

**Advisory Working Group – Meeting 2
March 6, 2013
3 to 5 p.m.
Brookside Country Club**

Meeting Summary

Meeting Purpose:

The meeting purpose was to 1) to answer questions raised at the October 4, 2012 Work Group meeting, 2) share additional technical analysis and the outcome of coordination efforts with multiple municipalities and public agencies, 3) review the strengths and weaknesses of locating the shared-use path on the north or south side of SR 161 from Linworth to Sawmill Roads, and 4), outline steps moving forward.

Date and Location

Wednesday, March 6, 2013
Brookside Country Club
Clubhouse
West Dublin-Granville Road

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. The meeting was also open to the public.

Participants

City of Columbus:

- Nick Popa, Planning Project Manager
- Jamie Gordon, Design Project Manager
- Bill Lewis
- Daniel Moorhead

Consultant Team:

- John Panovsky, Korda Engineering

- Christine Placek, Korda Engineering
- Karin Irwin, Korda Engineering
- Marie Keister, Engage Public Affairs, LLC
- Stu Nicholson, Engage
- Ray Miller III, Engage

WORKING GROUP (20 of 33 Invitees):

1. Perry Township Trustee Chet Chaney
2. Robert Myers, Perry Township
3. Tammy Boring, ODOT
4. Amy Turner, ODOT
5. Worthington City Manager Matt Greeson
6. Rosemarie Lisko, NW Civic Association
7. John Ehlers, Northwest Civic Association
8. Dorothy Martin, Brookside Woods
9. Kimberly Nixon-Bell, Rau Lane Civic Association
10. Kim Moss, Ohio State University
11. Stan Apseloff, residential property owner
12. Paul Doran, business property owner
13. Joe Segna, Segna Motors
14. BG Jack Lee, Ohio National Guard
15. Joe Furko, Brookside Country Club
16. Aaron Schill, Columbus Bike Subcommittee
17. Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, Consider Biking

PUBLIC

1. Mike Middaugh
2. Fran Middaugh
3. Bruce Walcott, Linworth Lumber
4. John Gray
5. Anna Pyle
6. Ron Stokes
7. Carl Wittenauer
8. Suzanne Goodburn
9. Roger Wagner
10. Eugene Gillman
11. Daniel Forchard
12. Bill Alsnauer
13. Rev. Jim Wilson
14. Vince Tran
15. Carol Damschroder
16. Greg Caplinger

Meeting Handouts

- Agenda
- Evaluation matrix

Meeting Summary

Facilitator Marie Keister opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda, discussion ground rules, decision-making roles and process. Self-introductions were made around the room.

City of Columbus Project Manager Nick Popa reviewed the City of Columbus goals for improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Columbus. (See PowerPoint presentation.) He explained the focus of this effort is to plan, design and construct a shared-use path beside State Route (SR) 161 between Linworth to Sawmill Road (2.2 miles). He explained that the idea for the path was the result of extensive community input gained during the Bicentennial Bikeways Plan and Northwest Mobility Plan community engagement efforts. He noted this Work Group meeting was part of the City's continued commitment to gather public input.

Marie and consultant project team member John Panovsky, Korda Engineering, reviewed questions from previous meetings.

Q. What exactly is the City of Columbus' overall bike plan: what is the purpose and what does it plan to connect? *This question was asked again toward the end of the meeting and attendees were told the Bicentennial Bikeways Plan is available on the city's website: <http://publicservice.columbus.gov/SR161SUP/>*

A. Nick Popa (Columbus): The idea is to connect the three north/south "river trails" with east-west bicycle and pedestrian connectors. This will create a grid of bike and pedestrian facilities that allows all kind of path users a way to access the system. The SR 161 shared-use path connects a similar path in Dublin with a shared-use path in Worthington as well as the Olentangy River Trail.

Q. What about past ODOT plans for widening SR-161 and potential conflicts between path users and vehicles using driveways and parking lots?

A. John Panovsky (Korda): ODOT does not have any further plans for widening SR-161 and the shared-use path plan is to work within the existing right of way. He explained that American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) updated its guidance for bike/roadway intersection safety last year. It provides guidance on path signage and safety. Path users will have the right of way and motorists will be required to stop on side streets and/or driveways. The City is considering erecting signage that exceed the AASHTO guidelines to be responsive to stakeholder concerns about safety in some high traffic locations.

An attendee suggested turn lanes are needed. Later, maps were shown of locations where turn lanes and signalization would be needed if the final design calls for it.

An attendee suggested pavement markings for driveways and parking lots, so bicyclists know the environment is changing.

An attendee suggested lowering the speed limit on SR 161, or at least enforcing the existing limit.

Marie stated that all suggestions would be passed along to the City and ODOT.

Q. Will there be accommodations for drainage ditches?

A. John Panovsky: Yes, there will be some accommodations, but the intent is to minimize impacts to existing drainage ditches and utilities.

Q. Can the path be located on both sides of SR 161?

A. John Panovsky: Project funding (approximately \$3 million) allows for location of path on only one side of SR-161.

Q. What about the impact on landscaping? Will landowners be compensated?

A. John Panovsky: Existing trees and landscaping will be preserved to the extent possible. Landowners who have landscaping that is impacted by construction will be compensated through the right of way acquisition process.

Q. Why aren't photos of other projects used in the presentation comparable to what is planned for SR-161? (Referring to photos of paths on West Henderson Road, Dublin Road and along Sunbury Road).

A. The project team acknowledged that photos were not immediately available of all shared-use paths around the City of Columbus that also have numerous driveways, and more of those types of photos would be helpful when discussing environments similar to SR 161. It was noted that the photo of the path at Dublin Road and Fifth Avenue crosses many driveways, and the Alum Creek path shown in the presentation shows a path located parallel to a busy two-lane road (Sunbury Rd) that also has many driveways.

Q. Will the path would be built at existing elevations or will there be a need for fill to be brought in to build up the grade where the path intersects with the country club's drive? (He said there is a three-foot drop from the roadway to the adjacent land.)

A. John Panovsky: It's a design detail, but the goal is to try to keep the path on the existing elevation along as much of the right of way as possible. Our goal is to avoid bringing a lot of new fill if possible.

Q. How can this be safe for bicyclists to use a path along such a busy two-lane roadway?

A. Aaron Schill (Columbus Bicycle Subcommittee): The typical cyclist will slow down at driveways and streets to look for oncoming or turning traffic.

Q. Is there separate ODOT funding for some of the intersections and safety needs that might be added to the project funding?

A. John Panovsky indicated he didn't know for sure, but that would be a more appropriate question for ODOT.

Q. How will signals be activated at intersections?

A. John Panovsky: Signals will be actuated by motor vehicles or pedestrians/bicyclists as they approach the intersections.

Comment: Attendee (a property owner) was critical of the plan, saying that it's just for bicyclists, and that it interrupts businesses.

A. Aaron Schill commented that this "isn't just about people in spandex suits out on weekend rides" and that it's about people who are bicycling to work, jogging or walking. People are frequently observed walking along the berm of SR-161 wearing the uniforms of their employers, indicating they are walking to work. Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, board member with Consider Biking, stated she was one of the early architects of the city's bike plan when she served on Columbus' City Council. The plan's vision included serving those who bicycle to jobs and other locations because they either don't own a car or choose not to drive. She also noted that paths also encourage people to walk to local destinations and create a more walkable, community-oriented environment.

Comment: An attendee said he isn't convinced anyone will use it other than recreational bicyclists.

Comment: An attendee said he found MORPC guidelines that are in conflict with the city's plan. He advocated putting bike lanes on the roadways rather than building a separate pathway.

Overview of Findings (Subject to Environmental Review)

John Panovsky discussed the matrix of how each path route was evaluated. He concluded that the engineering analysis reflected in the matrix indicates that the "north side only" path is the strongest option based on the project's objectives.

Q. Why does it seem like the weighting of path choices point to favoring the north side path on the matrix? (*Suggested the evaluation matrix was designed to make the north path appear better, and that it was a flawed approach.*)

A. Marie Keister invited the attendee to provide input on evaluation criteria and to create his own matrix, but stated there are no absolute right or wrong answers in the matrix. The attendee responded that if this can't be done safely as a side path, it would be reasonable to look at another alternative.

Comment: Attendee stated he thinks the path plan is the "worst possible use" for the corridor.

Q. What about compensation for land owned by OSU and Don Scott Field? Is it proper to compensate a state entity for land that is technically already publicly owned?

A. OSU representative Kim Moss said that they have not prepared a response to that, since they have not been approached yet with a specific plan to use a south side right of way for the path.

Comment: By using population data just to the north and south of SR 161 between Linworth and Sawmill, you are missing those of us off of Linworth Road and other areas who would also use the path.

Q. Will public comment continue to be taken as part of the environmental process?

A. Marie Keister: *Yes. Ms. Keister provided her business card so attendees could email her comments or questions, and also encouraged attendees to call or email the City of Columbus 311 comment system.*

Comment: Please send us the meeting summary and direct us to online sources where we can research details on the environmental document process you'll be using for the shared-use path.

Written and emailed comments (2 received as of March 8, 2013)

- A stakeholder email was received on March 8 that provided a revised evaluation matrix. The project team is reviewing this input.
- A letter was sent to 311 on March 9, 2013 that objected to a shared-use path on the north side of SR 161.