



Legislation Text

File #: 2463-2022, **Version:** 1

Background: This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Alternative Program to build a significant section of the Big Walnut Greenway on the far east side of the city, from Nafzger Park near Refugee Road to Big Walnut Park near East Main Street.

MORPC is accepting applications for federal funds for bike and pedestrian improvements, including regional trail projects. This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to submit a grant application to MORPC to build a significant section of the Big Walnut Greenway on the Far East side of the city, from Nafzger Park near Refugee Road to Big Walnut Park near East Main Street. This area of the City has very few bike and pedestrian facilities. It also rates on the High Injury Network as a dangerous area to bike or walk.

Five neighborhood connections would be added, providing connectivity for over 50,000 residents to the regional network. All of the alignment will be separated trail. Several key destinations will be linked by this project. These destinations include job and commercial centers, including Eastland, the Hamilton Road Corridor, and the East Main Street Corridor. It also includes three major city parks, including Helsel, Nafzger, and Big Walnut Parks, as well as, the Far East Community Center. Five communities are also connected, including Blacklick Estates, Walnut Heights, Eastland, Pine Hills, and Shady Lane. Two future Linkus transit stops at Livingston Avenue and East Main Street will also be connected. 16 schools are within a one mile walkshed.

A key result will be overcoming substantial barriers to biking and walking. The project will build four major trail infrastructure improvements, including underpasses beneath I-270 and I-70, an underpass beneath the Norfolk Southern railway, and a new pedestrian bridge connecting the Walnut Hills and Woodcrest Communities to the Far East Community Center, Walnut Ridge High School, and Big Walnut Park. This project is a collaborative effort with the Cities of Whitehall and Gahanna. When completed, over 12 miles of greenway corridor will be connected.

Principal Parties:

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
111 Liberty Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
William Murdock, Director, (614) 228-2663
Contract Compliance Number, Tax ID: 004591, 31-1009675
March 25, 2024

Emergency Justification: Emergency action is requested in order to obtain approval to apply for this grant as this legislation is required to be submitted with the grant request package and the application will be submitted as soon as possible upon approval of this ordinance.

Benefits to the Public: Cycling, walking, running, and active transportation opportunities provide highly recognized year-round benefits to urban lifestyles. Access to trails and to key destinations is one of the top rated priorities noted by residents. Over 50,000 residents live in the adjacent Columbus neighborhoods that will be connected to this trail. Three major employment centers, three parks, 16 schools, and some of the city's most scenic natural areas will also be connected to this trail as proposed.

Community Input/Issues: The Department has received letters of support from the community, the Central Ohio

Greenways organization, civic associations, area commissions, and city-wide trail users.

Area(s) Affected: Far East (58), South East (65)

Master Plan Relation: This project will support the Recreation and Parks Master Plan by improving access to trails and greenways corridors while providing safe east-west connections for nearby neighborhoods to the regional trail network.

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal action is required at this time. Future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

To authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to apply for grant funding from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Alternative Program to build a significant section of the Big Walnut Greenway on the far east side of the city, from Nafzger Park near Refugee Road to Big Walnut Park near East Main Street; and to declare an emergency. (\$0.00)

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks to apply for grant funding from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Alternative Program to build a significant section of the Big Walnut Greenway on the far east side of the city, from Nafzger Park near Refugee Road to Big Walnut Park near East Main Street; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance shows the City of Columbus' support for all application requirements; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operations of the Recreation and Parks Department in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to apply for this grant funding grant as this legislation is required to be submitted with the grant request package and the application will be submitted as soon as possible upon approval of this ordinance, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of Recreation and Parks be and is hereby authorized and directed to apply for grant funding from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Alternative Program which will be used to build a significant section of the Big Walnut Greenway on the far east side of the city, from Nafzger Park near Refugee Road to Big Walnut Park near East Main Street. This Council hereby supports this action.

SECTION 2. That this ordinance authorizes an application for the grant funds only and is not a commitment to expend City funds.

SECTION 3. That future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

SECTION 4. That the City of Columbus does agree to obligate the funds required to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Alternative Program.

SECTION 5. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.