

REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 12:30 PM

Subject: Oxford Main Street Committee Meeting

Location: Google Meet

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Kathleen O’Neil	Oxford Main Street Project Committee (OMSPC)
Tony SanAngelo	OMSPC
Mary LoPresti	OMSPC
Mary Beth Nelson	OMSPC
Robbi Costigan	OMSPC
Jim Sanders	OMSPC
Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
Casey Hardin	TranSystems (TSC)

Meeting Purpose:

The meeting was a regular meeting of the Oxford Main Street Project Committee (OMSPC). The Oxford Main Street Alternative Transportation Study team presented on study progress and facilitated a question and answer period. The following represents discussion pertaining to the study. A full recap of other meeting business is available on the [OMSPC website](#).

Presentation:

Aaron Budris introduced the presentation, explaining that it would focus on the screening process for potential sidepath routing alternatives. The study’s goal will identify and advance the design on a preferred alignment. He explained that this was an important time for the OMSPC to provide feedback on routing decisions. For

Casey Hardin began the presentation by recapping the study’s progress to-date. The recent focus of the study team has been on potential routing options for the sidepath. Initial concepts were presented at the virtual Public Information Meeting on October 8. The study’s draft Existing Conditions report is available on the study website.

Casey indicated that additional efforts to generate responses to the survey will be undertaken in the coming months. To date, there have been 37 responses, all by residents of Oxford. The responses fit within expected trends that the majority of trips in the corridor are by single-occupant vehicle. A high percentage of respondents have indicated that they do not walk in the corridor as they feel there is no safe place to walk. Respondents have also indicated that they do not often use transit. The primary indicated transit use is to access New York City via Metro North Railroad.

Casey presented two potential typical sections for a sidepath along Route 67. He explained that a 5’ buffer distance between the curb and the path is desirable. Should this not be feasible due to adjacent constraints, guide rail would be placed between the path and the roadway. The proposed path width is 10’.

Casey presented a table of screening criteria, intended to help the study team evaluate the potential routing options for the sidepath. Criteria include connectivity with key destinations, likely cost, property impacts, environmental impacts and, most importantly, minimizing the need for path users to cross Route 67. In evaluating alignment options and establishing the criteria the study team has conducted several site visits to evaluate the feasibility of implementing unsignalized, or mid-block, path crossings. Based on the average speeds of vehicles traveling on Route 67, amongst other concerns, the study team recommends that these crossings be minimized. Therefore, the primary routing conclusion is that the sidepath should consistently stay on the south side of Route 67.

Casey then presented a series of previously identified routing options and explained how well they satisfied the screening criteria. He began with the Oxford Center to Quarry Walk segment. In Oxford Center, the Town's Community Connectivity project will implement a section of the path along the west side of Route 67. Kathleen O'Neil explained that a contractor the project has been advertised and awarded. Construction should be substantially complete by fall 2021. The Town also submitted a second Community Connectivity Grant application for a complimentary sidepath on the east side of Route 67. Casey explained that this is an area where the study team feels that a mid-block crossing would be feasible and recommends providing sidepaths on both sides of Route 67. This supports the Town's desire to create a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly, Oxford Center. Crossings of Route 67 to create a pedestrian network, would be provided at the signalized intersection with Riggs Street and at a mid-block location near the main entrance to the Little River Nature Preserve. The study team will continue to explore infrastructure solutions to maximize safety at this location.

Casey then discussed the next segment to the south. The study team had previously identified a potential alternative alignment for the sidepath that would follow Route 42 (Chestnut Tree Hill Road Extension) and offer a connection to Victory Memorial Park. The road would cross Route 67 at the signalized intersection with Riggs Street and again at the unsignalized intersection with Old State Route 3. Casey explained that maintaining the path on the west side of Route 67 would likely have additional construction costs associated with the need for rock excavation on the steep side slope. It also would not provide connectivity with Victory Memorial Park. However, the study team recommends maintaining the path on the west side of Route 67 to avoid the need to create an unsignalized crossing at Old State Route 3. Casey asked the OMSPC members for their opinion on this recommendation. Following discussion, the group concluded that maintaining the sidepath on the west side of Route 67 is the preferred alternative. Jim Sanders suggested providing a spur connection to Victory Memorial Park and wayfinding signage for the Naugatuck State Forest, located further east along Route 42.

Casey then presented the segment containing the Quarry Walk development on the east side of Route 67. He indicated that the signalized driveway intersection offers an opportunity for sidepath users to cross directly to the development. The study team evaluated an alternative sidepath alignment that would cross Route 67 at the signalized Quarry Walk driveway intersection and stay on the east side of Route 67, follow the alignment of Old Route 67 and cross Route 67 back to the west side at the unsignalized intersection with Old Route 67. This alignment would not need to cross the Little River, whereas following the west side of Route 67 would need to cross the river twice, increasing costs. However, the need to cross Route 67 at an unsignalized location and the constrained right-of-way along Old State Route 67 leads the study team to recommending maintaining the sidepath on the west side of Route 67. Casey asked the OMSPC members for their opinions on this recommendation. Following discussion, the group concluded that maintaining the sidepath on the west side of Route 67 is the preferred alternative. They noted that a connection with Quarry Walk would still be provided at the signalized intersection, and that

there are sidewalks to facilitate access to different parts of the development. Jim Sanders noted that a connection could be made to a municipal property on the west side of Route 67 just north of Quarry Walk.

Casey then advanced to the remaining segments south of Quarry Walk. He indicated that the study team feels the best option is to maintain the sidepath on the west side of Route 67. The topography and available right-of-way support this conclusion. He indicated that one of the study team's key remaining tasks is to finalize recommendations from the Seymour Town Line to the Seymour Fish Ladder / Naugatuck River area.

Casey then discussed the section north of Oxford Center. He asked the OMSPC what they felt the sidepath should connect to as its northern terminus. Kathleen O'Neil explained that the Larkin State Park Trail has always been thought of as the most important connection. Casey asked whether the Southford neighborhood or the Southford Falls State Park were also important. After discussion, the group agreed that making the connection to the Larkin State Park Trail and Southford are both important. Therefore, the sidepath alignment will be extended northerly to Route 188 to make the connection to the Larkin State Park Trail in Southford. Additional wayfinding will be provided at Hawley Road and Christian Street to direct users to alternate routes from Route 67 to the Larkin State Park Trail.

Casey discussed two potential alternative trail routings along between Oxford Center and Southford. First, at Old State Route 2 and Christian Street, the alternative routing would avoid the need to cross the Little River twice. However, it would introduce two unsignalized crossings. The group discussed and agreed that it may be feasible to locate one, unsignalized crossing at Christian Street, with wayfinding for the Larkin State Park Trail. The main routing for the sidepath should remain on the west side of Route 67. The second location, at Old State Route 1 and Hawley Road has similar characteristics, except the alternative alignment does not avoid any river crossings. Similar to previous group discussion, it was concluded to maintain the preferred path alignment on the west side of Route 67. An unsignalized crossing at Hawley Road with wayfinding to direct path users towards the Larkin State Park Trail will be recommended.

Casey identified the study's transit service alternatives. An analysis of potential commuter demand indicates that commuter service is unlikely to be economically viable. The study team has previously presented four preliminary service alternatives:

- Add fixed route along Route 67 to the CTtransit Waterbury Division
- Expand the Valley Transit District to provide demand-response service in Oxford
- Provide a Town-operated demand-response service
- Subsidize TNC (Uber / Lyft) rides within Town

Based on the initial analysis the first option, a new fixed route, does not seem economically viable. The study team plans to set up a meeting with Valley Transit District to discuss these alternatives.

Casey explained that the study team's next steps are to refine the northern and southern sidepath termini and coordinate with CTDOT on design details. The study team is preparing a Story Map to post the routing alternatives to the study's website. The study must conclude by the end of June.