

## **SCIO CHURCH ROAD SIDEWALK GAPS DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 18, 2013

**Time:** 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Lawton Elementary, 2250 S. Seventh

**Attendees:** Public Present: 23; refer to Appendix A for sign-in sheet.

City staff present: 3; Kayla Coleman, Nick Hutchinson, Elizabeth Rolla

Council members present: 1; Margie Teall

**Re:** Scio Church Road Sidewalk Gap

### **Next steps:**

A resolution to request funding for the design of the north and south sidewalks will be presented to Council on October 21, 2013. If approved for funding, a design and more precise cost estimate will be prepared. A second council meeting to request approval of funding for construction will be scheduled once the design and cost details are available. Construction of the south side (and possibly the north side) sidewalk could potentially begin as soon as late 2014.

### **Meeting notes:**

City staff shared a presentation to review the alternatives and costs for addressing sidewalk gaps along Scio Church Road. The meeting presentation is available at [www.a2gov.org/sciochurchsidewalk](http://www.a2gov.org/sciochurchsidewalk).

### **Open discussion and feedback forms:**

The majority of feedback received was in favor of the sidewalk installation.

Some key topics of discussion included:

- Funding concerns related to special assessment, request for more specific figures.
- Several neighbors are interested in contributing funds and looking for another mechanism for this aside from forming a neighborhood association.
- Safety concerns as justification for sidewalk need.
- Safety concern for crosswalk use as a sidewalk alternative.
- Project schedule and timing.
- Nearby destinations in need of pedestrian connection and also the potential for funding contribution from these businesses.

The complete meeting notes are provided as Appendix B.

### **Feedback Form results summary:**

- 17 Total feedback forms were submitted at the meeting
- 13 Respondents were in favor of City Staff moving forward to pursue sidewalk installation along the south side of Scio Church Road to Maple Rd.
- 3 Respondents were opposed to City Staff moving forward to pursue sidewalk installation along the south side of Scio Church Road to Maple Rd.
- 1 Respondent was undecided regarding whether City Staff should move forward to pursue sidewalk installation along the south side of Scio Church Road to Maple Rd.

Many respondents also provided open ended feedback (refer to Appendix C). Key topics addressed on the feedback forms were similar to what was heard during the open discussion; key topics included:

- Funding concerns related to special assessment
- Sidewalk needed to address pedestrian safety issue in the area
- Safety concern for crosswalk use as a sidewalk alternative
- Nearby destinations in need of pedestrian connection

**Post meeting and electronic feedback**

One written feedback form and 13 email responses were received after the meeting. All of these additional responses were in support of City Staff moving forward to pursue sidewalk installation along the south side of Scio Church Road to Maple Rd.

The complete post meeting and electronic feedback are provided as Appendix D.

## Appendix A

### Sign-in Sheet

DAVE ASKINS

Ellen Fisher

W. HIGGINS

Shirley Thornton

PETER HOUK

Jennifer German

Bruce Souby

Christine Aidala

Scott Weber

ERIC MACKS

Erin Maddens

Peggy Leonard

Marita Boehman

Steve McKenag

Andre Boehman

Ken Brock

Mick Horton

Ann Nicklas

Ajit Saini

John Nicklas

Gloria Trossa

Margie Teall

Joe Hood

JERRY LEONARD

## Appendix B

### Open Discussion Meeting Notes

Note: this is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. This summary has been developed from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased. Where staff responses or clarification were provided they are shown in italics.

- Will residents be charged for sidewalk installation along Scio Church Road? *Per City Code, the properties that front the sidewalk are charged via special assessment. However, staff will pursue other funding sources (e.g., Federal Surface Transportation Funds) to reduce the cost to homeowners.*
- Staff mentioned that the cost figures shown on the slides are total per foot cost – not the assessment cost which would be less; please explain the difference between the cost estimates and potential assessment costs. *Extensive grading or retaining walls (as may be required for the potential Scio Church Sidewalk) are typically not included in special assessment charges to property owners, however the walkway construction itself would likely still be charged.*
- When is Scio Church Road planned for reconstruction? *This portion of Scio Church Road is not planned in the near term for resurfacing or reconstruction.*
- What is the timeline for the south side sidewalk construction? How would it impact the nearby properties? *This construction would take place over a couple of months; it may be loud, dusty, etc.*
- Would the sidewalk installation cause an impact to drainage in the area? *The sidewalk would sheet flow into vegetation, which would allow opportunity for infiltration. There is not a large volume of water coming off of 5 ft of sidewalk.*
- Would this project impact the wet weather projects? *No*
- Will a fence be installed along the sidewalk? *A railing would be used wherever the slopes are steep enough to cause safety concerns.*
- A citizen expressed that the sidewalk should be put in by the City at the City's expense. This should have happened when the neighborhood became a part of the City.
- Is the sidewalk millage a potential funding source? What are the restrictions on this funding? *New sidewalks are not an eligible expense from the sidewalk millage; the millage is for repair of existing sidewalks.*
- This project needs to be coordinated with the Upper Mallets project.
- What is the potential timing for this project? *Next construction season may be feasible.*
- What is the timeline for the planning phase? *Based on input from tonight's meeting our next step is to go to Council to request funding for design. Council will need to decide where the appropriate funding comes from. Design may be complete sometime around November/December. The goal would be to construct late next construction season.*
- Did Council approve funding for the study? *Yes, council approved \$15,000 to study the alternatives.*
- Funding is a concern for those who may be specially assessed. One resident expressed that he did not see or sign the petition for this, and is concerned about the impact that this may have on his savings for children's college.
- Will rear lots adjacent to the sidewalk installation be required to contribute funding? *Current City policy is that these lots would not be specially assessed.*
- Could a property owner be sued for a slip and fall accident along this sidewalk? *Potentially, but the City could also be sued. It would not be any different that the potential liabilities of property owners near any other sidewalk.*

- A crosswalk could be used to alleviate the need for sidewalk on south side; use existing sidewalk on the north side.
- Concern was expressed that crosswalks can be dangerous.
- If a crosswalk were used at this location, what kind of light would it have? Would there be a button to push? *These details are not yet determined, and would need to be explored if a crosswalk is pursued.*
- Concern was expressed that crosswalks might make pedestrians feel safer than they actually are.
- Could a traffic light be installed rather than just a sidewalk? *A light must be warranted based on the traffic conditions in the area.*
- How can the City demand that sidewalk must be on both sides of the road and then not do it?
- Where does the funding come from for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sidewalk ramp updates? *That is covered by streets millage for streets that were resurfaced but not brought up to ADA standards in place at the time of resurfacing.*
- Will the study recommend funding options? *Staff would request authorization of funds for design; this would provide the cost estimate.*
- A sidewalk along the south side of Scio Church Rd. will make the area safer, it will be better for the neighborhood, a more attractive and valuable place. We want to see more detail; how much will it cost? What would be assessment cost be? If we don't have that info yet then we can't make the decision yet.
- Would like more info about ways to share that assessment cost. Multiple citizens expressed interest in contributing to share expense among neighbors. *Neighborhood contributions could work by an agreement through the neighborhood association. We wouldn't assess all of the parcels separately or have agreements with multiple homeowners, but the City could have an agreement with a neighborhood association.*
- The largest expense needs to come from the City for the Public land that needs a sidewalk. Homeowner/ neighbor funds shouldn't used to contribute to the sidewalk portion along public land. Sidewalk installation along the public land is the City's responsibility.
- Will the community have another opportunity to reassess this plan once we have more detail? *Yes.*
- *There is a staff effort underway for sidewalk gap prioritization.*
- Are there other sidewalk gap projects underway? *Yes, about 3 others are currently being pursued in response to petitions that have been submitted.*
- *Is there interest from this group for the City to pursue sidewalk installation along the north side of Scio Church Road? This group is focused on the south side gap. The neighbors on the north side of Scio Church Road have other options for pedestrian access.*
- Is there potential for private businesses to contribute funding? i.e. businesses that are "destinations" that the potential sidewalk would lead to. E.g. the Ice Cube and Wide World? We have not heard of this being done. One neighbor expressed he is willing to approach the businesses, but needs information from the City regarding what would the mechanism would be for businesses to make contributions.

## Appendix C

### Open-ended Feedback Form Responses

1. South side project is a priority. South side project has become a major safety issue with the construction of the Public Library, the Ice Cube, and Wide World. I have personally witnessed multiple automotive vehicle-pedestrian near-misses. I have witnessed 2 automotive accidents on Scio Church from Covington. The South side project should be completed as soon as possible.
2. South side sidewalk is a priority. No contiguous sidewalk is a major safety issue for access to the Pittsfield Public Library, the Ice Cube, Wide World Soccer Center and other Oak Valley establishments.
3. I want to see accurate costs that the 3 homeowners will absorb that won't be covered by Federal funding and also any other funding alternatives that could help them on the south side portion.
4. I think the sidewalk on the south side of Scio Church to Maple is the most important thing to pursue. The burden on fronting property owners needs to be determined as soon as possible.
5. I think the sidewalks should be done on the south side of scio church as a first priority. I don't trust the crossing islands. Cars do not stop. There is much more traffic on Scio and we don't need to have kids "trying" to cross Scio to get to Oak Valley.
6. Priority should be south sidewalk between Churchill and Maple.  
A large amount of traffic is created daily to access:
  - Lawton School
  - Boulder Ridge Sub and other nearby subs to Boulder Ridge
  - Ice Cube
  - Library
  - Gretchen's House
  - Kumon Center
  - Wide World
  - Dozens of Businesses (Meijer, Target, etc.)
7. I am very much in favor of moving forward with the sidewalk on the south side. I would love to see a mechanism put in place to help the three properties that will have an assessment that would not require us to form an association.
8. Yes- so long as the north side gap is also done. My concern is completely about the safety of the neighborhood children. Highschoolers crossing Scio Church to get to Pioneer, and they can't get to the light at 7th and Scio church because of the sidewalk gaps on both the North side and the south side. Also, last school year we had 2 Dicken students in Scio Church just so they could get to school because of the North sidewalk gap. Scio church is too busy and too unregulated of a street for the safety of our children already having to be in it. The sidewalk gaps need to be closed.
9. Ann Arbor prides itself on being bike and pedestrian friendly. Our City neighborhood, Landsdowne, is cut off from safely accessing anything West of us in a motorized manner, as a result of the sidewalk gaps on Scio Church Rd. It is one thing to impose a new requirement on residents- shoveling, maintain sidewalk. It is quite another to expect existing homeowners to come up with the cost of putting in a new sidewalk. This was the City's error by not requiring the original developer to put in a sidewalk. The CITY needs to make it right.
10. Yes- assuming cost is reasonable (it is not ok to have a few property owners pay thousands of \$). It should be on south side to avoid dangerous crossing of a busy street. Traffic and speed on Scio Church before school is heavy.
11. I would support the south side and north side sidewalk constructions. All efforts should be made to minimize the costs to the property owners that might be subject to special assessments.

- Somehow these property owners (subject to special assessments) opinions should carry extra weight. Better numbers for the assessments to the effected property owners would be helpful.
12. Please put the sidewalk in that would make it standard with the rest of Ann Arbor. (sidewalks on both sides of the street as written in Ann Arbor's laws). Access to our community library is inaccessible to our children. Access to friends across the street is inaccessible. Access to parks (Greenview and Pioneer) is inaccessible.
  13. A great presentation- I hope you will continue with this project.
  14. No- not given the homeowner "assessment" funding model. Having a sidewalk is one thing, but not at the expense of a few homeowners for the benefit of all. If the funding could be sourced through a millage, or some other city/neighborhood tax, then I might be 'for' this project. If it was "warranted," I would be more supportive of a pedestrian island and light at Churchill. As it is there's a long gap between the lights/crosswalks at 7th and at Maple, so it would be a benefit anyways.
  15. As there already is a sidewalk on the other side of the street it seems more logical to install a crosswalk instead of a sidewalk. How many people would use the sidewalk?
  16. Can not commit until I know the cost per homeowner. The sidewalk is very desirable but of equal importance is the cost each person must bear.

## Appendix D

### Additional feedback received after the meeting (via email, or feedback forms submitted after the meeting).

1. Support for south side sidewalk- Calculate the outside-contractor cost for standard sidewalks alongside two Churchill Downs dwellings, and 15' in front on one Lansdown. Deduct the new ramps and corners required at Churchill/Scio and the ramp connections.  
In meetings with the County and others, Scio east from Greenview (a bad crossing and useless ramps) to S. Main, there will be tear-ups for surface drainage, and with "narrowing" the design has to resolve the islands, pedestrian crossings, curbs fronting township properties, drainage from those properties, and sidewalks.  
[the ramp replacements, per federal order have been installed with road money prior to the recent millage renewal. So if the City can act improperly in this, and tear up the ramp connections- 8-12 slabs per corner there is probably less than 300' of resident-pay pavement with we will cover.]  
So if you modernize Scio East, the same design criteria must be applied to the dangerous Scio West, i.e. curbing, drainage, narrowing, no parking on north as now prohibited on the south (to permit narrowing and a turn lane, Scio to S. Maple North). The guard rails are already wrong/ plenty of room if you copy the Pittsfield side/ approach to the bridge.  
\*The impound in Eisenhower will be large not nearly as expensive as the impound at Lawton, and it will affect Eisenhower frontage on Scio.  
\* It been 2 years for the petition and 30+ years for residents on both sides of Scio.  
Keep in mind- in my 46 years at 2131 Chaucer, we have had 3 sets of corners (50% new ramps are unsatisfactory) zero access to S. Main, zero access to S. Maple, and zero access to Stadium, on a public sidewalk specified as mandatory by City standards, in noncompliance on City property.
2. I am writing this message to inform you of my support with city staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd. to Maple Rd. I currently live at 2109 S Seventh, and recently moved from 1875 Wiltshire Drive. I know that there is general consent in the neighborhood that sidewalks in the proposed area would be WONDERFUL!  
Thank you for your support in moving this project forward.
3. Thank you very much for coming to speak with us about the Scio Church Sidewalk project last night. It was very informative and it was great to see the progress that has been made.  
I support moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd to Maple Rd.  
As some others brought up at the meeting last night, I am also concerned about the financial burden of this project on the three homes. I understand that it is a very small fraction of the total project cost that would land on those three homes, but this is a project that will benefit many hundreds of homes, it seems unfair to place the cost on just three. I also understand that the city will likely not have any option to spread the cost among other homes, I am just voicing my only real concern with this project.  
Additionally, I regularly commute downtown using the AAATA bus route 15 that comes along Scio Church Rd. I am frustrated by the lack of safe crossings from the South side to the North side of Scio Church to facilitate catching the bus (or simply to visit friends on the other side Scio). I would love to see a safe crossing added somewhere between Mershon and Churchill, but only if it would be truly safer than the current situation.
4. I support the City Staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Road to Maple.  
However, we need to be able to track the design/development of the eastern portion of Scio Church road which has been stated to be "narrowed", has gaps, needs curbs and sidewalks, and

has severe Pedestrian-crossing problems with the existing service road islands, plus some sub-surface drainage will be added to alleviate surface water runoff (as remains possible on the western end near Maple) In addition, the City has to resolve the problem of Township islands wherein those property owners will have to accept the addition of sidewalks, possibly paying for them in like manner to paying for City utilities when those properties are sold. It is improper for those islands to receive the benefits of improved roads, drainage, and other amenities with being obligated to pay their share for them.

Even though the residents of Churchill Downs have already paid for the Scio sidewalks and the City has acquired a large tax base for the last 30 or so years, at no cost, we will still need to know the answer to " how many feet of sidewalk of residential property we will jointly subsidize (and what will the extent of the curbs, ramps, and ramp pad approaches is the City obligated to install at the intersection of Scio and Churchill?) I very much appreciate your understanding of this problem . For me, sidewalks have been a 45 year aggravation and is ongoing.

5. I support city staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd. to Maple Rd.
6. I was unable to attend the neighborhood meeting at Lawton last night, so I am writing to express my support regarding the city's staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd. to Maple Rd. My daughters and I walk to the AADL Pittsfield branch often, and a safe sidewalk would be much more convenient than crossing the busy street twice.
7. I was so excited about the positive results of your study last night that I forgot to submit a paper feedback form!

I definitely support extending the sidewalk on the south side of Scio Church. A pedestrian refuge for crossing Scio Church is also a good idea.

At this point, I think that there needs to be a little more discussion with the residents on the north side of Scio Church before moving forward. The Churchill Downs and Lansdowne residents have had many meetings on this topic. I don't think that the Dicken area residents have done the same. Can you maybe organize some meetings specifically for that topic?

Thanks again for your effort on this project.

I had an idea about the curb cuts and ramps. See if you can follow my logic here:

The last time the city refurbished Churchill or Scio Church, they should have brought it up to spec with sidewalks and ramps.

Saying it another way: these ramps are work that should have been done when the roads were refurbished. Therefore, they are indeed an example of a non-compliance that should be fixed as part of the settlement of the curb cut lawsuit, with road money. And, since we have requested them, these would count toward the 25 per year that should be completed based on community input.

What do you think?

*Staff response: Good thinking, but unfortunately that's not exactly how it works. The last time Churchill was resurfaced was 1998, and at that time there was no sidewalk along Scio Church to connect to. The ADA would not have required any new sidewalk to be constructed – only to make existing curb ramps compliant with ADA standards. You could make an argument that when Churchill was resurfaced, ramps could have/should have been installed to connect the currently dead-end sidewalks on either side of Churchill, but that's a gray area (there's a lot of gray areas in ADA).*

*Regardless, I think this is a moot point. The cost of installing the ramps themselves would not be assessed to the adjacent property owners anyway – only the sidewalk. Past practice has been to address requests for ramps with a separate small budget that is set aside for that purpose, and not assess property owners. We would follow that same logic in preparing the assessments for this project.*

8. Below is my public comment from the Ann Arbor CIL and myself as a citizen. I am also a board member with the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition and our Board additionally supports the sidewalk expansion for both pedestrian and bicycling access.

Non-motorized improvements are needed along Scio Church road. The Ann Arbor CIL is in support of action to be taken ASAP. I cannot be in attendance at Monday, November 19, 2012 City Council Meeting. I want to submit this written statement for submission of public comment for the record.

Scio Church from Maple to Main on both north and south sides is an area that is used by walkers, riders, drivers, strollers, buses, school buses, taxis, cars, vans, semi-trucks, preschoolers, elementary, middle, high school, college, professionals, families, seniors, people with disabilities, people of all ethnicities, people of all religions, people of all sexual orientations, people who are city taxpayers, people who are in town for football games and is essentially an area traveled by the WHOLE COMMUNITY and ought to be accessible to the ALL in the community. Both the north and south sides from Maple to Main have many deficiencies, inadequacies and safety concerns for non-motorized use.

The bridge over I-94 at Maple was substantially improved without safe access to get to it, to the schools, to the neighborhoods, to the public library, or to the community and business at large. We need the City's help to address this properly. We need the City to complete and improve non-motorized access on Scio Church from Maple to Main on both the north and south sides of the road. It is important enough to be listed in the City's Non-motorized Master Plan, it needs to be an immediate priority to be addressed.

I have previously stated we would like to count parts of this project in the sidewalk and curb ramp request program. This is an essential improvement and it is needed ASAP. I have lived in the area for 25 years and every time I walk on Scio Church it is risky to say the least.

Thank you for your assistance into implementing access for the community. The Ann Arbor CIL and the community will greatly benefit from this non-motorized improvement.

9. We live on Churchill Drive south of Scio Church Drive and we support city staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd. to Maple Rd.

10. I strongly support extending the sidewalk along the south side of Scio Church Road to Maple Road and completing the sidewalk on the north side of Scio Church Road. The current situation, with the missing sections of sidewalk, is dangerous and should be corrected as soon as possible. Thank you for your efforts to complete the sidewalk on Scio Church Road.

I was not able to attend the recent meeting at Lawton School. From the documents on the city website, it appears that the proposed sidewalk on the south side of Scio Church Road may be right next to the road. I think that it is important to have a strip of grass or natural material separating the sidewalk from the curb and road. If the sidewalk is right next to the road passing vehicles will splash the pedestrians when there is water on the road. Even in dry weather it is unpleasant to walk right next to a busy road. Putting the sidewalk right next to the road is dangerous because there is no buffer to protect pedestrians from their own errors or errors of drivers.

The existing sidewalks in the neighborhood have grass and trees in the lawn extension area separating the sidewalk from the road. The sidewalk on Scio Church Road should have a similar extension area separating the sidewalk from the road to provide a safe and pleasant path for pedestrians.

*Staff response: For the most part, the sidewalk will be separated from the road with a vegetated extension. However, near the I-94 bridge and where there is a sudden and significant drop-off, the terrain requires that the sidewalk be placed nearer the road.*

11. I support the sidewalks from Delaware to Maple being put in the FUTURE, however, I think we need to prioritize what is necessary now, compared with what we can postpone until a later time. Scio Church road, Greenview, and many others streets in are area are in deplorable and

unacceptable condition! We currently have a sidewalk on the north side of Scio Church which can be used until our ROADS in the area are resurfaced.

*Staff response: Street resurfacing is funded by the Street Reconstruction Millage. Sidewalk installation must be funded from a separate source. So installation of new sidewalk does not preclude resurfacing of streets. The request for resurfacing of Scio Church and Greenview has been added to the list for evaluation.*

12. I was not able to attend the meeting last week regarding improving the sidewalks on Scio Church between Maple and Delaware but feel strongly that this is an improvement that our neighborhood really needs. I have 5 children ages 3-15. I have never felt comfortable having them walk to even ride their bikes to the Pittsfield Library which is so close, but they have to dash across Scio Church with no cross walk to avoid walking on the shoulder of the road to get to the overpass over I-94. That light at the corner of Maple and Scio is also poorly times such that the left hand turn arrow turns green right as the walk signal tells kids to walk into the street. I have called the city about this, but have not let my kids venture that way because it's just not safe. I was excited to hear that these improvements were possible.
13. I'd like to show my support for city staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd. to Maple Rd.  
Our family visits the Pittsfield Library many times a week. We have tried biking, but have found it difficult to cross back and forth with our young children.  
Thank you very much for pursuing this important improvement! It will make it much safer for our family.
14. I support city staff moving forward to pursue the extension of the south sidewalk along Scio Church Rd. to Maple Rd.