



Hilltop Community Mobility Plan

Community Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting



Time and Location:

Wednesday, December 3, 2008
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Parkview United Methodist Church
344 S. Algonquin Ave.

Minutes:

Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization/Neighborhood</u>
Terry Stewart	City of Columbus Transportation
Christopher George	City of Columbus Transportation
Gary Smith	Hilltop Neighborhood Action Group
Marian Lupo	Highland West neighborhood
Dru Bagley	Greater Hilltop Area Commission (GHAC)
Stan Thornburgh	GHAC/Westgate Heights
Charles & Wanda Gaul	S. Wayne Ave Blockwatch
Chuck Patterson	GHAC Chair
Rev. Patricia Cook	Parkview Church Pastor
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 described the role of the Steering Committee and 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. Ultimately, it is important that the Hilltop community, and the Steering Committee specifically, take ownership of this project, its recommendations, and its future implementation. 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.

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. There will be a Working Committee for that process as well that people are invited to participate in. 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 they will coordinate through the sharing of resources and at opportune times in the coming months.

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.

Role of the Steering Committee for the Mobility Plan

Susan Daniels reviewed the role of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will act as a working group for the Hilltop Area Commission. It is expected that the plan will be endorsed by the Area Commission at completion.

During the mobility planning study, the Steering Committee will assist the project team with community outreach, identification of problems and issues, evaluation of potential solutions, and prioritization of recommendations within the project budget.

After the plan is completed, the Steering Committee will assist the City of Columbus in promoting and supporting the implementation of the plan's recommendations. The Steering Committee will educate and reach out to community members before solutions are implemented.

Purpose of the 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
- Reduce traffic violations, ticketed and not-ticketed (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.

At this time, Gary Smith mentioned that sidewalks are necessary around West High School and on surrounding side streets.

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

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

Susan Daniels reviewed the schedule. There will be a Stakeholder Group meeting and a public Open House in January. The next Steering Committee meeting will likely be in early February. Walk audits will take place in April when the weather gets warmer. The plan will be complete for approval by the Greater Hilltop Area Commission and Columbus City Council in Fall-Winter 2009.

Josh Sikich proposed a community outreach method of producing an online survey that can be easily emailed and accessed by members of the community. Outreach can be conducted with visitors to the library who come there to access the computers and internet. The online survey would be supplemented by hard copy surveys to seek input from the community.

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.

Stan Thornburgh asked if executive summaries could be emailed to the Steering Committee of all previous studies. Josh Sikich stated that he will compile that and send it in an email. The studies will also be posted on the Mobility Plan website once it is functional.

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, COTA bus routes, community facilities, bikeways recommendations from the previous Bikeways Plan, 311 mobility requests, and previous sidewalk recommendations. All of the data presented represent inputs into the Mobility Plan analysis and evaluation of solutions. He concluded by noting that the Hilltop area currently has various traffic calming devices, including a mini-circle, speed bumps, and chicanes.

Discussion – Identification of Problems and Community Outreach

The meeting was opened up for discussion with the attendees.

The following are comments discussed:

- Chuck Patterson asked if COTA would be at the table for this plan. He stated that east of Hague there is an older population that would be better served by COTA with small buses that traveled through the neighborhood rather than just on main corridors. The study team responded that COTA is a stakeholder.
- In order for data to be more readily viewed, maps will be emailed to the Steering Committee as 11x17 pdfs and posted on the mobility website.
- Charles Gaul stated that speed bumps are needed on Wayne Ave because speeding is a problem. Speeding is also a problem on S. Warren. Speed bumps were requested from the City but were not installed.
- Marian Lupo stated that her neighborhood is a porch community where people sit on their porches. It is an older population and many do not have internet. A good way to get their input is to reach them personally in front of their homes. She stated that using the blockwatch coordinators to administer a survey to the people in their blockwatch is a good idea for getting community input.
- An attendee questioned how this plan would be applied across jurisdictions within the Hilltop, which has been an issue in the past.
- Marian Lupo suggested grants for green energy projects. There are many vacant lots east of Hague that could be used for green facilities that could provide energy for the community.
- The intersection of Freemont & Eureka is active for drug dealers. It needs to create activity for kids to move the drug dealers out.
- East of Hague speeding is a problem and landscaping is needed.
- School bus stops need to be coordinated with traffic.
- Dru Bagley stated that the intersection coming out of ODOT/ODPS is a problem. Vehicles make wide turns out of those buildings across from Lechner Ave that are dangerous for cars waiting at the intersection.
- Lechner Ave should not be 2-way at Broad St. It used to be one-way south at Broad, but it was changed to 2-way to increase access to the Glenwood Recreation Center.
- An attendee was concerned about a bike lane and parking on W. Broad St. There may not be enough room. The businesses would have to be convinced that it would work. Businesses would have to see what it would look like.
- Sidewalks are a major priority in Hilltop and north of Broad St. Sidewalks are a bigger priority than bike paths and are needed near elementary schools.
- Chuck Patterson said that partnerships are important. Involvement must include police, COTA, code enforcement, and traffic engineering. Sidewalks blocked by hedges and cars are a problem. The United States Postal Service needs to be a partner to try to re-establish corner post office boxes as seen in other neighborhoods. Traffic engineering needs to address changes in traffic signals as the community changes.
- The boulevard streets in the community with medians need to be showcased.
- Parking too close to hydrants, alleys, stop signs, intersections, and driveways is a problem.
- Accidents occur at S. Warren and Wicklow.
- Many accidents east of Hague, including cars running into houses. An attendee suggested all-way stop signs.
- Parking on sidewalks is a problem.
- Residential roads are not wide enough. Parked cars are sideswiped.
- On Broad St and Sullivant Ave, people park illegally during restricted parking hours.
- Wilson Road needs sidewalks. It is not a low priority.

- Wayne & Springmont need sidewalks. Hilltonia School is in that area.
- There is a lack of enforcement for speeding and parking violations.
- An attendee suggested that curbs can be painted yellow on either side of a driveway or intersection to indicate parking is not allowed, as is done in other cities.
- Grace St and Steele Ave, north of Broad and west of Hague, are used as cut-throughs where cars speed.
- Trees over sidewalks need appropriate maintenance. Citizens offer to do it themselves but are not allowed until City's laws. These trees block sidewalks and impede walking.
- Traffic coordination needs to be done for morning and evening in opposite directions.
- An attendee stated that bicycle paths are important for transportation and for the beauty of the neighborhood. A bike path should connect all of the parks in the Hilltop. He suggested bike paths be considered for roads parallel to Broad St, which are already conducive to biking. Bike paths should be advertised as an asset of the Hilltop area. McKinley Ave is good for bikes.
- An attendee mentioned that Wilson Rd was considered for a lower speed limit between Sullivant and Broad, but the speed limit has remained the same. He wondered what happened to that plan.

Discussion – Steering Committee Meeting Logistics

Stan Thornburgh asked that agendas be emailed to the Steering Committee members prior to future meetings. The study team stated that it will do so.

Susan Daniels asked about what the best times are for future Steering Committee meetings. The attendees agreed that Wednesday evenings worked well, because other community organizations have their meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Chuck Patterson stated that materials such as previous planning documents can be posted on the Area Commission website until the Mobility Plan website is created. The website has also hosted online surveys in the past.

After discussion, the meeting came to a close.