



## TECHNICAL ADVISORY & STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

### Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Fairfield County Agricultural Center

831 College Avenue

Lancaster, OH 43130

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### **Attendees:**

Holly Mattei – Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission  
James Mako – Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission  
Frank Anderson – Fairfield County Engineer  
David Burgei – Fairfield County GIS  
Johnathan Ferbrache – Fairfield County Soil & Water  
Greg Butcher – Violet Township  
Peggy Portier – Pickerington Safe Routes to School  
Brett Navin – Fairfield Heritage Trail Association  
Robert Kalish – Mayor of Baltimore  
Harry Myers Jr. - Violet Township  
Terry Dunlap - Violet Township  
Ira Weiss – Fairfield Heritage Trail Association  
Eric Oberg – Rails-to-Trails Conservancy  
Mike Ebert – Canal Winchester  
Bernice Cage – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission  
Amelia Costanzo – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission  
Dilip Karpoor – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission  
Amanda McEldowney – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission  
Chris Gawronski – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

**Welcome** – Holly Mattei opened the meeting by welcoming the Technical and Stakeholder Advisory groups. She introduced the members of the Fairfield County Regional Planning team and gave a brief background on the plan.

**Introduction** – Bernice Cage introduced herself and asked the members of the MORPC team to introduce themselves and the element of the plan in which they are responsible. She discussed the agenda, the project purpose, background and schedule. She discussed what has occurred thus far on the plan; defining the bikeway, pedestrian, open space and greenway elements, the review of existing plans to identify and develop themes, development of goals and objectives, and township field reviews.

**Needs Analysis** – Chris Gawronski introduced how the county’s active transportation and open space needs were analyzed. Analysis information was based on data, needs identified in previous plans, and needs identified by stakeholders during the planning process.

**Pedestrian** – Dilip Karpoor presented a brief overview of pedestrian transportation issues. While there are pedestrian destinations in most of the developed parts of the county, only a small, disconnected pedestrian infrastructure exists in a few subdivisions in northern Violet Township. The primary tool currently available to regulate the development of pedestrian infrastructure in the county is the countywide subdivision regulations. However, these regulations only address the construction of sidewalks within subdivisions, and do not address the creation of pedestrian connections to destinations outside subdivisions. Violet Township had the only planning document in the county that explicitly identified pedestrian needs. Input from the Stakeholder Advisory Group and the Technical Advisory Group identified a need to revisit the subdivision regulations and provide for pedestrian infrastructure.

**Bicycle**– Ms. Cage discussed how the bicycle and pedestrian crashes in Fairfield County, results of ODOT’s Amish Buggy Safety Report, the number of children ages 5 to 14 and seniors age 65 and up, High Crash Locations 1997-1999 identified in the Fairfield County Development Strategy and Land Use Plan, recreation usage described by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources from a 2001 survey, and the field review of abandoned rails and canals during township tours play a role in identifying the need, location and type of bikeways for Fairfield County. The number of existing bikeways in Fairfield County was discussed; six miles of shared use paths, 7 miles of bike lanes, and 8 miles of shared routes.

**Open Space** – Amelia Costanzo discussed the open space standards used in the needs analysis. The standards were derived from a combination of national standards and the Fairfield County Development Strategy and Land Use Plan, and address park service area and acres-per-person. Service area needs were assessed by analyzing the distance residents have to walk and drive from their homes to a park. Maps were used to show where high concentrations of people reside who do not live within walking distance of a park.

**Greenways Analysis** – Amanda McEldowney discussed the four waterways that the plan would be studying: Walnut Creek, Hocking River, Clear Creek, and Rush Creek. She discussed the topography and the water quality attainment for these waterways. She discussed the needs that were identified through other plans and needs that were identified from the stakeholders group. She ended the discussion by talking about existing conditions.

**Alternatives Analysis** – Mr. Gawronski explained that conceptual alternatives have been developed to work toward the goals of improving active transportation and open space in Fairfield County. The alternatives fall into two categories: countywide alternatives that apply equally to all areas of the county, and corridor alternatives that are specific to certain geographic areas of Fairfield County. Pedestrian and greenways alternatives mostly fall into the countywide category, while bikeways and open space alternatives will be described by corridor.

Countywide Alternatives, Pedestrian – Mr. Karpoor presented conceptual alternatives that included modifications to the subdivision regulations that control pedestrian infrastructure within subdivisions, the development of tools to help connect subdivisions to destinations outside of them, including creation of a pedestrian thoroughfare plan, and the development of context appropriate facilities that integrate pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation. Amendments could be made to the subdivision regulations to include the development of safe facilities for non-motorized individuals. Subdivisions could be connected from within to adjacent destinations without utilizing major arterial roadways.

Countywide Alternatives, Greenways – Ms. McEldowney presented different methods of land acquisition. She also discussed stream setbacks for Fairfield County. She gave examples of the Meander Belt Width Calculation and Fixed Width.

Corridor Alternatives, Open Space – Ms. Costanzo began the discussion by mentioning the factors she considered when conducting the alternatives analysis. She followed by suggesting ways in which new park acreage could be created: expanding existing parks, providing many small parks, providing a few large parks, and using any combination of those. Ms. Costanzo then showed two maps – one based on existing land use and one based on future land use – with potential general locations for new park acreage marked on each. One participant asked if greenways had been considered as a linear park serving a population across a wider geographical area than most non-linear parks. Ms. Costanzo said that greenways had been considered that way in the needs analysis and would be considered similarly when making recommendations.

Corridor Alternatives, Bicycle – Ms. Cage started her discussion stating that bicycles are legally allowed on all roads except freeways and limited access highways. She presented corridor maps with conceptual alternatives for the bikeway element of the plan. Each of the ten corridors had a corresponding map and matrix of attributes. One participant noted that many of the state routes are limited access in sections. This information will be researched and included. Due to time and amount of information, it was suggested that this element be discussed at the next meeting.

## **Group Discussion**

Members of the group discussed how the current subdivision regulations can create difficulties for the design and construction of pedestrian-friendly neighborhood streets. It was noted that portions of the roadway standards used in the current regulations have been in existence for many years. There was consensus among group members that one project recommendation should be for the county to review the subdivision regulations.

Ms. Costanzo asked the group members if they agreed that the two-mile walking distance used in the needs analysis made sense. Some of the group agreed, while others voiced concern that two miles was too far. Ms. Costanzo explained the ramifications of both reducing and increasing the walking distance standards, where reducing the distance would result in a greater need for parks and increasing it would result in a lesser need for parks. The group came to a consensus and recommended that parks and open space needs be reanalyzed based on walking distance being one mile in urbanized areas and two miles in non-urbanized areas.

Ms. McEldowney asked the group members if they would like for the plan to recommend the Meander Belt Width Calculation as the standard for providing setbacks. The group came to a consensus that they would like to see a combination of both the Meander Belt Width Calculation and Fixed Width. More information on the combination of both of these standards will be provided at the next meeting. The group requested to see several examples of what other communities, both inside and outside Ohio, are doing in terms of riparian setbacks.

**Closing/Next Steps** – Cage discussed the draft plan development and review, upcoming meetings and the adoption process. The next meeting was scheduled for March 3, 2009 from 2 to 4:00 p.m. at Fairfield County Agricultural Center, 831 College Avenue, Lancaster.