

REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Thursday, October 8, 2020

Subject: Public Information Meeting #1

Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Name	Organization
George Temple	Town of Oxford
Kathleen O’Neil	Oxford Main Street Project Committee (OMSPC)
Chrissy Kimball	OMSPC
Mary LoPresti	OMSPC
Mary Beth Nelson	OMSPC
Jim Sanders	Oxford Main Street Visibility Committee (OMSVC)
Blair Richardson	Public
Maureen O’Donnell	Public
William Hovan	Public
Kelly Kerrigan	Public
Joe Mannion	Public
Suzanne Wisniewski	Public
Rena (*)	Public
Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
Priscilla Cotto	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Sara Radacsi	CTDOT
Casey Hardin	TranSystems (TSC)
Nick Mandler	TSC
Mark Arigoni	Milone & MacBroom (M&M)
Nick Kavadas	M&M
Jim Levy	Planning4Places (P4P)

Meeting Purpose:

The meeting was a virtual public information meeting hosted jointly by the Oxford Main Street Project Committee (OMSPC) and the Oxford Route 67 Alternative Transportation Study team. The meeting consisted of an introduction by First Selectman George Temple, a video presentation by the OMSPC and a technical presentation by the transportation study team. Moderated question and answer periods were held twice during the meeting. The meeting was recorded and the video uploaded to the [study website](#) along with the presentation materials.

Presentation:

Casey Hardin introduced himself and explained the meeting ground rules. He invited First Selectman George Temple to provide introductory remarks. Mr. Temple praised the work of the OMSPC and explained that he was looking to delegate additional tasks to the committee. He explained that the Town’s vision is to develop the Little River Nature Preserve and other transportation and recreational resources along Route 67 to be an attraction for the Town.

Mr. Hardin introduced Kathleen O’Neil, chairperson of the OMSPC, to introduce the committee’s presentation. A video presentation played summarizing the formation of the OMSPC and the work they have done since their inception in 2017.

Ms. O’Neil noted that a new OMSPC website will be launched soon featuring fundraising and volunteer opportunities. She thanked the meeting attendees for participating and explained that there are many opportunities for them to become involved with the project.

Aaron Budris introduced himself as the project manager from the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) for the Oxford Route 67 Alternative Transportation Study. The study has been initiated to help the Town develop a transportation master plan for the Route 67 corridor. This will help the Town be better-positioned for future funding opportunities. He introduced Mr. Hardin to give a presentation summarizing the study’s progress to-date. A summary of the presentation is included below, the entire presentation is available on the [study website](#).

Mr. Hardin explained that the Route 67 corridor carries high traffic volumes at high speeds and that the infrastructure is automobile-centric. There are minimal pedestrian accommodations and the typical roadway shoulder widths are not sufficient for comfortable cycling. There is also no transit service in the corridor, or within the Town of Oxford. A draft Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum is available on the [study website](#).

Mr. Hardin presented the study team’s initial thoughts on the potential routing of a multi-use trail. The initial conclusion is that the trail should generally follow Route 67, as a sidepath. There are several opportunities to connect to environmental resources and commercial destinations. An alternative routing, following the Little River, was deemed impractical due to grading challenges, need to acquire rights-of-way and permitting issues. The study team will further refine the sidepath options and analyze the positives and negatives for each. In particular, attention will be paid to locations where the path would need to cross Route 67. Mr. Hardin presented two potential typical sections. Ideally, a 5’ buffer can be provided between the curb-line of Route 67 and the pathway. If less is provided, a guiderail would be provided as a physical divider between path users and the roadway.

Mr. Hardin presented a series of slides, illustrating potential sidepath segments and potential views of the sidepath. Beginning and Oxford Center, design is substantially complete for a new 10’ sidepath on the west side of Route 67 between Town Hall and Dutton Road. This project will likely be constructed in 2021. The study team recommends an additional sidepath on the east side of Route 67 through the Oxford Center area. Between Oxford Center and Quarry Walk, the study team is recommending that the sidepath follow the west side of Route 67. There is potential for a spur along Route 42 near Victory Memorial Park. The team recommends that the sidepath switch to the east side of Route 67 at Quarry Walk. This would capitalize on sections of sidewalk that have already been constructed.

Mr. Hardin explained that the sidepath would continue south towards Seymour primarily on the west side of Route 67. The study team is evaluating potential points to cross the sidepath from the east to west side of Route 67 south of Quarry Walk. North of Oxford Center, the study team recommends placing the path on the west side of Route 67. There are two opportunities for spur paths north of Oxford Center, at Old State Route 2 and Old State Route 1. The team is also considering four ways to connect the Route

67 sidepath to the Larkin State Park trail using Larkey Street, Christian Street, Hawley Road and Route 188.

Mr. Hardin presented the study team's initial thoughts on implementing transit. He indicated a potential demand of approximately 13,600 rides per year (or approximately 37 per day). This would require a minimum of two vehicles. Due to the income levels and geographic spread of employment locations, it is unlikely that a transit service designed to serve commuters would be viable. Mr. Hardin outlined four options the study team will evaluate:

- Fixed route along Route 67 added to the Waterbury Division of CTtransit
- Add Oxford to the Valley Transit District to provide demand-response (on-call) service
- Town-operated demand-response service
- Subsidized ridesharing costs (Uber / Lyft flat rate)

Mr. Hardin explained that the study team's next steps include assessing the transit concepts through fall 2020 and continued interactive analysis of the trail routing through spring 2021. The study team has activated social media accounts and is has an [online survey](#) published to gather feedback.

Mr. Hardin concluded the presentation and proceeded to take questions via the Microsoft Teams chat window and by calling on users who identified themselves using the 'hand raise tool'.

Question & Answer:

Jim Sanders asked whether consideration had been given to connecting to the Southford Falls State Park. Mr. Hardin indicated that this is one of several recreational destinations that the study team believes should be connected via the Route 67 sidepath.

A member of the public asked whether there are already sidewalks in Seymour. Mr. Hardin noted that sidewalks currently end at the Oxford town line.

Rena noted that the number of unsignalized pedestrian crossings of Route 67 should be minimized. Mr. Hardin explained that signalized intersections are the preferred locations for crossing the sidepath and that any unsignalized locations would only be selected following a safety review.

Chris Lester asked whether the Route 67 sidepath system would connect to Matthies Memorial Park in Beacon Falls. Mr. Hardin explained that, like Southford Falls State Park, this is another recreational destination that should be connected to a regional trail system.

Mr. Sanders asked whether any sidepaths were being considered for Route 188. Mr. Hardin noted that Route 188 could provide connectivity with the Larkin State Park Trail. Other uses for Route 188 are likely outside the scope of the study.

Rena asked whether funding was available for trail maintenance. Ms. O'Neil noted that grants typically require that the path owner provide maintenance funding. Mr. Sanders explained that volunteers can be used to maintain the Little River Nature Preserve trails. Mr. Hardin noted that a 10' wide sidepath is wide enough to be plowed by a small mechanical plow.

Rena asked whether the Town held any liability for accidents on the sidepath. Ms. O’Neil noted that it would be covered by the Town’s insurance.

Rena asked when the project would begin. Ms. O’Neil noted that the Town has funding in-place to construct the portion of the sidepath on the west side of Route 67 between Town Hall and Dutton Road. The Town is applying for a Community Connectivity Grant to provide a sidepath on the east side of Route 67 through Oxford Center. The results of the study will also provide a prioritization and implementation plan.