

Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Transport Committee – January 17, 2026

Attendees: Chair Chris Bell, Councilwoman Mary Rensel, John Buda.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. The following was discussed:

Committee Structure and Membership

The committee discussed the structure of the new committee and the need to decide on the number of voting and non-voting public members.

A proposal was made for two voting members from the public in addition to the current members, with a requirement that they must live in the village.

Concern was raised that non-council community members might be too emotionally invested, leading to biased voting. It was suggested to establish a ratio of council to non-council members (e.g., two to one) to maintain balance.

Questions were raised about quorum requirements if non-council members are granted voting rights. It was noted that a quorum must be present for decisions, but it was unclear if the number would change. The fiscal officer will be consulted for clarification.

The full council will need to approve any decisions made regarding the committee's structure.

Enhancing Public Engagement and Communication

A consensus was reached to hold committee meetings outside of traditional work hours (e.g., evenings or Saturday mornings) to encourage public involvement.

The group noted that the trail topic is becoming emotional, with residents concerned about money, and stressed the need for consistent information dissemination to combat misinformation, particularly on platforms like Facebook.

Ideas for improving communication included better use of the village's Facebook page, the text alert system (sparingly), the monthly newsletter, and reaching out to Homeowners' Associations (HOAs).

To address recurring questions and keep residents informed, it was suggested to create a dedicated page on the village website or a publicly viewable document (like Google Docs) summarizing the project's progress, history, and overview.

Defining the Trail's Primary Purpose

The discussion emphasized that a clear objective for the trail's purpose is needed to guide decisions.

It was questioned whether the trail is primarily for serious cyclists, who would likely stay on the road, or for pedestrians.

The primary goal was stated as providing residents, particularly those on the west side of South Russell, with safe pedestrian access to the park without needing a car.

The trail is also seen as a way to enhance community health, wealth, and connection by enabling residents to be outdoors and interact more.

Trail Project Grant, Design, and Safety

Grant and Review: The committee previously proposed a path from 306 to Spring Drive, utilizing grant funding that requires a third-party review of the plans. After a previous call for qualifications yielded only one response, the group agreed to issue another call and proactively reach out to engineering firms, potentially using a list from ODOT, to solicit more competitive bids.

Trail and Road Safety Ideas: Several cost-effective safety measures were proposed, including reducing the speed limit from the park to Gurney, installing physical barriers to separate the path from traffic, repainting the road to adjust where vehicle traffic moves and widen the existing pedestrian lane on the south side, and adding more speed monitor signs.

Trail Design and Materials: The committee reviewed resident concerns about water runoff and the choice of asphalt. While the engineer stated runoff is not a concern, alternatives to a standard 5-foot asphalt path were discussed, including porous asphalt, crushed aggregate, and a porous lattice-like brick system, each with different cost, maintenance, and usability implications.

Project Priorities and Information Gathering

Funding: The finance committee is considering a levy for the trails. The group also discussed exploring various competitive grants (e.g., health, senior) and noted that funding bodies appreciate resident-initiated projects, which may allow for more flexible timelines.

Neighboring Communities: It was decided that committee members will research how neighboring communities like Pepper Pike and Orange funded and managed their trail projects to understand best practices and potential roadblocks.

Overall Priorities: The discussion touched on how the trail project fits within the village's overall infrastructure priorities, especially concerning a potential second phase of the Manor Brook stormwater project.

Student Safety and School Policy Engagement

A key issue raised is that the school currently has a policy not allowing students to walk to school on their own for safety reasons, preferring bus or car transport.

The group agreed on the need to formally engage with the school board to understand their concerns, determine if the policy is flexible, and see if the proposed trail could change their stance.

It was noted that even if the school policy remains, the path would still be useful for accessing the school for after-hours activities.

Next Arrangements

- Ask the fiscal officer about the quorum requirements if public members are added.
- Bring the proposal of adding two voting community members to the full council for input.
- Consult with fiscal officer to understand the structure and voting rules of the Parks Committee.
- Re-issue the call for qualifications for a third-party reviewer for the trail project grant.
- Research how neighboring communities/towns funded and designed their trail projects.
- Look into “bike cities” for multi-use trail best practices.
- Contact the school board to get on their agenda to discuss student travel policies.
- Ask the engineer about the feasibility of road modifications (e.g., altering road striping).
- Create robust plan for resident communication channels

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.