

Public Information Meeting Minutes

Mapleton Avenue-Thompsonville Rd Sidewalk Project - Suffield, CT
State Project No. 0170-3515 / Community Connectivity Grant Program (CCGP) Grant
August 10, 2021; 7:00 PM at Town Hall

Karen Isherwood (KI), Town Engineer, began the meeting and explained that the project will be funded by a Community Connectivity Grant Program (CCGP) grant that was awarded to Suffield in 2019. Attendees were informed that Alford Associates were contracted for design services, and would present progress plans (30% design) to date. As plans progress, a permit will be required from the Suffield Conservation Commission for work within nearby upland review areas. Review and approval by the DOT will also be required for this project. The project proposes a 4' wide concrete sidewalk, starting at the existing sidewalk located within the State's right of way on the south-east intersection of Rt 75 Main Street and Mapleton Avenue, continuing easterly on the south side of Mapleton Avenue to the intersection of Mapleton Avenue and Thompsonville Road, and continuing easterly within the State right of way on the south side of Thompsonville Road, terminating at the existing sidewalk at Rawlins Brook Road.

Christian Alford, (Alford Associates) discussed the standard layout for the sidewalk, for a 4' wide concrete sidewalk, and be located 6' behind the road, where possible, to provide a 6' grass snow shelf. Progress plans were reviewed including all areas where the location of the sidewalk were adjusted to avoid obstacles, including mailboxes, trees, fire hydrants, utility poles, etc. Throughout the meeting, the anticipated project route was displayed on screens using available imagery on Google Maps.

Questions/comments were raised about the project, including:

Will funds need to be used on the sidewalk only?

Who determined the location of the project?

How was it evaluated that it was needed in this location?

Can alternate routes be suggested in place of Mapleton Avenue/Thompsonville Road?

KI was unable to answer these questions definitively and indicated she would follow up.

Comments were made by attendees regarding the safety along Mapleton Avenue, and the number of accidents that have occurred on the south side of the road.

A question was raised, why it is being proposed on the south side and not the north side. KI explained while she was not here when the application was submitted for grant consideration, she believes the decision was made to provide access to residents from additional/neighborhoods that currently intersect the proposed route, on the south side.

Attendees offered additional comments including:

The 4' walk and 6' snow shelf is essentially losing 10' of their front yard. It was explained that the project is proposed primarily within the limits of the State's right of way and not on private property. It was noted that there are a few isolated areas where the amount of right of way available is not sufficient to accommodate the 4' wide sidewalk and an agreement will need to be made with these property owners in order to construct the sidewalk as proposed.

Additional questions were raised including:

Was there a study for safety along this route? Was the sidewalk designed for speeds? KI answered that neither a specific safety nor a speed study was completed prior to the design of the sidewalk.

A resident offered his support of the sidewalk, for safety, as he typically walks the road with his family and small children.

What is the condition of the sidewalk within driveways? KI answered that concrete is proposed through all driveways. In future meetings with the DOT, she will be asking for relief of this in areas where achieving ADA grading will be challenging. She will ask to keep existing asphalt driveways as is in these locations. If DOT does not accept this, then additional work will be required to grade farther into driveways within private property and will likely require an easement from property owners to construct.

Attendee referenced the owner of a commercial property on the route submitting a letter with concerns. KI indicated receipt of no letter.

Property owner of corner lot (Mapleton/Thompsonville) is concerned with distance of sidewalk, as two houses are located close to the road. Christian Alford explained the sidewalk would be located adjacent to the road in this location, providing as much separation as possible.

Will the State have a public hearing? KI thought not, but was unsure and indicated she would follow up.

Resident on Thompsonville Rd expressed concern about his driveway and retaining wall along his driveway. Discussion followed about the existence of a nearby spring in this vicinity, that discharges into the gutter line of Thompsonville Rd and continues down to Quail Run. Resident added that water in the area contributes to icing conditions within Thompsonville Road, specifically in front of Quail Run, that ices up and impacts drivers leaving Quail Run.

Christian Alford discussed the addition of drainage structures proposed to intercept this runoff including a catch basin and additional underdrainage. The resident was concerned about underdrains impacting roots of nearby trees and killing the trees. KI indicated they would consider surface collection where possible.

Questions by residents of a property-specific nature were raised, and KI indicated she would meet separately to discuss.

Residents expressed a need for money to be spent elsewhere in town, such as sidewalks in front of the Middle School (KI represented that construction is anticipated to start soon of a 10' wide multi-use trail on the north side of Mountain Avenue from the Middle School west to Sheldon Street), widening bridges, etc; as opposed to constructing a sidewalk in this location.

The meeting terminated at around 9:30pm, with final questions raised from earlier discussions regarding the need for the sidewalk in this location, and potential changes not only to the proposed route (consider alternate locations in town, or consider proposing on the north side of current route), and also questioned the possibility of making changes to the roadway itself (reconfiguring the intersection of Mapleton Avenue and Thompsonville Road, and straightening the curve on Mapleton where residents are concerned about speed and accidents).

Attendees requested updates, and a possible second meeting after the Town meets with DOT to discuss the project. KI represented that meeting minutes, and the plan reviewed this evening would be posted on the Town website. In addition, answers to questions raised would also be posted separately on the website.