

## Route 109 Design Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 13, 2011 – 7:00 PM

Medway Senior Center

76 Oakland Street

*Present: Paul Yorkis, Chairman, Route 109 Design Committee; Tom Holder, Director, Department of Public Services; David D'Amico, Deputy Director, Department of Public Services. Other Committee Members: Pam Benjamin, Matt Buckley, and Dan Hooper. It was noted that Susy Affleck-Childs and Ann Sherry were attending a meeting of another Town committee, and that Peter Cooper and Chan Rogers were away on vacation.*

*Also present: John Diaz and Geoffrey Howie, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.; Sean Sanger, Copley Wolff Design Group.*

At 7:07 PM Mr. Paul Yorkis called the meeting to order. He stated the committee will be meeting next to discuss revised streetscapes based on tonight's review and comments, and then another date to discuss the 25% design point.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Regarding the minutes from the public presentation held on May 4, 2011 at Medway High School, it was noted that the dollar amounts on page 2 were incorrect. Dan Hooper moved that the minutes of May 4 be approved as corrected; David D'Amico seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Regarding the minutes of the neighborhood presentation held on June 15, 2011 at the Medway Public Library, David D'Amico moved to accept the minutes as drafted; Dan Hooper seconded. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Review Streetscape Designs:**

Mr. Sean Sanger, Copley Wolff Design Group, began his presentation of streetscape components. He acknowledged they are dealing with overhead utility lines and other things such as fountain in front of the church. He briefly described the road alignment and where walkways will be located throughout the project, noting that it might be interesting to see if any particular land use will drive any specific needs. A brief discussion of the Rabbit Hill Historic District followed. Mr. Yorkis suggested that whatever is determined for the historic district should be used for the entire project to provide continuity in the appearance. He suggested that area businesses may take a cue from what the Town does and then maintain that continuity. Committee members nodded in agreement. Mr. Yorkis stated that period lighting fixtures would be included in the costs for the project. It was noted that such continuity will increase the ability to be "in sync" as much as possible.

Mr. Tom Holder asked if conditions exist that would call for different things in a residential historic district compared to a business historic district, or some that would not work well in one area or the other.

Mr. Sanger responded that he did not think lighting fixtures would be very different. He reviewed artistic renderings of the areas, commenting that the placement of pedestrian walkways and tree plantings need to be determined. He suggested putting trees into larger planted areas where they will get more water and larger trees can be planted. If trees are too close to road, tree growth in coming years will encroach into the roadway making the street seem narrower. Discussion followed. Mr. Hooper commented that many of the existing trees are not in good shape.

Regarding pocket parks or waiting areas, Mr. Sanger stated he wanted to present the initial plans, and then work with the committee to determine where those parks might be located. Drainage is an important consideration.

Mr. John Diaz reminded the committee those parks might fall into area under jurisdiction of business owners. For example, their routines in things such as snow removal or piling may affect where that park area might be.

Mr. Hooper asked if all walkways fall within the existing right-of-way with the exception of the triangle at the entrance to Choate Park. Mr. Yorkis replied that this was the case on the whole. Depending on what the final plans are, the committee may go to the property owners for an easement.

The following discussion focused on the north side. Mr. Hooper suggested “walking the sidewalk” in order to get the feel of it, while noting the uneven pavement, lack of crosswalks, speed and noise of cars, curb cuts, etc. He suggested a sidewalk on the private (non-business) side of the street might have a safer feel for pedestrians. Mr. Sanger replied that this could be problematic as the grass strip needs to be a good width in order to support tree growth. The root ball will grow over time and can impact sidewalks as roots become large. Ms. Pam Benedict suggested the sea of pavement contributes to that. Mr. Matt Buckley suggested some variation could be made in the placement of sidewalks so that it isn’t a straight shot. Mr. Sanger stated he is willing to look at it further but cautioned that we cannot go too far onto private property without an easement. Mr. Diaz cautioned that parking is right up against the treed area, and parking spaces cannot be eliminated. Mr. D’Amico suggested a short fence or similar element of demarcation. Mr. Sanger suggested a stone wall. Mr. D’Amico suggested something at the entrance, perhaps a short raised bed kind of thing. Mr. Yorkis stated the committee could work with businesses to rearrange parking spaces so that the spaces are not so close to the planted areas.

At this time Mr. Yorkis mentioned a grant proposal has been developed which will address walkability and other factors relative to this project.

Mr. Holder cautioned that we have to be careful to stay within the right-of-way. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT) has no objection to using existing right-of-way. Otherwise, easements with every single property owner will have to be negotiated, surveyed, etc. which can be a lengthy process. Mr. Yorkis stated four large property owners do not have objections at this time. Discussion followed. On the south side, sidewalk is being added, which utilizes the bulk of the remaining

right of way. Mr. Yorkis pointed out that this is an important update as it allows pedestrians to traverse the entire length and cross at crosswalks when necessary.

Describing a streetscape from the roadway in, Mr. Sanger stated it would be granite curbing with a sidewalk, or if there is room, it could be pavers, then concrete. Mr. Yorkis asked if the project could use streetlights that meet the Dark Sky Initiative, meaning the light is projected down not up. Mr. Sanger stated some are available. Discussion on LED lighting followed. Could there be a solar-powered signal at Choate Park? It was noted that LED lights will have the potential to reduce the Town's energy costs, and solar-powered signalization could be explored where installation was practical.

Mr. Sanger displayed samples of crosswalks and sidewalks from projects he had done in other communities. Citing a need for the sidewalks being as low in maintenance as possible, Mr. Holder stated he would prefer the resin be impregnated into the concrete so that it does not have to be painted or otherwise touched up. He also expressed concern for trash and litter being blown around and caught up in grassy areas. Mr. Sanger asked if businesses would be amenable to helping in controlling litter. Mr. Holder suggested a program such as "Clean a Store Front" or other program where sections of the road are monitored by groups in the community.

Mr. Geoff Howie cautioned that Massachusetts DOT may not be as receptive to the lighting and sidewalk upgrades as we might hope. Mr. Diaz stated the DOT will likely approve the ornamental lighting in the historic district if it is appropriate to maintain the historical appearance. Mr. Yorkis suggested the Town's Adaptive Use Overlay District might allow for continuation along the entire length of the project.

Mr. Sanders stated that the taller the fixtures are, the less visible the utility lines will be. Mr. Yorkis stated he would like to get rid of the lights mounted on utility poles). Mr. D'Amico stated there could be significant loss of lumens by doing that, and suggested staggering the lights to spread the available lumens with fewer light fixtures. Mr. Yorkis stated he would also like the poles in the middle of the sidewalks eliminated. Discussion followed.

Mr. Sanger continued with his conceptual plan, noting that he has initially planned trees for right next to the road, then the sidewalk. In a residential area, there is no signage to worry about so placement can come closer to the road. Mr. Yorkis stated he knows the owners of some of those businesses and can approach them to allow planting of the trees on the interior side of the sidewalk and they might take responsibility for watering the trees. Mr. Sanger suggested using ornamental trees that will be hardy, drought-tolerant, and do well in an urban environment. Mr. D'Amico stated the trees should be planted at least 5-6 feet away from the sidewalks because of the damage roots will do over time.

Regarding the Choate Park entrance, Mr. Sanger presented renderings depicting enhanced sidewalks and greenery. Mr. Yorkis stated that because Chicken Brook is covered by the Rivers Act, the 200-foot buffer zone comes into play. The project application needs to precisely explain that what is currently there is coming out and there will be no net increase on impervious surface. A decrease in impervious surface would actually be better. Mr. D'Amico suggested shifting the entrance to the right somewhat so that it is not directly across from the mill.

Mr. Hooper suggested shared parking spaces with other entities in the area. He continued to state that ultimately he would like to see it as a Choate Park/Thayer House combined area, utilizing the entrance

off Main Street, and eliminating Mechanic Street as the entrance. Mr. Yorkis reminded the committee of a previous discussion to make Oak Street a one-way street. Mr. D'Amico stated the closing of the entrance had nothing to do with speed, and more to do with the safety of children playing in park. Mr. Buckley suggested a slight bend at the entrance which will cause drivers to slow down as they enter the park, noting it could be just a tree that may intentionally block line of sight.

Mr. Hooper stated the small triangle of space is practically useless, but it could be expanded if the entrance was moved. Mr. D'Amico stated the triangle has good drainage and can be attractive with plantings.

Mr. Sanger pointed out that he does not usually get involved until the 75% design point has been reached, noting this was his first pass at things to see how they worked with what GPI has developed.

It was noted that a public hearing happens after the 25% point submission. Major changes from DOT have to be done before the hearing can take place, otherwise they will get the go-ahead. DOT comments as well as public comments will be considered.

Mr. Diaz stated the committee will need to make a decision on moving the park entrance, whether it is a one-way or no left turn or whatever, so that the entire Choate Park area can be worked on and completed as a unit. Mr. Yorkis noted that Community Preservation Act funds can be utilized for this part of the project as the Town owns the whole of Choate Park. Town Meeting action is required to approve the use of the funds, after submission to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mr. Hooper offered to have a conversation with Mark Cerel of CPC to alert him that this may be happening. Mr. Holder suggested a conversation with the Parks Department as well.

Mr. Sanger asked what groups might be available to research lighting that may have been here years ago. Various publications, as well as groups such as the Historical Society and the Community Church, were suggested.

### **Review and Recommend Design Options:**

At this time, Mr. Howie asked the committee to state preferences on various components.

First, he asked for a vote on a single left-hand turn at the intersection of Route 109 and Main Street, with a straight/right-hand lane. This is the option using the bump-out and parking lane on the south side. There was brief discussion on appropriate signage. Mr. Diaz stated that typically the through ways are not marked, only the turn lanes, though it might make sense to mark the straight/right lane so drivers do not consider it a double left. Mr. Yorkis stated the signalization will have capacity to adapt to increased traffic flow to cover the 20-year-life expected of the project.

Mr. Diaz stated there are limitations to the model, but they are minimal. The operation of the major intersection takes priority over the occasional car being out of sync.

Mr. Yorkis asked about making Highland Street a one-way to the north. Mr. Diaz stated the 25% public hearing will still allow the one-day to be amended.

**Committee Consensus: Yes, single left-hand turn at the intersection of Route 109 and Main Street, with a straight/right-hand lane, bump-out and parking lane on the south side. Highland Street will be designated a one-way street heading north, subject to testing after school starts in the fall.**

Regarding one lane in an eastbound direction straight east on 109, Mr. Holder stated the DOT will be more likely to approve two lanes as it looks forward to increased usage in 20 years (Alternative 3). Discussion followed. Mr. Yorkis reminded the committee that increased traffic from Bellingham may necessitate two lanes, and the right-turn lane could be reassigned as a combined straight/right if necessary. Discussion followed. Mr. Buckley suggested striping the inactive area (right turn lane) is at least a visual reminder of what's intended. The bump-out will prevent people from turning into that lane. Mr. D'Amico suggested installation of reflectors on the end of the bump-out.

Mr. Buckley suggested a shorter right turn lane to make it obvious that it is a local turn. Mr. Diaz stated that does not set the space for future expansion. There was discussion of an island with a right turn lane cut to direct traffic with Keep Right signs. The crosswalk could go through the island.

**Committee Consensus: The portion of Main Street to the west of the Main Street intersection would be a two-lane in the eastbound direction, the right hand to be right-turn only, with a raised island and sidewalk moved toward the west with a crosswalk cut-through, reducing the length of the crosswalk.**

There was brief discussion regarding a sidewalk at this corner. Mr. Diaz stated if the sidewalk is extended later, it does not make sense to put in a short length now. Mr. Hooper acknowledged there is very little room for additional sidewalk at this time.

Regarding the westbound portion from west of Slocumb Place to the intersection, the suggested concept consists of three lanes - one right-turn, one left-turn, one straight - in a westerly direction. Mr. Hooper asked how far the lane striping can continue on Milford Street heading west. Mr. Diaz responded he will look at how far they can take it. Mr. Yorkis stated lanes can always be re-designated as need arises. Mr. Howie stated there is only room for four-foot sidewalks on the church side.

**Committee Consensus: Three lanes, one right, one left, one straight in a westerly direction.**

**Committee Consensus: Eastbound portion of Route 109 from Franklin Street to High Street includes space for parking with bump-outs at each end.**

Discussion followed on crosswalks on Main Street across Slocumb Place, across Main Street, and across High Street. It was noted there will be no signals for those crosswalks. Mr. Hooper expressed concern that the design caters to use that is predominantly on Sunday mornings. Mr. Yorkis stated it also encourages people to use the library and provides a way for them to get to it for a small cost. Mr. Buckley asked if it would make sense to put the crosswalk on the corner of High Street on the south side, noting cars will go around a driver stopped for pedestrian. Discussion followed. Mr. Sanger stated that, symbolically, the more residents see that changes are made to accommodate them, the more they will be used as intended. Mr. Diaz stated that once two left-turn lanes become necessary, the crosswalk will probably come out. A driver would not notice walkers on corner of High Street when they are looking left to gauge entering the intersection. Mr. Buckley asked if the shaded area in the middle of Main Street was a raised area like a rumble strip. Mr. Howie stated it could become that, but

it is now more of a surface indication like striping. He stated further that if left turns are prohibited from High Street onto Main Street, the traffic will be better controlled at that corner.

**Committee Consensus: The committee accepted the crosswalks as presented.**

Discussion followed on Winthrop Street and the impact on Cassidy Field with its extensive use during the summer. Could the sidewalk be extended farther up Winthrop Street? Mr. Howie stated he can ask DOT about it.

**Committee Consensus: The committee accepted the design consisting of signalized intersection featuring a left-turn lane onto Winthrop Street along with a through lane eastbound, with crosswalks on all streets, also featuring a left-turn lane from Winthrop Street onto Main Street.**

There was a brief discussion on curbing.

Ms. Benedict expressed concern that there are too many traffic lights. Mr. Yorkis stated the lights can be synchronized so that drivers don't get stuck at every light, and the traffic flows better. Mr. Diaz stated all the traffic lights are demand-activated.

Mr. Buckley stated a choke point occurs in the area of the post office directly across from the shopping center. He suggested moving that entrance slightly west, combining the entrances and eliminating a curb cut. He expressed concern for traffic flow within the lot. Mr. Diaz stated they would have to consider how the entrance lines up with existing striping if it is moved. Discussion followed. Mr. Buckley asked if any consideration will be given to consolidating curb cuts. Mr. Diaz stated they did consider it, but opted to instead designate one as entrance-only, and the other exit-only, or similar designations. Mr. Yorkis stated consideration has to be made for areas where large trucks make deliveries as their access into the parking lot cannot be impeded. There was brief discussion on business owners being willing to work with the design and improve their storefronts and landscaping in tandem, and creative solutions for those who are hesitant. Those people may hesitate because of financial obligation to those improvements.

**Committee Consensus: The committee accepted the turn lanes, curb cuts, signalization and other enhancements shown on the plan for the business district.**

**Committee Consensus: There was acceptance on the overall concept plan.**

There was brief discussion regarding Pond Street and crosswalks all the way around. Mr. Diaz stated it is outside the scope of this project, and those enhancements would likely be the responsibility of any future developer. There was brief discussion on Holliston Street.

**Select Date for Next Community Meeting:**

Mr. Howie estimated that the 25% public hearing would occur sometime in March or April of 2012. GPI will submit the project application in September, and then have to wait for comments from DOT.

The committee agreed to meet on Wednesday, August 31, at 7 PM for a review of revised streetscapes, close to the 25% design point. There is a possibility the meeting can be moved forward if GPI is ready with the revisions sooner.

**Walkable Community Workshop:**

Mr. Yorkis stated he would be meeting with a representative from the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) to walk the project. This may not be the person who will conduct the workshop, but they will try to include that person as well. Mr. Yorkis stated he will notify everyone when a workshop is determined. Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) is the traffic arm of the Metropolitan Planning Office, reporting to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. He anticipated the workshop could happen very close to the 25% meeting.

**Other Business:**

There was brief discussion on project funding. Mr. Yorkis stated the project did not get added to the long range plan, and the project will likely not be added to the TIP because of the lack of construction funding. He stated that Christopher Philbin's position is that the Federal Highway Administration requests specific information and actions, all of which have been done, including a letter from the Town Administrator to David Moeller.

Regarding construction, it's unclear whether a highway reauthorization bill will be introduced as 2012 is an election year and that might constrict necessary legislation. Due to changes in congressional districts, Representative McGovern may not belong to us much longer. If he remains, the \$9.75 million will be requested. Otherwise, we have to work with the new person. The Town does not have the money, and the project will have to be funded via appropriate legislative discussions and actions. Mr. Yorkis stated that the Medway Board of Selectmen has indicated that they will not pursue a \$9.75 million override for this project, and most residents would not be in favor of that. He stated funding will likely be a no-local, no-state match scenario. Discussion followed.

**At 10:12 PM Mr. Hooper moved to adjourn; Ms. Benedict seconded. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt  
Night Board Secretary