

Rankin, Braddock, North Braddock, East Pittsburgh & Turtle Creek Active Transportation Plan

Meeting Minutes

Date, Time, and Location: 6:30pm July 20th, 2017 Turtle Creek Municipal Building

Attendees:

Kelley Kelley, Turtle Creek Mayor
Deborah Brown, Braddock Borough Manager
Jill Heikel, Turtle Creek Borough
Barb Ritts, Braddock
Brian Sink, Braddock
Maria Cruz, Braddock
Roy Weil
Dennis Simon
Henry Boweden

Discussion Items

- 1.1 John reviewed what Pashek + MTR had accomplished in the time since the previous meeting. Progress included:
 - a) Field views of the five communities to inform recommendations
 - b) Evaluation of corridors and creation of preliminary active transport infrastructure recommendations
 - c) Further site visits to confirm feasibility
 - d) Contacted the County to inquire about the possibility of using the flood control corridor as part of a local and regional trail. The inquiry was met with a positive response, which led to a tour of the flood control corridor with Ann Ogoreuc, Darla Cravotta, and Dave Wright, Allegheny County staff. All agreed a feasibility study would be in order to evaluate the feasibility of the corridor.

- 1.2 Jess then presented the preliminary recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, refer to the attached map and spreadsheets. A summary of the proposed improvements is as follows:
 - a) Braddock Ave/Penn Ave Ext/Airbrake Ave is the only continuous route that connects all five communities without extensive grade changes or crossing of highways. Cooperation from RIDC to have a trail run parallel to the existing tracks on the back of the property and access through the flood control corridor are critical for keeping cyclists and pedestrians safe on this route. Braddock Ave becomes the Tri

Boro Expressway, which cannot be used safely for active transportation. ROW expansion would also be necessary where the proposed Floodgate trail reconnects to Braddock Ave to keep users off of the highway. This route would pass through the heart of downtown Braddock. A cycle track in this section would be possible, but it would remove one side of the metered street parking. This route would continue towards Carrie Furnace, where there are long term plans to reopen Hot Metal Bridge to pedestrians and cyclists, creating a safe connection to the GAP Trail. There is no current safe access, despite the bike lanes on Rankin Bridge. The route also passes through Rankin via Rankin Blvd, exiting the community along Miller Ave.

- b) Wilkins Township has expressed interest in connecting to Turtle Creek and the proposed Interworks Trail through their own active transportation study. Committee members for that plan were adamant about finding a connection via Brown Ave and Larimer Ave. There is a pinch point on Brown Ave in Turtle Creek that is not safe for cyclists or pedestrians. If this pinch point cannot be diverted, the connection cannot be made. Pashek + MTR has highlighted this section to review more closely. The Larimer Ave connection is feasible by diverting traffic along calmer, parallel corridors. This alternative requires the reconstruction of two small trail bridges.
- c) Bell Ave is another important connection between East Pittsburgh and North Braddock. The existing bridge is slated to be replaced in 2018. Pashek + MTR will inquire to see what pedestrian/cyclist accommodations are being made.
- d) Most north/south connections require substantial elevation change. These connections include:
 - Grant St/Maple Ave/James St (Turtle Creek)
 - Main St/Brinton Ave/Pallas St/Wolfe Ave (East Pittsburgh and North Braddock)
 - Library St/Jones Ave/Locust St (Braddock and North Braddock)
 - Corey St/4th St (Braddock and North Braddock)
 - Kenmawr Ave (Rankin)

1.3 John then discussed how these improvements could begin to be implemented, understanding cost is a major concern. Grants are a key way to help communities fund improvements, with varying match rates. Numerous improvements are also recommended along State/County roads. PennDOT has Transportation Alternatives Program and Multi-Modal Program. These programs are competitive funding programs which, if successful, the municipalities can access funding for implementing recommended active transportation features along active projects. The County also has an invested interest in improving active transportation, and is does look at how they can improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along their roadways.

1.4 John spoke in greater detail about the potential Floodgate connection. He said Dave Wright indicated it is positive that the rail is owned by Union Railroad, as they historically have been more cooperative than other rail companies. It was mentioned that Union Railroad and Turtle Creek have had some disputes over the years, primarily failing to maintain aging infrastructure. A suggestion was made that this might be an opportunity - if

Union Railroad is struggling to maintain its infrastructure, it might be more willing to lease/provide easements for the trail if they no longer have to maintain it. John reminded the committee that this is still a long term project, and that it likely will take 5 to 10 years to implement. John emphasized the importance of the municipalities supporting the proposal, and working with County and State officials to keep it in the forefront.

- 1.5 The final agenda item for the evening was planning the public meeting. John asked the committee if there was a preference between a presentation followed by Q&A or an open house format. The committee agreed that an open house format would be the preferred method. Turtle Creek offered the use of their community room for the open house.

Next Steps

- 1.6 The next meeting will be an open house public meeting held at the Turtle Creek Borough Building on September 20th, 2017 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek + MTR and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Please notify Pashek + MTR within one week of distribution. Otherwise, minutes will be distributed as final, and assumed accurate as written.

Prepared by: Jess Fegley
Date Prepared: 7/27/17
Distributed to: Committee members