

November 9, 2012

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 that 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 East Franklinton Creative Community District Plan. This plan is tentatively scheduled for a second reading on November 12, 2012. 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 and 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 lifestyle means people are driving their cars less. This improves air quality which is good for everyone, but especially for those with respiratory diseases. Additionally, as we improve infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, we make the built environment safer, therefore reducing injuries and fatalities. Finally, while we want everyone to adopt an active living lifestyle by choice, for some there is no other 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, thereby improving health equity in our community.

The Franklinton neighborhood statistics show 58.3% of neighborhood adults are obese or overweight and 6.8% have diabetes. The prevalence is slightly lower than totals for Franklin County which are 59.1% and 7.3%, respectively. The asthma prevalence for the neighborhood is 11.2% for adults and is slightly higher than Franklin County (8.0%). And the leading causes of death in the Franklinton Area are Heart Disease and Cancer.

The East Franklinton Creative Community District Plan contributes to improving public health by preserving and enhancing a built environment that fosters physical activity and encouraging a pattern of economic developed that is centered on the principal of walkability. The ability to be physically active in your neighborhood reduces the need for a car and increases physical activity.

Examples include:

- Proposes a future land use that is anchored by mixed use developed. Mixed use development encourages walking and biking to daily destinations.
- Recommends a series of "early actions" that result in immediate improvements to the safety, aesthetics, and connectivity of streets throughout East Franklinton. Safe, connected streets are

fundamental to encouraging physical activity in daily life. Aesthetically pleasing places are perceived as being safer, encourage social interaction and are therefore more walkable.

- Recommends an urban design and character that promotes dense, compact development. Density and a compact mix of uses have been found to be factors that encourage walking and biking to daily destinations.
- Recommends these specific public realm improvements: improved lighting, public art installations, consolidated utility lines, screen parking, and improve connections under bridges. These improvements enhance safety and create a culture in which engagement with the built environment is encouraged.
- Recommends improvements to roadway, bike, and transit access to and from East Franklinton. These improvements are central to spurring redevelopment efforts and have a core focus on improving the social determinates of health.

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

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

Sincerely,



Betsy A. Pandora, MCRP  
Healthy Places Coordinator  
Columbus Public Health

cc: Dr. Teresa Long, Health Commissioner, Columbus Public Health  
Vince Papsidero, Administrator, Planning Division, Department of Development  
Priscilla R. Tyson, Health and Human Services Chair, Columbus City Council

