

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Matt Fulton, City Manager
DATE: June 27, 2016
SUBJECT: Discussion regarding strategy for implementing sidewalk and trail plan



BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The City Council approved a comprehensive Sidewalk and trail plan in 2014. Since it's approval, some elements have been constructed, but the majority have not in anticipation of the development of a financing strategy for constructing the sidewalk/trail system. The City Council has indicated a preference for a financing strategy that would include a City wide assessment approach for constructing sidewalks and trails. In fact, the recent City Code recodification process incorporated language that enables the establishment such assessment districts.

One of the minimal expense elements of the plan includes establishing and painting bike lanes onto existing street right of ways where possible. The recent success of Marie Avenue's on-street bike lanes has prompted staff to advance some additional options where such lanes might be possible, subject to Council's willingness to adjust some on street parking configurations in certain locations. The Parks and Recreation Board contributed to this discussion at its last meeting and has advanced a set of recommendations as discussed below.

DISCUSSION:

City Wide Assessment District: The City's former City Engineer estimated that the entire sidewalk and trail plan could cost \$6.7 million. It is clearly recognized that the entire system would need to be constructed over time and initial efforts should be focused on priority corridors and logical school connections. The other important element of establishing any assessment district pertains to ensuring the annual costs for any assessment district doesn't become too burdensome for taxpayers.

City-wide assessment districts are allowed for up to a five year period. The City's Finance Director has developed a possible strategy for implementing a series of overlapping assessment districts that would allow for the sidewalk plan to be financed over the next 14 years with assessment impacts (set currently to a *residential equivalency* since commercial and tax-exempt parcels would still need to be figured out) that would start at \$20/year and adjust annually by \$20 until the peak assessment rate of \$100 is reached in 5 years. As the attached matrix indicates, the annual assessment rate would start decreasing after year 10.

The actual timeline established by the City Council for constructing the Sidewalk and Trail plan could be at a different pace than the financing plan. The Council should be reminded that the Marie Avenue sidewalks/trails and the Safe Routes to Schools sidewalks/trails being constructed this summer and next on Wentworth/Bidwell/Bellows anticipated being paid for via the City-wide assessment district.

Establishment of Bike lanes and Sharrows

Staff has researched and discussed a few main east/west and north/south corridors, in which we could fairly easily reconfigure to add either a bike lane or sharrow (shared bike

and motor vehicle lane). The corridors were evaluated based on parking impacts and width of the streets

While County road corridors could also provide great opportunities, the County currently does not allow bike lanes to be identified. This is an area staff should continue to work with County staff on. The Park and Recreation Committee discussed these options at their June 14, 2016 meeting. After a thorough discussion of all the options, the committee unanimously recommended to the City Council the addition of the following on-street bike lanes:

- North-south bike lanes on **Charlton** from Marie to Butler Avenue moving the bike lanes to Ohio at Moreland and continuing to Annapolis as a sharrow (removing all parking from Butler to Marie).
- North-south bike lanes on **Livingston** from Marie to Thompson Avenue (removing all parking).
- Westbound bike lane on **Bernard** from Oakdale to Dodd (moving all parking to the south side only).
- Eastbound bike lane on **Moreland** from Delaware to Oakdale (moving all parking to the north side only).

Additionally the PRAC believes it is very important to educate the public through various sources on the changes to the various streets. Information regarding the new bike routes can be disseminated at the Night to Unite parties, through safety camps and on the various social media platforms, as well as the City newsletter.

STAFF REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION Staff is interested in getting feedback and direction on how to best move forward with the development of a strategy for implementing the Sidewalk and Trail plan.

Staff is also interested in getting Council reaction and feedback to the suggested bike lane ideas and, if moving forward is possible, to notify property owners along impacted routes and provide opportunity for input.

