

Regional Active Transportation Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes, December 8, 2023  
Dayton, Ohio – Five Rivers Metro Parks Headquarters

**Agenda Items**

1. Strategic Funding Plan and Complete Street Review:
  - a. Nick Cannistraci, Active Transportation Planner, MVRPC
2. Accessing Transit for Persons with Disabilities—All Hands In Coordinators:
  - a. Josh Welhener, Greene County Board of Developmental Disabilities
3. Strategic Community Investment Fund and State Capital Budget:
  - a. Eric Oberg, Midwest Regional Director, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
4. Bike Miami Valley Updates:
  - a. Leslie King, Director Regional Environment and Economic Development, Board of Bike Miami Valley
5. Organizational Updates and Announcements:
  - a. Matt Lindsay, Manager Environmental Planning, MVRPC
6. Networking Lunch to follow – generously sponsored by Rails to Trails Conservancy!

**Present: Matt Lindsay, MVRPC; Nick Cannistraci, MVRPC; Stan Kegley, Troy; Eric Sauer, Five Rivers MetroParks; Brent Anslinger, Five Rivers MetroParks; Jim Cook, Simon Kenton Trail; Susan Vincent, City of Dayton; Chad Henry, City of Piqua; Dick Feldmann, Friends of the Little Miami State Park; Eric Oberg, Rails to Trails; Ron Gorley, Friends of the Little Miami State Park; Leslie King, MVRPC; Brian Forschner, City of Xenia; Gary Hawkins, Preble Trails; Josh Welhener, Green County Board of Developmental Disabilities**

**Welcomes and Introductions:**

The meeting began promptly at 10:11 a.m. Mr. Cannistraci called the meeting to order and began with brief introductions. After introductions concluded, Mr. Cannistraci introduced the next item on the agenda.

**Strategic Funding Plan and Complete Streets Review:**

Nick Cannistraci was present to provide an update on the Complete Streets policy review and Strategic Funding Plan. Mr. Cannistraci began the update with a look into MVRPC's Complete Streets Policy. The policy was adopted nearly 13 years ago and believes that a look into the policy's efficacy is appropriate. Context and background were given regarding the policy and it was stated that all current and projected users of the public right-of-way must be able to safely and conveniently reach their destinations along and across a street or road...in order for

that street to be considered “complete.” Mr. Cannistraci explained that all MVRPC-funded STP and CMAQ projects will consider complete streets principles and possible treatments at the time of the initial application. He also explained that there is a total of 8 exceptions that a project sponsor may request. Mr. Cannistraci stated that so far, he has examined years 2011 through 2014 of the policy and that so far, he has found exception numbers 2, 4, 5, and 7 to be the most frequently used. The goal of this policy review is to collect hard data and to eventually map the areas that have resulted with a more complete street.

Comments from the participants indicated a high level of interest in the final report on the policy. It was suggested to compare the length of roads made more complete to the overall length of roads funded.

Mr. Cannistraci also provided an update on the Strategic Funding Plan. He explained that this plan wasn't included within MVRPC's Active Transportation plan but is a part of the implementation process laid out in the plan. The Strategic Funding Plan is described as a cooperative effort among potential project sponsors, transit agencies, and active transportation advocates to develop a timeline of funding applications. He stated that the main goal of the plan is to identify project sequencing and avoid areas of possible overlap in grant applications. MVRPC initially sought consultant help but because of internal changes, the plan became an entirely internal project. Mr. Cannistraci stated that the process of building this plan is to begin by having discussions with all potential project sponsors of the priority projects listed in MVRPC's Active Transportation plan. So far, discussions have concluded with 8 project sponsors which cover 23 of the 37 priority projects. Only 1 project is no longer considered a priority by the project sponsor and over half of the projects have either been funded, applied for funding, or have a plan to be funded. Mr. Cannistraci stated that he hopes the final product would include a narrative as well as a spreadsheet that clearly identifies timelines and project sequencing.

Committee participants discussed the utility of Sharrow markings and also the shared issue of putting together local match for funding projects.

#### **Accessing Transit for Persons with Disabilities—All Hands In Coordinators:**

Josh Welhener gave the presentation to those in attendance. He introduced himself and explained his position the Greene County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The presentation was aimed at displaying the cross section of the built environment with the relationships that are necessary for inclusion of those with disabilities into the greater community. The group he organizes is called All Hands In and the group is focused on building social capital development for those with disabilities. One major barrier he highlighted—which affects usage of the transit system as well as relationships—is the 33% employment rate

among the developmental disability community. The large unemployment rates lead to a cascade of negative consequences concerning community connections and inclusion. Mr. Welhener emphasized the importance of time over money. Social capital development requires much more than money and individuals are much more apt to give money before investing their time. He also emphasized the fact that relationships are the most precious commodity. He further explained that accessibility is about much more than wheelchair ramps and that true accessibility is having a reason to be in a place. The bike paths, curb cuts, and safe crosswalks don't mean as much without a purpose for someone to utilize that infrastructure. Mr. Welhener made a pitch to the group. He emphasized the need the organization has for community groups to join them on their events. They hold many events on the bike trails and often times on the Creekside Trail in Beavercreek. He emphasized that segregated developmental disability events are not ideal. The ultimate goal would be having community support with needing the developmental disability support.

#### **Strategic Community Investment Fund and State Capital Budget:**

Mr. Eric Oberg was present to provide an update for the Strategic Community Investment Fund and State Capital Budget. Mr. Oberg emphasized the unique circumstances that surround this particular fund. This is a cash fund and is not bonded like any of the other typical funding streams at the state level. There is much debate about how to spend and utilize this fund, however, it will most likely be quite flexible. The other unique characteristic about this fund that Eric noted is the sheer size—at over 700 million, the fund could be used on a wide array of infrastructure projects. He stated that the given deadline is December 18<sup>th</sup> but that perhaps the deadline is a soft deadline rather than a hard deadline. Eric also provided an announcement regarding a special event happening in Columbus Ohio. He stated that Columbus, and Ohio, is home to some of the nation's best trails. That's why it's the hub of the regional Central Ohio Greenways network, an anchor in the statewide Ohio to Erie Trail, and a key component of the cross-country Great American Rail-Trail. The event is aimed at showing what is needed to prioritize efforts to connect trails into the larger active recreation and active transportation systems.

#### **Bike Miami Valley Updates:**

Ms. Leslie King was in attendance to give some key updates for Bike Miami Valley. She began by explaining the transition that is now occurring with the departure of Bike Miami's inaugural director Laura Estandia. She stated that there is currently budget for an interim director, however, it is likely that members of the board will step in as needed help conduct business. The hiring process for a new director could easily take six months. Discussion also ensued about the need for bike share and whether Bike Miami Valley will continue to own and run the bike share program.

### **Organizational Updates and Announcements:**

Mr. Lindsay opened up the floor for any updates and announcements with members present in the room.

- Ms. Susan Vincent was in attendance and gave an update for the City of Dayton which included updates about the much-anticipated Flight Line project. She stated that talks with the railroad company have picked up again and the city is looking to purchase property.
- Jim Cook was also in attendance and gave an update regarding the Simon Kenton Trail. He also stated that money is still coming in from their riding and fundraising event.
- Brent Anslinger from Five Rivers noted that the planning committee for the 2025 Miami Valley Cycling Summit (in Springfield) held its first meeting. Those interested in supporting that event should reach out to Bike Miami Valley.
- Gary Hawkins from Preble County Trails noted the ODOT feasibility study for the cross county trail to parallel US 40 in Preble County.
- Eric Oberg noted that Celebrate Trails Day in 2024 would be April 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Brian Forschner was in attendance to give an update for the City of Xenia. He stated that the city is looking to begin a comprehensive plan update. He also suggested public safety on the trails as a future meeting topic
- Friends of Little Miami State Park celebrated the completion of the King Avenue Bridge/Grandin Road project, including the new trail tunnel under the bridge. Ribbon cutting (for the bridge) is scheduled for December 19.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.