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REPORT OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING

Project No: 61-153

Date Prepared: July 7, 2021

Project Name: Walkable Sidewalks Project

Route: Augur Street, Benham Street, Davis Street, Treadwell Street

Town(s): Hamden

Date of Meeting: June 30, 2021

Location of Meeting: Virtual - ZOOM

Subject of Meeting: Preliminary Design Public Involvement Meeting

In Attendance:

Name	Role/Title	Organization/Office
Mark Austin, PE	Town Engineer	Town of Hamden
Rich Armstrong	Project Manager	GM2 Associates
Paul Brand	Lead Engineer	GM2 Associates
Jonathan Geary, PE	Project Engineer	GM2 Associates
Mike Marzi	Rights-of-way Specialist	GM2 Associates
Chris Faulkner, PE	CTDOT Liaison	VHB

In addition to the above, about 20 – 25 members of the public attended.

Transactions and Determinations

The purpose of this meeting was to present the preliminary design of the project and to receive public comments and questions. The meeting was a virtual meeting (i.e. online) venue via Zoom.com. The meeting was recorded. A series of PowerPoint slides were used to supplement the presentation. Mark Austin, Town Engineer, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone for attending, describing the purpose of the meeting – to learn about the plans which are at the preliminary design level and allow the public to provide input to the town during both the meeting and the comment period that ends July 14.

Rich Armstrong, Project Manager from GM2, then provided an overview of the project and descriptions of the proposed work, which involves various pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic calming improvements on Augur Street, Benham Street, Davis Street and Treadwell Street. The presentation also included information about property rights needed and the rights-of-way process; construction cost estimate and funding; and project schedule.

Following the presentation, Mr. Austin facilitated taking comments and questions from the public. He read for the record three written comments he had received prior to the meeting:

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1. A resident expressed support for new sidewalks on Davis Street, but was having difficulty getting more detailed information as the links provided to the town webpage were not working. Subsequent to his email, the resident was able to gain access to the information. Mr. Austin described to the meeting attendees where the project information can be found on the town website. He also noted that this meeting would be recorded and posted on the town website.
2. Another resident wrote and expressed his support for the new sidewalk on Davis Street and proposed crosswalk to the park entrance.
3. A resident wrote to express her opposition to the new sidewalk on the south side of Benham Street, being concerned about impacts to her property and the burden of having to remove snow and ice from the sidewalk. She further stated that school students don't walk to school along the street, and the only pedestrians she's observed are Sacred Heart runners on the north side of the street.

During this portion of the meeting, Mr. Armstrong used the more detailed preliminary design drawings and Google Maps to aid the discussion.

Davis Street

There was significant discussion about the proposal to construct the new sidewalk on the north side of Davis Street versus the south side of the street:

- Some residents of Davis Streets commented that a new sidewalk on the south side of the street would provide for a safer condition for park access as pedestrians could cross Davis Street from the north to the south at the signalized intersections at Ridge Road and Hartford Turnpike. With the sidewalk on the north side as proposed, pedestrians wishing to enter East Rock Park would have to cross Davis Street at the proposed new crosswalk at the East Rock Park access road (Farnam Drive).
- One resident expressed that it is unfair to the Davis Street residents on the north side for their properties to be negatively affected by the new sidewalk, given that there are more private properties (12) on the north side and their properties are smaller in size than the properties on the south side (4). It was expressed that the plans should be disruptive and destructive to as few homes as possible. It was the resident's view that the plans should be more equitable to lower-income property owners and not cater to wealthier property owners.
- A resident noted that Marshall Road shown on the plans is not actually a road but rather a private driveway and should be treated like the other proposed driveways.
- Other Davis Street residents expressed that property owners on the south side have as much to be affected by, both negatively and positively, if the south side were to be chosen for the sidewalk to be constructed on. One resident expressed that a new sidewalk would make it easier and safer to walk to/from her house.
- A Davis Street resident expressed concern about the placing the new sidewalk on the south side of the street due to an existing drainage swale from the Park that directs drainage toward Lake Whitney. He noted that this swale may have to be relocated if the sidewalk is placed on the south side of the street

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- A resident expressed that it may be very challenging and excessively time consuming to coordinate with and receive approval from the City of New Haven for any work on East Rock Park property; his opinion is that it could take several years.
- A resident asked about the potential property easements. Mr. Armstrong showed how the property addresses on the preliminary design plans, also currently available on the Town's website, are highlighted in yellow for those that it appears would require easements for constructing the sidewalk.
- Concerns were raised about road noise, speeds, littering and removal of trees/landscaping and impacts to other features such as fences that contribute to the feel of the neighborhood. Mr. Austin stated that the town would work with property owners to try to restore loss of greenery with new trees, etc. Mr. Armstrong explained that, as part of the discussions for any required easements, property owners will have the opportunity to meet with town representatives and point out potential impacted features. Mr. Austin stated that replacement trees could be considered as part of the project.
- There was expressed concern and discussion about truck traffic on Davis Street. Mr. Austin explained that is subject to a separate town discussion.
- A resident noted that the south side of the street has some decorative driveway aprons and asked if the sidewalk could be made of decorative materials such as pavers to keep with the aesthetics of the older neighborhood. Mr. Austin noted that the scope of the project that is funded through the CTDOT does not include decorative items such as pavers, but that stamped concrete may be possible and he would look into it further.
- Several residents asked if the traffic light at Hartford Turnpike could be replaced or have a pedestrian signal added. Mr. Austin and Mr. Armstrong both noted that the signal equipment at this location is very old and likely could not have a pedestrian signal added. They noted this signal would also likely be very expensive to replace. Mr. Austin noted that he is currently seeking funding for another project that would address signal upgrades at several locations in the town.
- Some expressed concern about the safety of the existing pedestrian crossing environment at the Hartford Turnpike and Ridge Road intersections. One person requested the existing southside sidewalk that ends west of Hartford Turnpike be extended to the east to the intersection. Mr. Austin explained that work west of Hartford Turnpike was not included in the scope of this project and noted that the north side of Davis in this area has an existing bituminous sidewalk, though it is in poor shape. The resident then noted that the south side does not have a sidewalk and the brush along the roadway makes it difficult to walk along that side and asked if that brush could be cleared. Mr. Austin noted it was the responsibility of the resident of that property to clear the brush and that his office could notify the resident.

Benham Street

- A resident expressed concern with the proposed new sidewalk being placed on the south side of Benham Street, rather than the north side of Benham Street which has far fewer properties and fewer utility poles. She expressed concern about property impacts and the burden of having to

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clear snow from the sidewalk. Mr. Austin explained that the sidewalk location options analysis had been the subject of a public meeting earlier this year, and that the south side had been selected based, in part, on the feedback received at that public meeting. Mr. Armstrong explained an analysis showed the latent pedestrian demand is stronger on the south side due to the greater number of residences to the south and that one important consideration is the safety of school children. The resident stated that school children do not walk to school in this area. Mr. Armstrong explained that, while there are utility poles on the south side between Mix Avenue and Cherry Hill Road, the proposed sidewalk layout appears to avoid all of them, and that the new sidewalk and the majority of effected features are on town right-of-way (ROW). In addition, farther to the west, the utility poles switch over to the north side. A new sidewalk on the north side on the steep hill would require construction of expensive retaining walls.

- The same resident, who is the owner of the property on the southeast corner of Benham Street and Vantage Road, expressed concern with impacts to features on her property due to the proposed sidewalk. The preliminary design plan was viewed, and it shows that the new sidewalk would be entirely on existing town ROW and that the only potential disturbance may be minor regrading and possible resetting of a fence currently within the town ROW.

Auger Street

- A question was asked in the meeting chat why the chicane design is proposed and why not a speed sign. He also expressed concern about winter conditions and snow removal.

Treadwell Street

- No resident comments on Treadwell Street

In concluding the meeting, Mr. Austin expressed his understanding of the concerns raised about the location of the sidewalks – north side versus south side, on both Davis Street and Benham Street. He stated that all of the comments have to be considered and a determination made. He thanked all for attending and expressing their view points and reminded them how they can further comment during the two-week comment period.