 13.6% for adults, which is higher than Franklin County (8.0%). Additionally, 41.6% of Broad-Blacklick residents meet the recommended amount of exercise (30 minutes a day on five or more days of the week). The Broad-Blacklick Area Plan contributes to improving public health by preserving and enhancing a built environment that fosters physical activity. The ability to be physically active in your neighborhood reduces the need for a car and increases physical activity. Examples of this include:

240 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5331

Teresa C. Long, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner

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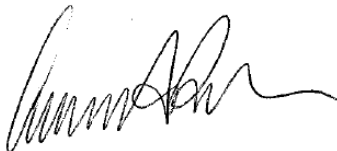
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- As much tree cover as possible should be preserved within any new development or redevelopment. Tree cover creates a friendly environment for walking and cycling by shielding pedestrians from the sun and weather.
- Mixed use development incorporating office and retail uses which encourages walking during the work day.
- Maintain the scenic quality of Noe Bixby Road. Scenic areas encourage walking.
- A neighborhood park, community park, or recreation facility (public or private) should be located within one - half mile of all residents, with a specific recommendation to construct a new park to the east of the Blacklick Subarea. One-half mile is a very walkable or bikeable distance.
- The plan has recommendations for to adopt Regional Commercial Overlay and the Community Commercial Overlay for specific streets. These overlays ensure provisions for pedestrians and cyclists as the area develops.
- Regarding industrial development, where feasible, safe bike and pedestrian access should be provided to encourage employees to use these modes of transportation.
- Principal 4 states “People will be able to get around by walking, car, transit or bicycle.” The Principal places an emphasis on guidelines to make walking and biking safer and more convenient for pedestrians and cyclists and well as the cars they share the road with.

Moreover, it is important to note that the Broad-Blacklick neighborhood had a large public input component. The fact that residents of the Broad-Blacklick 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Betsy A. Pandora', with a stylized, cursive script.

Betsy A. Pandora, MCRP
Healthy Places Coordinator

cc: Dr. Teresa Long, Health Commissioner, Columbus Public Health
Vince Papsidero, Administrator, Planning Division, Department of Development
Hearcel F. Craig, Health, Housing & Human Services Chair, Columbus City Council