

An Input to the North Ridgeville Master Plan

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A People-path Network

Goal: Interconnect all public sites and North Ridgeville neighborhoods with a network of pedestrian-friendly, bicycle-friendly, auto-free pathways.

Rationale: Nature made North Ridgeville *ideal* for bicycle transportation, North Ridgeville is *nearly flat*. We would be remiss not to take full advantage of it.

The Vision: Often, many of us would be delighted to commute locally by bicycle or on foot ...if we could do so safely. It would be efficient to integrate our exercise with our errands. And, families would definitely be better off if the kids did not need to be driven to so many places.

Bicyclists suffer in auto accidents. It seems foolish to let our city evolve in such a way that we must always choose between our safety and exercise, or between our kids' safety and their exercise, or between our kids' safety and their activities.

At present, it is easy to take a safe bike ride in North Ridgeville ...unless you want to go somewhere while riding. The schools, the stores, the library, the parks, etc. are risky rides from most of our residences.

An ideal people-path network should safely connect every residential area to all the places of activity ... without putting pedestrians or bicycles into space competition with motor traffic.

Network evolution: Without a wise master plan, a people-path will not happen. Here are a few of the elements needed:

Walking and biking within existing neighborhoods is fairly safe. But, absurdly, our neighborhoods usually only interconnect by busy roads, routed the long way around. **Inter-neighborhood connectors** should be

an early step. We can encourage people traffic without inviting through motorists.

People paths should offer short-cuts.

Long bicycle through-corridors should *not* be adjacent to busy roads, as are currently envisioned along a widened Center Ridge Road. Bike crossings across the many busy driveways would create more hazards. Bike corridors should logically connect to what is now the back side of the shopping areas. **Some people-path through corridors should parallel our main roads, with a minimum of traffic crossings.**

The proposed centralized **school complex** should some day become a reality. Also a southerly **extension of Jaycox Road** has been planned. It would be a shame if a safe **walk/bike school access system** were not part of these plans.

An enchanting vision of the future might see all sorts of novel people-powered vehicles in the school parking lot. They would use future inventions in lighting, GPS, etc.

Our intra-city path network should **connect with the inter-city path systems** that are evolving.

Benefits: A complete network of auto-free pathways would make our city a much better place to live:

- Young people would **not** need to be driven to their many activities. Except in harsh weather, they could safely walk or peddle there.
- Parents would be more flexible in caring for their families.
- Traffic would be less congested. A less hectic rush hour would help shoppers.
- All people would have safe alternatives to the automobile for local activities.
- People would be healthier.
- Family auto expenses would be reduced.