



Hilltop Community Mobility Plan Community Stakeholder Meeting



Time and Location:

Tuesday, January 13, 2009
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center
85 S. Clarendon Ave.

Minutes:

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization/Neighborhood</u>
Terry Stewart	City of Columbus Transportation
Dru Bagley	Greater Hilltop Area Commission (GHAC)
Lisa Grazier	Friends of Westgate Park/ Camp Chase Blockwatch
Lisa Boggs	Ogden Avenue Blockwatch
Sue Laughlin	GHAC
Marian Lupo	Highland West neighborhood
Kathy Hoke	Wilshire Heights Blockwatch
Steve Hermiller	GHAC/Mannik & Smith
Gary L. Baker, II	Friends of the Hilltop (FOTH)
Courtney Dekle	FOTH/Wilshire Heights Blockwatch
Chris Dekle	FOTH/Wilshire Heights Blockwatch
Phillip Cockerham	Cols. Neighborhood Health Ctr, Inc.
Keith Neal	J. Ashburn Center
Chuck Patterson	GHAC
Stan Thornburgh	GHAC/Westgate Heights
Daniella Weber	Columbus Code Enforcement
Robin Traxler	Westgate Neighbors Assoc.
Bernice Cage	MORPC
Valerie Croasman	Cols. Transportation & Pedestrian Commission
Paul Johnson	Franklin Twp Trustee/Johnson Insurance
Amber Cackler	Cols. Neighborhood Services intern
Susan Daniels	TranSystems
Josh Sikich	TranSystems

Introduction

Terry Stewart began the meeting by introducing the Hilltop Community Mobility Plan and the consultant team, TranSystems. He stated that the City of Columbus is undergoing this process because of the community's requests. He noted that the Community Mobility Plan process is a plan with action and has a funding mechanism associated with it for implementation. In addition to this Stakeholder group, a Steering

Committee has been formed with key community members to help with decision-making regarding the plan. The Steering Committee will act as a working group for the Hilltop Area Commission. He added that before landscaping can be installed within the city's right-of-way, a landscape maintenance agreement needs to be signed between the City and a third party that states that the City will be held harmless and the third party is required to hold liability insurance. He mentioned that mobility plans have been created for a few other Columbus communities, and the Linden neighborhood's recommendations began implementation last fall.

Terry Stewart continued by noting that the City's Planning Division is beginning an amendment to the Greater Hilltop Plan that will address land use and urban design. The Hilltop Community Mobility Plan is focused on transportation and the Greater Hilltop Plan Amendment is focused on land use and design. The two are separate processes but are being coordinated to occur simultaneously this year.

Susan Daniels from TranSystems introduced herself and the project team. Then all attendees introduced themselves and stated the organizations or part of the Hilltop community that they represent.

Purpose of the Hilltop Community Mobility Plan

Susan Daniels reviewed the goals of the Hilltop Community Mobility Plan:

- Balance the transportation infrastructure for moving people and goods among all modes in accordance with Columbus' Complete Streets Policy
- Reduce traffic violations, ticketed and not detected (speeding, failure to yield to pedestrian, running red-light, etc)
- Strengthen the connection between land use and transportation
- Promote distinct and vibrant neighborhoods
- Address issues from public workshops, walk audits, 311 database (traffic calming, crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.), area plans and pedestrian crash history
- Coordinate with the Columbus Bicentennial Bikeways Plan

Susan Daniels described that the components of the study include the West Broad Street corridor, focus areas based on public input, and a Safe Routes To School plan for Valleyview Elementary School.

Role of the Stakeholders for the Mobility Plan

Susan Daniels reviewed the role of the Stakeholders. During the study, Stakeholders will help with community outreach; representing the community during the problem identification phase; and reviewing potential solutions. After the plan is completed, Stakeholders will help with promotion and support of the plan and its implementation. She mentioned the website at www.hilltopmobility.com and upcoming public open houses on January 28 and 29. She stated that there are extra flyers and surveys for meeting attendees to take with them and pass out to neighbors and churches to advertise the upcoming public open houses and get the public's input.

Susan Daniels noted that tonight the Stakeholders will be asked for their ideas regarding the identification of problems in the Hilltop neighborhood. The Stakeholders will also be asked about their thoughts on the best ways to reach other community members for their input.

Study Process

Susan Daniels described the study process and associated components, which include:

- Data collection
 - existing facilities, sidewalks, bikeways, transit
 - parks, schools
 - traffic volumes, crash data
- Identification of Problems
 - Coordination with city departments
 - Steering Committee
 - Stakeholder Group
 - Open House
- Prioritization of problem areas
 - Steering Committee
- Identification of Potential Solutions
 - Project team
 - Steering Committee and City Staff
 - Walking audits, with opening and closing workshops
- Review of Proposed Strategy
 - Steering Committee and City Staff
 - Stakeholder Group
 - Open House
- Recommendations and Priorities
 - Steering Committee and City Staff

Project Timeline

Susan Daniels stated that the general timeline includes:

- October 2008 - December 2008
 - Project Kick-off and Data Collection
- January 2009 – early February 2009
 - Public Input on Problem Identification
- February 2009 - August 2009
 - Alternative Solutions Development
- Spring 2009
 - Walk Audits with Public
- Summer 2009
 - Public Input on Solutions
- Fall 2009
 - Develop Recommendations and Report
- End of 2009
 - Plan Completion and Presentation to City Officials

Study Area and Known Conditions

Josh Sikich reviewed past plans that have been completed for the Hilltop area. These include the Greater Hilltop Plan, West Broad Street Economic Development Strategy, Highland West Visioning Charrette, West Broad Street Corridor Market Analysis, and others. Many of these plans refer to the need for economic development on Broad Street, on-street parking on Broad Street, positive destinations to walk to, and the need to promote the unique qualities of the community to the rest of Columbus in order to bring more businesses and residents to the Hilltop. The Bicentennial Bikeways Plan addresses the entire city and calls

for bike lanes on West Broad Street and Sullivant Ave, as well as bicycle facilities on other streets in the Hilltop. He noted that these previous planning documents are located at www.hilltopmobility.com.

Josh Sikich presented maps of the study area, which is within I-270, I-70, and the railroad tracks parallel and west of Rt. 62. Other maps showed current land use, street functional classifications, COTA bus routes and stops, 311 Call Center requests, bikeways recommendations from the previous Bikeways Plan, and pedestrian crashes. The presented maps and others are available at www.hilltopmobility.com.

Examples of Traffic Calming

Josh Sikich noted that the Hilltop area currently has various traffic calming devices, including a mini-circle, speed bumps, and chicanes. He showed a few examples of other traffic calming devices that might be analyzed for possible implementation in the Hilltop community. While not a comprehensive list, possible solutions might include:

- Curb extensions
- Roundabouts
- Raised intersections
- Street medians
- Various types of bicycle facilities

Josh Sikich concluded by showing an example of a road diet. He described how a 4-lane road, for example, could be changed to a 2-lane road with bicycle lanes, a crossing island, and a center turn lane. All of the examples shown represent ways that automobiles can be slowed, pedestrians can travel more safely and conveniently, and the transportation system can become more diversified and balanced.

Discussion – Identification of Problems

The meeting was opened up for discussion with the attendees. The following are comments discussed:

- Both railroad crossings at Hague near Valleyview cause traffic congestion when trains pass. Hague Avenue is the primary north-south route through the Hilltop. It is the primary way to access I-70 so there is a lot of traffic on Hague. Railroad crossings block access and cause bottlenecks with a danger of rear-end accidents.
- Hague and Steele has no sidewalks and deteriorating curbs. School children wait for bus there.
- In the Valleyview area near the swimming pool, children walk with no sidewalks.
- An attendee asked if the Bikeways Plan was set in stone. Terry Stewart responded that the plan was passed by City Council. The plan is focused heavily on east-west routes, so the plan's recommendations may provide a minimal plan for implementation. It is possible that there will be more bikeways implemented in Columbus than what is mapped out in the Bikeways Plan.
- One attendee said it is difficult to travel by car from the Hilltop to Grandview and Upper Arlington. Hague Ave in Hilltop and Souder Ave in Franklinton are the only routes to travel. Another attendee said that Hague to Fisher to McKinley to Grandview Ave is the best way to get to those towns.
- Attendees said it would be nice to have a quicker connector to Grandview Ave over I-670. Terry Stewart stated that a bicycle bridge is planned to be built over the Scioto River near Harpers Rd.
- Bus service needs to be increased to serve elderly and disabled better. A bus route on Hague is needed.
- An attendee asked about the final mobility plan. Will the results address only infrastructure or also policy? Terry Stewart responded that it includes both. In Linden, education and coordination were

- policy strategies that were recommended. He noted that the Transportation Division only has jurisdiction over the right-of-way in the roads.
- Parking at Fremont and Hague restricts drivers' ability to see oncoming traffic.
 - Hague Ave is not safe for bicycling.
 - On Hague and Sullivant cars are parking on sidewalks because the roads are thin.
 - Sullivant Ave is too narrow for passing vehicles. Curbs are deteriorating and pedestrians do not feel safe.
 - An attendee mentioned a speed trap on Valleyview where the police catch speeders.
 - COTA should have a route that travels to the Wal-Mart on Georgesville Rd and Georgesville Square.
 - Sidewalks are needed on Broad St from Wilson Rd to Georgesville Rd.
 - COTA needs to empty its trash cans more often. There are safety issues on COTA buses.
 - An attendee said that COTA held a meeting last year regarding transit in the Hilltop. The comments from that meeting need to be incorporated into our study.
 - Mound St is too narrow. Buses ride on the curbs. There are no sidewalks and children walk in the street.
 - Ong Street to Clarendon has no sidewalks and children use this road to walk to school.
 - Broad St. at Lechner Ave is problematic because State workers making turns endanger pedestrians and other cars.
 - An attendee stated to make sure to incorporate the bikeways plan.
 - An attendee stated that West Broad St. is the main thoroughfare in the Hilltop. The Highland West Visioning Plan needs to be incorporated into our recommendations. Nothing happened from the GHAC Parking Study from 2000. West Broad commerce is suffering and the road needs to go on a diet. Parking is needed for businesses during all hours.
 - There was a question about the School Travel Plan and Safe Routes To School. Terry Stewart said that the Valleyview/Westmoor School Travel Plan is a pilot program that that will be an example to other schools in the Hilltop. Any school or agency can initiate a School Travel Plan. Funding for the study comes from the Ohio Department of Transportation which receives funds from the federal Safe Routes To School program.
 - An attendee requested countdown pedestrian signals for the Hilltop, with audible signals where necessary.
 - An attendee said that a School Travel Plan was previously completed for a school in the Highland neighborhood. Consider Biking is a good resource for bicycling information for schools.
 - Crossing guard training should be included as a recommendation in the mobility plan report, particularly for the crossing guards at West Broad Elementary at Broad and Hague.
 - The intersection of Broad and Hague is problematic to cross when school starts and ends each day. There is bus congestion and poor drop off locations for students.
 - An attendee asked about funding for the mobility plan. Terry Stewart responded by saying that capital improvement funds, not operating funds, are used for the mobility plan.
 - West Broad left turn lane to Clarendon is bad, conflicts with eastbound traffic.

Discussion – Community Outreach

Susan Daniels asked attendees about community outreach methods. Attendees mentioned a variety of places to put posters up advertising the public open houses, such as at the Walgreens at Broad and Hague, UDF at Sullivant and Hague, Minellis, hardware store on Broad, gas station at Broad and Hague, post office on Broad, Center for Latin Hope, daycare centers, and other local businesses. Outreach to local community groups should also be included.

After discussion, the meeting came to a close.