

**THE KENT CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WED., OCTOBER 1, 2008**

This meeting of the Community Development Committee of Kent City Council was called to order by Rick Hawksley, Chair at 7:10 p.m. on Wed., October 1, 2008.

PRESENT: MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MS. SHAFFER, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH & MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: J. FENDER, MAYOR; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; J. BOWLING, CITY ENGINEER; AND L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

ABSENT: MR. KUCHAR, COUNCIL & MR. RULLER, CITY MANAGER

Mr. Hawksley explained the only item on their agenda dealt with the Comprehensive Bike Plan, and introduced **Jim Bowling, City Engineer**, at this time.

Mr. Bowling said as they have moved forward on some capital and redevelopment projects, they continue to get questions and have been relying on the bikeway plan last updated in 2007. He said they felt this would be a good opportunity to come to Council to let them know what was in the plan and to take their comments. Mr. Bowling stressed that this is a flexible plan.

Mr. Bowling said as the plan came to fruition in 2003 and 2003, AMATS made a requisition for a plan for regional bikeways. He said in 2007, AMATS asked for an update. He said they met with Kent State, the Portage Parks District and the Kent Parks and Recreation. He said they discussed the plan, updated it, and brought it back up to speed at that time. He said the whole reason they were doing this was because of money. He said if something is in the plan, they can access federal dollars.

Mr. Bowling said the plan should be a viable living plan as things occur. He said it is more important now, as they are implementing significant pieces of the Plan. He said that one is the ongoing Portage Hike & Bike Trail. He said they have the downtown redevelopment, and that is generating discussion on about the Portage and how it gets to the downtown, and whether it serves other development. He said redevelopment is about more than Fairmount's project; Kent State's plan to connect with the downtown; or PARTA. He said it includes a regional bike facility that would connect to everywhere. Mr. Bowling said they are trying to access money for the Whitewater Park, and some have suggested the regional path should be on the west side for the park, while others believe it should be on the east side for Main Street.

Mr. Bowling said they also want a better integration in the planning process. He said a good plan can be incorporated into capital projects. Mr. Bowling said they have had a lot of questions about bike lanes on Summit Street, adding that while they are valuable, those questions should be answered in the context of the entire City. He said nothing is shown, currently, on Summit Street, and it should fit in the context of connecting one place to another. He said that Stone Water Drive has a bike facility, and is designed with it. He said the City's street program will start back up next year, and they are suggesting that streets be bike friendly, or they should install pavement that is save for bikes. He said the question is why they should do it, adding they are Kent, and this is who they are. He said there are six sustainability goals in the Bicentennial Plan pertaining to this issue.

He said at the present time, the plan has been developed as physical improvement plan, and does not address bike education, policies, parking and storage facilities and funding.

Mr. Bowling said that unconnected bike paths are not used much, and are not serving the best purpose. He said that the Portage will connect the Ohio Erie Canal Towpath to the West Reserve Heritage Bike Trail, which is in Mahoning and Trumbull County. He said when the trails are complete, one could bike

from Cleveland to Washington. He said as it goes through Portage County, it cuts diagonally through the city, along the river, and is planned to cut through the University, and east to go to Trumbull County. He said the map he is showing is slightly outdated. He said they are finishing up the construction of the piece on Middlebury Road, and another piece. He said they received funding from AMATS for the section from Fred Fuller Park to John Brown Tannery Park. He said the University has the esplanade completed through campus. Mr. Bowling said the outside parts of Kent are done, but the inside is not complete. He said that is typical for the Ohio Erie Canal Towpath, as they did the easy sections first, leaving the various downtowns last. He said those are the most difficult areas and the ones that are the most gray.

Mr. Bowling said in their plan, they are saying it needs to connect to Fred Fuller, the Esplanade, and where Crain Avenue stops on the west side of the river. He said how they get there is open for discussion.

Mr. Bowling said connectivity is important, and they need neighborhoods, parks, the downtown and the university to be connected to the Portage. He said when that is done they can get anywhere around the City. He said they have met some of the sustainability plans in the Bicentennial Plan, as they will have less polluting transportation, less energy, and would strengthen the local residential neighborhoods by having an available resource.

Mr. Bowling displayed a map showing the Portage going through Kent, the pieces built and/or under construction. He said the location is not yet determined at this time. He said existing facilities connect through bike routes, including Silver Meadows and Francis Street to connect to the Summit County Hike and Bike Trail to Munroe Falls. Mr. Bowling said that bike lanes on Fairchild are not finished, adding a bike route would be hard to match. He said they have some areas on the east side of town where Franklin Township put in bike lanes, and they have gaps. He said they are working to close the gap.

Mr. Bowling said that in order to decide on a location, they need to know what it is used for, adding it could be for tourism, recreation, connectivity, separate transportation for the community, and physical health & well being. He said they want to support all of these proposed uses.

Mr. Bowling said they have to look at the types of facilities. He said they have bike routes, like Francis Street, which is a place for bikes and cars, not needing a separation of the lanes. He said they would put up the signs for continuity. He said there is no reason why people cannot ride their bikes on Yacavona or Elno. He said they do not want to sign every street, as it would be confusing. He said it is a preferred route for biking.

Mr. Bowling said bike lanes are different. He said they provide comfort for those riding. He said it is probably still not adequate for children.

He said the next is the shared use path, which is mostly for recreation, and supports areas not served by streets. He said they provide the best opportunity for comfort.

Mr. Bowling said when picking a type, he looked at several issues. He said one issue is continuity. He said if it does not connect to a destination, it will not be used. Mr. Bowling said if they have bike lanes connected to bike routes, connected to shared use paths, it will be confusing. He said if a street is not in good condition, they do not to stripe a bike lane or put in a bike route.

Mr. Bowling said that cost is always an issue, adding that the question is the availability of the right-of-way. He said the rules of the road cannot be contradicted, and a lane has to be on both sides of the street. He said they cannot put them on one side only, forcing bikes to ride against the flow of traffic, as that is illegal.

Mr. Bowling said the plan is flexible and can be changed, modified, adding it depends on the conditions and the chance to obtain right-of-way. He said they can adjust it if something comes up, like Summit

Street, and they feel they need that extra facility. He said that all of the neighborhoods need find connectivity to the Portage. He said when the plan is able to be put together, they can go anywhere, whether it is downtown or to campus. He said a lot of the connectivity in the neighborhoods is by bike routes. He said that some of the newer developments have parks with bike routes and shared use paths. He said they can be connected with other shared use paths, as it was planned in those developments. He said they are trying to retrofit the older parts of Kent.

Mr. Bowling said some things that have occurred lately, such as the Atlantic and Great Western site. He said they have discussed incorporating a shared use path through the facility to serve the facility, connecting it to the Portage and the neighborhood. He said if they lived on the south side of town, they would not have to ride on Franklin Avenue the entire way. He said the developer felt it was a good idea, felt it was beneficial to the neighborhood, and said they would consider it.

Mr. Bowling said another issue was the possibility of bike lanes on Lake Street, adding some areas have wider pavement. He said they may stripe it for bike lanes, and said it does connect to the Portage and back to the University. Mr. Bowling said if it can be used as a bike lane, there is the potential to have it striped.

Mr. Bowling said that they have heard the esplanade is not the best place to ride a bike. He said when the classes change, there are so many walkers, that it is hard to ride a bike. Mr. Bowling said the original plan shows a facility two hundred feet to the north, but if it is too crowded, they may want to consider something different. He said it must have a logical connectivity.

Mr. Bowling said it is not as simple as saying, "Here is a bike route," and used Hudson Road as an example. He said it would be scary to ride a bike on Hudson Road. He said it may be okay once it is improved, but if a road is not safe, they cannot put up a sign. He said those are the issues that exist and have to be considered.

Mr. Bowling said the issue is that this is a physical plan only. He said the plan is coming up in discussions about the downtown and other parts of the capital plan. He said they are not trying to implement the plan, but as pieces come up they are trying to handle them.

Chair Hawksley called for questions at this time, and there were none.

Ms. Shaffer thanked Mr. Bowling for thinking this through, adding it is very complex. She said what make's sense on the map does not always make sense on the ground. She thanked him for being open to all of the possibilities, adding she was excited. Ms. Shaffer said she bikes on Franklin Avenue, adding it is a narrow street. She said it makes more sense to use Franklin Avenue when going downtown instead of Water Street. She said she cannot wait to get on the trails.

Mr. DeLeone asked if the connection of Crain Avenue to the city limits is done, and Mr. Bowling said it is in the process of being completed. He said the piece is being built that connects to Towner's Woods. He said one piece that is not finished yet has to do with the crossing with Breakneck Creek. He said they were unsure if they should use the existing bridge or build a new one. He said he has understood it is a cost issue, adding it is not as cheap to build a new one.

Mr. DeLeone said Mr. Bowling was talking about the Portage off Hudson Road, and asked if it will continue, and Mr. Bowling said it should continue. Mr. DeLeone asked where it would connect, and asked if it would go along Hugo, and Mr. Hawksley said it would, possibly. Mr. DeLeone noted it would connect into Kent. Mr. Bowling said the piece through Riverbend hooks up to the Hudson/Judson connection and is supposed to go to the northeastern part of Portage County.

Mr. Fender thanked Mr. Bowling for his work, adding it is a complicated, interesting maze. He asked how many riders are in the Kent area, and Mr. Bowling said he was unable to answer that question. He said that when he worked in Akron, once they built their link, there was a lot of traffic on it. He said they

are building a piece along Tompkins Corporation currently, and someone was riding their bike on it earlier in the day.

Ms. Shaffer asked if the picture of the bridge under construction was near the Water Treatment Plant area of the trail, and asked how it would be routed along the river. Mr. Bowling said the picture is the boardwalk being constructed adjacently to the Water Reclamation facility, adjacent to the Cuyahoga River. He said that is one of the most complicated areas throughout Kent. He said there is a railroad overpass for the Wheeling and Lake Erie line, adding it is an extremely large trestle. He said on the east side is the CSX line. Mr. Bowling said if they go down the slope from that line, they are in the river, and come up the other side, hitting the walls of the facility. He said the area is locked between the railroad, the Wastewater Plant, and has another railroad running perpendicular. He said if they skirted around the plant, they would send it up Middlebury Road, across the tracks, and back down into Fred Fuller Park. He said they cannot go across the east side because of the CSX trains. He said they have stayed on the west side of the river, building the boardwalk. He said it is not a pleasant ride going by the Plant, and they wanted the river to be a resource. He said as they noticed from the picture, there is a row of mature pine trees buffering the treatment plant, and they used special care to not take down the trees. He said although the treatment plant is next to the path, they cannot see it. He said there is one junction of about 250' that puts them right next to the river and the railroad choice, adding they had no choice.

Ms. Wallach thanked Mr. Bowling for his openness and flexibility, adding it was very much appreciated.

There were no comments from the audience, and no action was needed.

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair Hawksley adjourned this meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE BIKE PLAN WAS PRESENTED; NO ACTION NEEDED.**

**THE KENT CITY COUNCIL
STREETS, SIDEWALKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE
WED., OCTOBER 1, 2008**

This meeting of the Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee of Kent City Council was called to order by Mike DeLeone, Chair at 7:40 p.m. on Wed., October 1, 2008.

PRESENT: MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MS. SHAFFER, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH & MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: J. FENDER, MAYOR; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; J. BARONE, DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER; AND L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

ABSENT: MR. KUCHAR, COUNCIL & MR. RULLER, CITY MANAGER

Chair DeLeone introduced **Jennifer Barone, Development Engineer**, who was present about the Stonewater Drive Dedication. Ms. Barone said she was present to ask them to accept the dedication, which is between the fourth phase of the Lakes at Franklin Mills and the bridge over Fishcreek. She said that Mr. Bob Heimann constructed the road, adding it was part of a land swap. She said that Mr. Heimann built the road, and they gave him the land. She said they wanted to delineate the right-of-way, adding it is near the park at Admore Drive. She said they can now dedicate it and file it with the County.

Ms. Wallach asked if she could ask a question about the development, and Mr. DeLeone said she could as long as it dealt with the dedication.

Ms. Shaffer asked what it mean to dedicate a street, and Ms. Barone said the surveyor draws up a plat, gets it recorded, and shows it as a right-of-way parcel.

Mr. DeLeone said when they dedicate a street to the City, it means the City can then plow it and maintain it.

There was no audience comment at this time.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE DEDICATION OF STONEWATER DRIVE.

Motion made by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Ferrara, and carried by a voice vote of 7-0-1, with Mr. DeLeone abstaining.

It was noted that the remaining two items on the agenda were deferred to a later date, as they were awaiting a response from the Ohio EPA.

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair DeLeone adjourned this meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) TO AUTHORIZE THE DEDICATION OF STONEWATER DRIVE.**