

**Advisory Working Group – Meeting 1  
October 4, 2012  
3 to 5 p.m.  
Peggy McConnell Arts Center**

***Meeting Summary***

**Meeting Purpose:**

To review the goals of developing a 10-ft shared-use path along SR 161 from Linworth to Sawmill Roads, and to seek feedback on proposed path options on the north and south sides of SR161.

**Date and Location**

Thursday, October 4, 2012  
Peggy McConnell Arts Center  
777 Evening St.  
Worthington, OH 43085

Meeting materials are also made available online at:  
<http://publicservice.columbus.gov/SR161SUP/>

**Meeting Notification and Format**

Thirty-three people were invited to participate in the Shared-Use Path Working Group. Members represent the cities of Columbus, Worthington and Dublin; Perry Township; Ohio Department of Transportation; residential and business property owners located on the north and south sides of SR 161; neighborhood groups living in or near the proposed shared-use path corridor; and the bicycling advocacy community. Invitations were sent to each member by email and follow up calls.

The meeting was also open to the public.

**Participants**

STAFF:

City of Columbus:

- Nick Popa, Project Manager
- Jamie Gordon

Consultant Team:

- John Panovsky, Korda Engineering

- Brooks Vogel, Korda Engineering
- Marie Keister, Engage Public Affairs, LLC
- Stu Nicholson, Engage
- Danny Louwers, Engage

**WORKING GROUP (23 of 33 Invitees):**

1. Perry Township Trustee Chet Chaney
2. Robert Myers, Perry Township
3. Dave Carlin, ODOT
4. Thom Slack, ODOT
5. Worthington City Manager Matt Greeson
6. Bill Watterson, Worthington City Engineer
7. Darren Hurley, Worthington Parks and Recreation
8. Worthington Councilman Scott Myers
9. Tim Ghering, Worthington Schools
10. Rosemarie Lisko, NW Civic Association
11. Dorothy Martin, Brookside Woods
12. Richard Hunter, Potters Creek
13. Kimberly Nixon-Bell, Rau Lane Civic Association
14. Jim Caldwell, Strathaven Condo Association
15. Kimberly Moss, Ohio State University
16. Stan Apseloff, residential property owner
17. Judy Doran, business property owner
18. Paul Doran, business property owner
19. Joe Segna, Segna Motors
20. BG Jack Lee, Ohio National Guard
21. Joe Furko, Brookside Country Club
22. Brian Moore, Columbus Bike Subcommittee
23. Jody Dzurainin, Consider Biking

**Meeting Handouts and Displays**

- Agenda
- WG roster
- 11 x 17 map

**Meeting Summary**

30 attendees: 23 Working Group members and 7 public

***Questions, answers and comments at the meeting.***

*(Unless indicated otherwise, Nick Popa and Jamie Gordon, Columbus Project Managers; John Panovsky and Brooks Vogel, Consultant Project Managers; and Marie Keister, facilitator and public involvement lead, responded to questions.)*

**Q/C:** When turning from SR161 onto a side street, what alerts cars to be aware of bikes on the path?

**A:** This is really no different from a normal intersection where cars need to be alert for pedestrians, who have the right of way.

**Q/C:** What about people driving on the bike paths?

**A:** We have considered using bollards. (Jody from Consider Biking then said that bollards are being removed because they're dangerous.)

**Q/C:** Have you considered using "No Motor Vehicle" signs? ) (Darren Hurley from City of Worthington Parks and Recreation noted there will always be someone who breaks the rules, no matter what you do.)

**A:** We haven't fully determined all the signage yet, but there will be signage.

**Q/C:** Will there be screening/landscape or fences between the bike path and residential? What is the level of separation?

**A:** Here's an example of how we handled landscaping for a similar path in Columbus.

**Q/C:** In a normal intersection, it is assumed that pedestrians need to be aware of cars. This current system doesn't seem to alert bikes to watch for turning cars.

**Q/C:** Maybe we should have a yield sign to tell cars to yield to users of the path.

**A:** Something will be put in place that will alleviate the concern here. There will be signage. This will be similar to what happens now when cars pull into driveways. Drivers must watch for pedestrians/bicyclists and pedestrians/bicyclists must watch out for drivers.

**Q/C:** Have the large number of traffic studies that have been done along 161 been taken into consideration?

**A:** Yes. We have reviewed prior studies.

**Q/C:** There should be a light at Federated anyways. It's a dangerous intersection.

**Q/C:** You wouldn't expect to touch the overhead poles as a part of this project?

**A:** Might not be able to avoid all of the utility poles, but we are trying our best because that significantly adds to cost.

**Q/C:** Why can't you fill in the ditch on either side?

**A:** We have considered it and it's still an option, but it would be more costly. Additionally, putting a path on the other side of the ditch provides more separation from SR 161, and riding through existing trees creates a more enjoyable ride.

**Q/C:** OSU has a fence for agricultural purposes at different places along 161. Would you avoid that fence?

**A:** We're trying to avoid fences and existing landscaping wherever possible. If we did impact the fence, we would replace it.

**Q/C:** Did you consider reducing the speed on 161?

**A:** No, it's not under our purview to reduce the speed limit.

**Q/C:** What would happen to the trees if the path is placed on the north?

**A:** We couldn't avoid all of the trees, and some would need to be removed. We would try to keep as many as possible and would re-landscape.

**Q/C:** Trees impact the slope between Brookdown and Linworth. Not having the roots there would cause erosion, wouldn't it?

**A:** We will re-vegetate the area. We don't feel it will affect stability.

**Q/C:** The path (if on the north side) goes through the front yard of homeowners. Some of these houses have no backyard. The front yards also have trees helping to block the road. Putting the path here would be devastating to these homeowners.

**A:** This is an understandable concern.

**Q/C:** Earlier you said you were going to stay within the existing right-of-way. Are you not?

**A:** We are going to as much as we can. There are places where it is too narrow to stay in existing right of way, so we will have to purchase property.

**Q/C:** If someone doesn't want to sell their property to you, will you force them?

**A:** There is a federally-required process we must follow when acquiring property to ensure property owners are treated fairly. We cover that in more detail in a few minutes.

**Q/C:** How would Meadowview and Brookside Woods residents get to the path if it is on the south side of SR 161?

**A:** We would put paths on both sides of SR 161 for short segments leading up to existing SR 161 crossing points (where there are currently drives intersecting with SR 161). We would not put paths on both sides of the road everywhere. Then you would use the existing street system north of 161 to get to path on south side.

**Q/C:** Why is this just an either/or project? Why not put the path on the north side of 161 from Sawmill to Federated, and then move it to the south side the rest of the way to Linworth?

**A:** We're looking at that, it is not necessarily an either/or. The downside is that it would be more costly and result in more crossings.

**Q/C:** How much right-of-way are you going to take?

**A:** We have not finalized all the details yet, but the maximum is expected to be 22 feet (12' from the road and a 10' path).

**Q/C:** I have mounds across the front of my house. Will you remove them?

**A:** Yes, it is likely we would have to move mounds that are in the right of way we need.

**Q/C:** What is compensation for landscaping and land taking?

**A:** The City hires independent appraisers to determine the property's value. The city will then negotiate with you on a fair price.

**Q/C:** What if we don't accept the offer?

**A:** There is a detailed process that you would follow. Ultimately, it could go to court.

**Q/C:** I want to understand the process of how the community can get involved so it is not shoved down their throats.

**A:** This meeting, other public meetings will be held, and you can put your concerns in writing which is recommended.

**Q/C:** It's not about money on the north side. You can't replace what we have (the land and landscape) with money.

**Q/C:** Is it a done deal that there will be shared-use path along SR 161, even as busy as it is? It has to be the worst street in the world. Could you consider putting it somewhere else?

**A:** The City of Columbus is committed to building this path along SR 161. People use SR 161 as an important east-west connector. It was a highly requested bike corridor during the Bicentennial Bikeways and Community Mobility planning process, and it could potentially provide better access to the Olentangy River Road trail.

**Q/C:** We own the BBQ restaurant property. Is the city going to take our building and livelihood?

**A:** No, the path would be tight, but would fit within the existing right of way. We are not taking any buildings as a part of this project.

**Q/C:** Could you go through the alley behind the BBQ restaurant on the north side?

**Q/C:** Would you be installing curb and gutters in Linworth?

**Q/C:** On the north side in Linworth, how much parking would be reduced?

**A:** The alley is not a practical option for the shared-use path. Parking will be maintained. While a few parking spaces will be impacted, there will be very minimal parking loss.

**A:** City of Columbus's Jamie Gordon on property acquisition: Come talk to me after meeting if you have concerns. We can set up a meeting with the City of Columbus real estate experts. Our interest is only to take property if absolutely necessary. Will follow the same process ODOT and State of Ohio follows.

**Q/C:** Let's talk about the armory. Due to anti-terrorism standards, you need to stay 10 feet from the fence. Also, McDowell is terrible. You will need something there (a light) to keep traffic and bikes moving.

**Q/C:** No matter what side the path is on, there needs to be stops or some kind of signage along the path to help cars from hitting bikes.

**Q/C:** Are the forms you handed out (the maps and statistics sheet) online?

**A:** They will be posted online within a couple of business days. We will send you an email with the link as soon as all of these exhibits and handouts are posted.

**Q/C:** Who is going to take care of the path once it's built? Is there liability for property owners if someone hurts themselves?

**A:** City of Columbus will be mostly in charge. Property owners along the road will not be held liable for injuries that occur along this path. We will look into more of these details.

**Q/C:** ODOT's Dave Carlin provided this update: ODOT is conducting a study now to figure out what to do at the intersection of Linworth and SR161. We will conclude this study before the path is built on the north or south side. People bike the street today, therefore there is a demand. It is a good connection.

**Q/C:** Perry Township (Chet Chaney): There needs to be a focus at the intersection of Linworth and SR 161 for safe connectivity. Bikers need to follow regulations; many break the rules and law enforcement has started handing out tickets recently. We do have a lot of safety concerns about the path.

**Q/C:** Worthington (Matt Greeson): We feel that the trail connectivity is important and like the project. We also agree with others that the Linworth intersection needs to be made safe before the path is installed. Need to think carefully about crossings. We are happy to work with the City of Columbus on how to connect the new path to the existing paths and neighborhoods and we would put some of that in our planning process.

***Written and emailed comments (1 received):***

1. Dear City and State Officials,

I'm writing to invite all of you to have a taste of what may soon be the shared-use bike path experience. Specifically I'd like to arrange a date/time when you can sit in lawn chairs in my driveway (2740 W Dublin-Granville Rd), with your backs to the traffic, ten or fifteen feet from Rt 161. This was actually an idea proposed by one of my neighbors, and I think it will afford you an opportunity to see firsthand how dangerous Rt 161 is for any non-motorist use. Every day when I go to the end of my driveway to get my mail, I wait until there's a break in the traffic before I approach my mailbox because the fast cars are so intimidating. Any notion that a shared-use bike path on Rt 161 will become a place where people will walk and ride in comfort to and fro is simply not reality, unless the path is on the south side and there are trees between the road and the pedestrians.

I know that my invitation to sit in lawn chairs might seem more than a bit odd, but I believe that it will significantly alter your view regarding what is practical. My schedule is quite flexible for the next two weeks, and I am happy to arrange multiple times when people can do this simple experiment. Also, I suspect that my neighbors will be willing to have you sit in their driveways as well--I'm copying a couple of them on this email.

I believe that making a decision about constructing a shared-use bike path without at a minimum having this experience is shortsighted. Please give my proposal appropriate consideration, and contact me accordingly. Thank you.

Stan Apseloff  
2740 W Dublin-Granville Rd