

Regional Active Transportation Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes, March 10, 2023  
Sugarcreek Township, Ohio

**Agenda Items**

1. Cara Tilford, Sugarcreek Assistant Township Administrator, will provide an update on Bike/Pedestrian initiatives in the Township
2. Nick Cannistraci, MVRPC Active Transportation Planner, will lead a discussion on proposed "Rules of Operation" and formalizing the Committee - please see attachment (revised based on early feedback).
3. Laura Estandia, Executive Director of Bike Miami Valley, will preview the 2023 Miami Valley Cycling Summit
4. Brian Housh, Midwest Policy Manager at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, will share upcoming advocacy opportunities, including Trails Advocacy Day at the Ohio Statehouse on March 29
5. Serena Anderson, MVRPC Regional Transit Programs Manager, will share information about first and last mile pedestrian infrastructure
6. Matt Lindsay, MVRPC Environmental Planning Manager, will introduce a project to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first trails in our region
7. Networking lunch. Lunch will be generously provided by our hosts, Sugarcreek Township.

Present: Matt Lindsay, MVRPC; Nick Cannistraci, MVRPC; Laura Estandia, Bike Miami Valley; Stan Kegley, Troy; Steve Mays, Bike Centerville; Shannon Webster, Greene CATS/GC Mobility; Robb Clifford, Darke County Parks; Jordan Hart, Five Rivers MetroParks; Brent Anslinger, Five Rivers MetroParks; Jim Cook, Simon Kenton Trail; Chuck Smith, Ohio Bicycle Federation; Mary Hoy, ODOT District 7; Andy Aidt, City of Kettering; Stein Pedersen, Centerville; Eric Sauer, Five Rivers Metro Parks; Susan Vincent, City of Dayton; Scott Miller, Xenia Twp.; Rap Hankins, Trotwood; Kristen Marks, Centerville-Washington Parks District; Mike Fanelli, Bike Centerville; Joe Weinell, City of Dayton; Jeff Steward Bellbrook Sugarcreek Township Parks District

**Welcomes and Introductions:**

The meeting began promptly at 10:05 a.m. Mr. Lindsay called the meeting to order and began with brief introductions.

**Sugarcreek Township Update:**

Cara Tilford provided an update on bike and pedestrian initiatives in the township. She began by describing conditions present in 2008. The major subdivisions developed in the early 2000's was disconnected. Despite close proximity of major population centers to schools, there were no pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure. Downtown Bellbrook was a place that people wanted to walk and bike to, but there were gaps in access. Ms. Tilford also shared the fact that the township lacked funding. There was opportunity, however, and there was early Safe Routes to School Success. In 2010, Sugarcreek Township received their first infrastructure and non-infrastructure awards from ODOT. There was continued success between 2012 and 2014, which included further investment and construction of multi-use paths. Funding slowed around 2019 and it was necessary to pivot to different sources of funding.

There have also been new changes in township policy. Along main roads, 10' multi-use paths are now required to be constructed when developments are proposed. Several residential developments have been retrofitted as well to accommodate multi-use paths. There is a well-

defined plan for an 8.3-mile loop around Bellbrook and Sugar Creek Township. There is connection of major subdivisions to the shoos, and huge progress toward completing the recommendations in their STP.

#### **Rules of Operation Discussion:**

Nick Cannistraci shared an update on the Rules of Operation for the committee. He started by highlighting the main purpose and goals of the committee. He stated that the main objectives concerning the committee include, but are not limited to: Keeping MVRPC staff up to date on active transportation planning and infrastructure planning in our member communities, updating and facilitating implementation of the active transportation plan, and information sharing. MVRPC will provide information to member communities for resources, events, and programming related to active transportation. The committee also exists to provide a platform for peer to peer sharing and collaboration.

Also highlighted in the discussion was the addition of an advisory group. He stated that in the new rules of operation an Advisory Group consisting of representatives of one or more advocacy groups and one or more jurisdictions will provide guidance to MVRPC on meeting agendas, scheduling, format, establishing working groups or subcommittees, and other items as needed. Participation on the Advisory Group is voluntary and open to any participating jurisdictions and advocacy groups. Discussion ensued regarding clarification on the advisory group. Discussion concluded and Mr. Cannistraci concluded with closing remarks and noted a few changes to the draft Rules of Operation.

#### **Preview of the 2023 Miami Valley Cycling Summit:**

Laura Estandia previewed the 2023 Miami Valley Cycling Summit. Ms. Estandia introduced herself and stated that Bike Miami Valley is the fiscal agent and co-host for the Miami Valley Cycling Summit. The summit is an event that takes place every other year and jumps around the region. Ms. Estandia stated that the mission of the cycling summit is to aim to use the power of cycling to spur on economic development throughout the region.

A brief history of the event was also shared. The summit was founded in 2009 and past host cities include Dayton, Kettering, Miamisburg, Piqua, and Springfield. One of the main goals of the event is to leave behind a legacy project in whatever city is hosting the event. The event is free and lunch is provided. The summit will take place on Friday May 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Estandia also shared that the keynote speaker will be Andy Williamson. His keynote will focus on national trends in the outdoor economy and how the trails have become an essential part of economic vibrancy and quality of life. Ms. Estandia also shared a program overview. Ethics and Equity in Engineering and an LTAP course as an introduction to complete streets are the two sessions with available credit. There are also several break out sessions and a projects panel as well as a bike tour. In conclusion, Ms. Estandia also stated that the summit also gives out awards and nominations are open now.

#### **Advocacy Opportunities:**

Mr. Brian Housh, Midwest Policy Manager of Rails to Trails, gave an advocacy update. He began speaking about RAISE grant opportunities. Mr. Housh also explained that RAISE stood for Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity. He also stated that Rails to Trails has been involved with many federal bi-partisan bills that have passed recently. He cited ATIIIP (Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program) as an example. There is a formula for success with federal grants. Mr. Housh stated those key elements for success are: safety, sustainability (mitigating climate change), and equity which is primarily focused on creating opportunities that have been blocked by racial barriers.

Mr. Housh also shared Celebrate Trails Day, which is the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in April and registration is open on the Rails to Trails website. An event will be held in Yellow Springs. Mr. Housh mentioned the annual spring Trails Advocacy Day which will be held March 29<sup>th</sup>. He went on to describe the trails caucus in Ohio. This year the main ask of the caucus is the operating budget. The proposal includes data that is useful in making the case for the expansion of trails and trail programming.

#### **First and Last Mile Pedestrian Infrastructure:**

Ms. Serena Anderson shared a First and Last Mile Connections presentation. Ms. Anderson introduced herself to the committee and stated that first and last mile connections are critical to fill in the gaps in the transportation system. First and Last Mile is a term often used to describe the difficulty people may be experiencing getting to and from public transportation. Ms. Anderson stated that this is by far the toughest mile in transit. She began by stating why this mile is so important. There are people who cannot access the transit system. It is especially a barrier for individuals with disabilities as well as those who cannot afford a vehicle or have had an accident.

Ms. Anderson also provided examples of inadequate bus stops from the region. Many of these stops had no where for individuals to stand. Her point was that this was a result of inadequate planning and thought and not funding for a particular project. She also made the point that barriers are created in a number of ways. Sometimes barriers are created by incomplete and unsafe or inaccessible sidewalks, crossings or bus tops, lack of shelter or seating, maintenance and snow removal, and obstructing objects such as dockless scooters or planters. Ms. Anderson stated that if one part of the transit system is inaccessible it affects the accessibility for the rest of the system as well. Analysis was completed for the AT Plan, which demonstrated that over 83% of GDRTA bus stops are served by sidewalks, however, there are large corridors where there are no sidewalks. These corridors are areas where access is limited and where potential barriers persist.

Ms. Anderson concluded her presentation by sharing information on another funding source for improving the operations of the transit system as well as the less traditional projects. Section 5310 is the federal funding source. She stated the aim is “to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the country by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available.”

#### **Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first trails in our region:**

Mr. Matt Lindsay gave the final update on the agenda. In the last 7 months or so there has been an effort by Mr. Dan Foley and Mr. Stan Kegley along with Mr. Lindsay to collect information on the first segments of trails built in 1973 as well as starting the planning for an event to mark 50 years of trail building. There’s an effort to plan an event to celebrate the five decades of work on the trails in the Miami Valley that could be tied into the meeting of the Regional Active Transportation Committee. Mr. Lindsay put out an invitation to participate in the planning process for this event and setting a date for the event.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.