

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 23, 2024

There was a meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission on **Tuesday, July 23, 2024**, at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Commission office located at 130 West North Street, Lima, Ohio.

Ms. Kinnear brought the meeting to order at 10:02 and after introductions proceeded with the agenda.

1. ROLL CALL

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|---------------------------|---|
| Kim Bruns | WOCAP |
| Alice Curth (virtual) | Delphos Senior Center |
| Jessie Doyle | Ohio Means Jobs/JFS |
| Carole Enneking | Family & Children First Council |
| Brandon Fisher (virtual) | Allen County Public Health |
| Casey Heilman | Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District |
| Michael Hensley | Allen County Council on Aging |
| Joe Lewis (virtual) | Marimor Industries |
| Charles Schreck | Citizen |
| Anthony Simpson | Citizen |
| Josh Unterbrink (virtual) | Activate Allen County |
| Leann Unverferth | Area Agency on Aging |

GUEST

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| Ian Kohli | City of Lima |
| Lanese Layne | |

STAFF

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| Tara Reynolds Bales | Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission |
| Cody Doyle | Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission |
| Megan Kinnear | Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission |
| Tonya Dye | Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission |

2. Thriving Communities Grant

Mr. Kohli presented on the Thriving Communities Grant. It is a direct funding to communities grant that works through LACRPC and ODOT. It is geared towards technical assistance to help with various projects. Submitted in early 2023, it kicked off in Fall of 2023. There are two capacity-building partners, Rocky Mountain Institute and AEEE, that are working with the local team. The goals are to help prioritize projects for the long-range transportation plan and how that document informs the TIP and STIP. A needs assessment was done where the census tracts were evaluated and how projects could fit into a needs matrix. Improving public participation is a second goal. The Thriving Communities Grant project team is looking at how to pinpoint various local leaders and groups to solicit the information that we need. We will have the assistance of this grant through June 2025. A survey is available in draft form to seek general information from people and gauge the priorities of the community to flesh out future projects.

IOBY is a kickstarter project for community projects that has launched. Citizens can submit projects to the website, as long as they are not long-term improvements. Artistic murals and tree plantings can be

considered. This is a first-come, first-served process and once funding is out, the project would be concluded. Funds do need to be matched and projects will need to be vetted for community approval.

3. URBAN SPRAWL: A DEAD-END ROAD

Mr. Doyle spoke regarding Urban Sprawl. He explained the role of the MPO and the Transportation Coordinating Committee to the CAC before beginning his presentation.

In the 1920s houses were closer to the roads, on-street parking more of the norm, and neighborhoods focused on the “front stoop/front porch” model. These neighborhoods had more multi-family housing and centered on multi-use districts with local schools and shopping. The development of urban sprawl began in the 1950s with the post-war generation and baby boomers moving out of cities and pushing towards subdivisions and away from the previous organic neighborhoods. These suburban models hadn’t been done before. In these, there is a focus on single-family homes, usually a lack of sidewalks, promoting individual transportation focus to get anywhere. Houses were set farther back from the road, and wider streets were developed, which created problems with speeding. Children who could once get to the local stores couldn’t do that in the suburbs, relying on parents for transportation, which then hindered their ability to work. The problems associated with urban and suburban sprawl started being explored by the Nixon administration, where they looked at traffic, noise, crime, and fast housing needs.

One of the problems with suburban sprawl is that the necessary infrastructure is government subsidized and the costs can never be recouped. Sewer and water need to be run to outer areas, along with roads. There are ongoing maintenance costs on these as well, which are not recouped by property taxes. The additional cost of a growing suburbia was the flight of retail businesses to the suburbs in malls. That left vacant space in downtowns, which often turned into parking lots and buildings being razed. The spread of vacant parking lots downtown creates both an eyesore and also issues with rain runoff, where the cities need to build more infrastructure to move rainwater and combat the environmental conditions associated with asphalt and stormwater.

Modern planning is beginning to focus development towards areas that already have infrastructure in place. Overall, governments cannot afford the sprawl model. Cities such as Columbus and Cincinnati are changing their zoning to mixed-use based on transit routes to refocus on community building and more efficient land usage. Some of the discussion with more compact mixed-use areas also involves parking. People want convenience and thus parking right outside the establishments they frequent. Urban planners are calling for more selective and focused parking where people would need to walk three or four blocks to get to their destinations. This promotes more retail effectiveness as people have to walk past more businesses to get to their final destinations. There were comments that there does need to be more handicap-accessible spots with more space to maneuver wheelchairs, etc., that do require more room in parking models.

4. OTHER

Ms. Kinnear stated that she had sent out a letter to the committee members to find out how to help the committee function more efficiently and to seek topic suggestions for future meetings.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:13.