

TOWN OF STOW
COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the November 7, 2017 Complete Streets Committee Meeting

Members Present: Karen Kelleher, Margie Lynch, Jim Salvie, Kathy Sferra, Jesse Steadman

Absent: Bill Bosworth, Mike Clayton

Conversation with Howard Stein Hudson

Present:

Liz Flanagan, Transportation Planner, Howard Stein Hudson

Lou Rabito, Manager of Complete Streets, Howard Stein Hudson

Liz Flanagan provided a document summarizing the reports, maps, and shapefiles received by Howard Stein Hudson, as well as additional considerations and a basic schedule going forward. Liz Flanagan described their methodology for creating a Prioritization Plan, including collecting data from the Town, setting up an online mapping tool, an in depth analysis of the streetscape in Town, public forums, and additional data creation. Liz Flanagan said that the creation of the priority projects will be iterative and compiled with assistance from the Complete Streets Committee and utilizing the specific goals and performance measures the Town creates.

Liz Flanagan described the WikiMap as an online mapping tool available for all residents to report their comments and concerns attached to pinpoints on a virtual map of Stow. Liz Flanagan said that the map allows users to comment on the experience on streets from the perspective of all users.

Liz Flanagan said that the additional analysis they conduct includes a look at census tract data for an equity assessment, safe routes to school, and a Town-wide bicycle and pedestrian analysis.

Margie Lynch asked about the use of Strava data to show bike routes. Liz Flanagan said that they look at key destinations in town to assess latent demand. Jesse Steadman said that it will be important to ask regional bicyclists to utilize the WikiMap, and noted that in terms of latent demand, the Assabet River Rail Trail now ends right at the edge of Stow.

Liz Flanagan said that their initial data analysis can be shared at the public forums for comment, and that combined with the WikiMap data and ground-truthing key intersections, a list of priorities will be sent to the committee. Lou Rabito added that the priority isn't necessarily the order sent to MassDOT for the Tier 3 project submission; that is determined by the Committee.

Jesse Steadman said that with the Tier 2 submission deadline of April 1, 2018, the final plan needs to wrap up in March, and therefore public engagement should start as soon as

possible. Jesse Steadman said that the committee is working on a preliminary list of goals, and suggested that the list is shared with the public at the forum for feedback. Liz Flanagan said that she could provide examples of goals and weights from other towns for the committee to react to. Kathy Sferra suggested that beginning the public forum with a discussion of the goals may be a helpful way to frame the forum as a town-wide project.

Liz Flanagan said that a draft of the WikiMap could be ready as soon as November 13, and activated by November 17th. The Committee agreed to schedule the public forum for Wednesday, December 6th at 7pm.

Liz Flanagan presented a WikiMap used in another Town's process, describing how to place pinpoints, add comments, and choose to either 'agree' or 'disagree' with a neighbor's comments. Liz Flanagan recommended hosting the map on a Town website.

Margie Lynch asked how to engage residents who aren't able to utilize the website. Liz Flanagan said that hard copies can be made available in public areas, such as the library or the Council on Aging. Lou Rabito said that these will be made available at the same time as the WikiMap is activated.

Jim Salvie asked how the map can fold in questions regarding Track Road, and whether improvements would help users. Liz Flanagan said that the map will have a welcome window that can have customized questions to prompt users. Liz Flanagan noted that the pinpoints don't need to be placed on top of recognized roads, so unpaved ways will still be able to be commented on.

Lou Rabito added that they can bring a map to the public forum so that participants can place a sticker near their home to show where they're coming from, where the dense villages in town are, and whether public outreach was effective.

Jesse Steadman asked about the format of the public forum, noting that sometimes discussing sidewalks conjures images of granite curbing and urban landscapes for some residents. Jesse Steadman said that it is important to balance context with complete streets improvements. Lou Rabito said that they have worked in smaller towns, most recently in Dunstable, and that the format of the forum encourages listening and discussion. Liz Flanagan said that the forum will have breakout sessions, where participants are speaking more with neighbors.

Karen Kelleher asked about the ability for Stow to craft a competitive project plan for funding while balancing community character. Liz Flanagan said that the funding is competitive, so they will want the priority projects to fulfill as many qualifications as possible, though as long as a project includes ADA compliance such as curb ramps and tactile strips, then projects with a more rural design will be fine.

Jesse Steadman asked about their experience working with surrounding towns to connect Complete Streets projects. Lou Rabito said that during his time working at MassDOT, he hoped those connections would be made, though he said he hasn't seen it in practice.

Jesse Steadman asked how a survey could reach those who may use last mile connections to regional transportation. Jim Salvie recalled the effort to get a shuttle in Stow. Liz Flanagan noted that this is another question that could be included in the welcome window on the WikiMap.

Jesse Steadman asked about the timeline for coming to consensus around the prioritization goals. Liz Flanagan said that specific goals to address should be confirmed before the prioritization project analysis. Liz Flanagan said that what is submitted to MassDOT is a spreadsheet of the top 15 or 20 projects with specific detail including cost estimates. Projects listed in the prioritization plan that aren't on the list sent to MassDOT will include a more narrative description of the recommended improvements. Liz Flanagan noted that Tier 3 funds cannot be used on design, which could impact the Town's year 1 projects.

Jesse Steadman asked what interventions could be viable on heavy use roads without much right of way. Lou Rabito said that they would look at traffic calming, bike sharrows, signage, and crosswalks; items that don't require takings. Jim Salvie noted that residents may want signage specifically to remind bikers to ride single file.

Jesse Steadman asked if interventions would include street striping techniques, such as getting rid of centerlines. Lou Rabito said that could be considered, though roads with average daily traffic counts of over 6,000 vehicles are recommended to stripe.

Jesse Steadman asked if it would be helpful to provide information on county layouts. Liz Flanagan said that it would be.

Jesse Steadman asked if it would be helpful to give locations of trailheads. Kathy Sferra offered to assist with making a map. Liz Flanagan noted that some of their analysis uses aerial imagery, so photos of specific streets or crossings that the committee would like to share would be helpful. Liz Flanagan suggested doing a walkthrough ahead of the public forum with members of the Committee.

Margie Lynch asked for an updated schedule.

Kathy Sferra asked for a copy of the completed Prioritization Plan for Lancaster.

Jim Salvie asked for materials regarding the WikiMap for the Board of Selectmen's meeting on November 14.

Discussion of Meeting Minutes

Minutes of October 18, 2017

Kathy Sferra moved to approve the minutes as amended.

Margie Lynch Seconded.

VOTED: 4-0 In favor (Karen Kelleher, Margie Lynch, Kathy Sferra, Jesse Steadman–Yea; Jim Salvie Abstained).

List of Key Destinations

The Committee reviewed a list of key destinations in Stow, including categories such as Parks/ Open Space/ Recreation Areas, Schools/ Community Centers, Multi-family Housing Developments, Farm Stands/ Orchards, Villages, Large Employers/ Employment Centers, and Regional Destinations/ Out of Town Destinations.

Margie Lynch said that the list should note if the location is a seasonal destination or if other notes could be added to help understand the type of use.

Kathy Sferra noted that the list is a good template to use for sending the consultant photos or for a site walk ahead of the public forum.

Preliminary Goals and Metrics

The Committee reviewed a list of Preliminary Goals, Metrics, and Additional Considerations. The Committee discussed refining these more ahead of the public forum, as well as the importance of allowing goals to reflect values articulated by residents at the public forum.

Additional Services- Traffic Assessment Tasks

Jesse Steadman described the potential for an additional services contract with the consultant to craft a traffic assessment to better understand the growing volume of vehicles on the roads. Jesse Steadman said that this assessment could look at traffic counts, crashes, speeds, and vehicle types, and that it could address the Town's potential for thickly settled districts and safety zones. Jesse Steadman said there are funds left over from Annual Town Meeting's allocation for the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan that could go toward funding an in depth traffic assessment.

Karen Kelleher said that she is more inclined to look into an additional services contract once the Prioritization Plan is complete, as there is an April deadline with MassDOT for the plan.

The Committee agreed to invite Bill Wrigley, Town Administrator to a future meeting to discuss the additional services contract, and to put together a scope of work for Howard Stein Hudson to consider at a future date.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys