

Activate Allen County — City learns about transportation plan

Written by Nancy Kline
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DELPHOS — City administration, the Delphos Area Chamber of Commerce, CIC, Delphos Parks Department, Canal Commission and Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association all had a voice at the Allen County Active Transportation Plan Project kickoff meeting in Delphos Thursday.

The plan falls under the auspices of Active Allen County, a Center for Disease Control initiative. Activate Allen County has contracted with the Greenway Collaborative and Poggemeyer Design Group to develop an Active Transportation Plan for Allen County.

According to Activate Allen County plans, consultants will work to develop a plan that will assess the gaps, barriers and bottlenecks that keep people from walking or biking within a neighborhood and throughout the county over the next year.

The program claims a prioritized plan will assist communities with improving quality of life through improved safety, crash reductions, enhanced health and well-being, energy savings and pollution reduction. The purpose of the plan is to reshape the transportation system to make walking and bicycling an easy and safe choice for everyday activities.

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Greenway Collaborative representative Norman Cox gave the presentation that introduced the program and had participants share their ideas of what their hopes and concerns are and what opportunities they see for downtown Main Street, the surrounding neighborhoods, between Delphos and Lima and between Delphos and Spencerville.

According to Delphos Safety Service Director Greg Berquist, Lima, Spencerville and Delphos proposed the first project which would link the three by a hiking, biking and walking path along the canal in Delphos, south to Spencerville, along the railroad tracks from Spencerville to Lima and back to Delphos along State Route 309.

Cox said the plan, if implemented, makes a community more attractive to job creators as well as providing benefits for citizens.

“Job creators are looking for vibrant downtowns, green infrastructure, recreation amenities and a creative entrepreneurial environment,” he said. “You could fashion this trail to enhance your downtown and bring more people through Delphos to see what you have to offer. You already have a great start with the Canal Commission Museum, the Museum of Postal History and several eateries.”

Cox also outlined how the program can improve quality of life.

“A properly-marked trail would increase activity levels, reduce crashes and injuries, enhance health and well-being, reduce pollution and give a sense of place,” he added.

The program also promotes rethinking streets, noting that more recreation time is spent on streets than in parks and streets define a community’s character.

“You need to look at your streets and try to see what others see,” Cox said. “Are they busy? Are there people moving around? Who would want to stop at a cafe, no matter how charming it looks, when the streets are deserted?”

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Participants led Cox on a walking tour of Delphos to assess intersections and well-traveled roads for possible paths of a trail and to explore the points of interest that would be found on the trail.