

**Auburn Trail/Ontario Pathways Trail Connector Feasibility Study
Project Advisory Committee Meeting—November 10, 2011
Farmington Town Hall**

Draft Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Robert R. Torzynski, AICP, PTP, Program Manager - Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning, Genesee Transportation Council (GTC Staff Lead)
Terrence Fennelly, Councilperson, Town of Canandaigua
Dennis Brewer, Director Parks & Recreation, Town of Canandaigua
Peter Ingalsbe, Deputy Town Supervisor, Town of Farmington
Bryan Meck, Recreation Advisory Board, Town of Farmington
Brian Emelson, CPRP, Director of Parks & Recreation, Town of Victor
Andrew Spittal, Board Member, Ontario Pathways
Kristen Hughes, Director, Ontario County Department of Planning
Stephen Beauvais, Regional Local Project Liaison, New York State Dept. of Transportation, Region 4 Office
Excused: Ronald L. Brand, Director of Planning & Development, Town of Farmington (Lead Agency Staff)

Consultants:

Carl W. Ast, P.E., PTOE, Project Manager, Fisher Associates
Roseann Schmid, P.E., Fisher Associates

Public:

Mary and Reginald Neale, Farmington
Jeffrey Hennick, Victor

I. Introductions and Approval of the Minutes:

In Mr. Brand's absence, Ms. Schmid chaired the meeting. She asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 14th meeting. Mr. Ingalsbe made the motion with Mr. Brewer seconding. All Committee members present voted aye to carry the motion.

Everyone present introduced themselves.

II. Review of Original Alignments

The consultants pinned up maps showing the original 17 alignments and four more suggested during the public meeting in September.

III. Overview of Comments from the Public Informational Meeting

Ms. Schmid summarized the input from the September 14th public meeting, saying that some good feedback was received and some new routes were suggested. It was decided that the trail should not include horses or snowmobiles. The public prefers an off-road trail to avoid mixing pedestrians and bicyclists with motor vehicles. A preference for a route with shade and along quiet, scenic areas was voiced. To do this, former railroad routes would be one solution.

IV. Review of Proposed, Additional Off-Road Alignments

A. Discussion of Advantages and Disadvantages

The consultants, therefore, looked at possible alignments to see if they met these criteria. Some challenges involve skirting wetlands and private property boundaries. At the same time, the original goal of linking destinations (schools, businesses, shops) was also considered.

Mr. Brewer contributed the update that work on the Town of Canandaigua's Outhouse Park has begun. They want to connect it with Blue Heron Park. 62 acres of parkland from the Old Brookside development will provide opportunities for trails.

B. Results if Step 1 of Ranking Criteria (Filter 1) Is Applied

Mr. Ast distributed hand outs to show how comments from the public resulted in changes to the possible alignments. He explained that they used the term "filter" to reduce the number of possibilities by applying specified criteria. It narrows the choice.

Filter 1 ranked alignment options by intersections with a buffer area, the quarter mile around a destination. The first filter process, Mr. Ast explained, resulted in the elimination of #17.

V. Potential Revisions to Alignment Evaluation

A. Impact on Project Objectives

However, the public did not want to use public roadways and requested scenic trails. If avoiding public roadways is applied to the possible alignments as well as access to destinations, preferences change. This resulted in revisions to the original proposed routes and the addition of four other possible alignments. He distributed several maps showing the various options.

Mr. Ast distributed a comparison of the original project objectives and revisions to them following the public meeting. The objective to "pursue former railroad alignments and off-road locations as much as possible" was added. In comparing the original evaluation criteria and the revised evaluation criteria, three changes were made. Scenic trail locations were added. Several criteria were grouped into one by listing "consistency with community plans" and "safety (including street crossings, road type, traffic speed and volume.)"

Next, the consultants looked at alignments that used public roads for short distances and ranked them by what type of road was being used. A state or county road would have a lower score than a town road or no public road use. The highest score was applied to off-road alignments or those using a railroad right-of-way. This eliminated five more possibilities: #3, #4, #13, #14 and #15.

However, the consultant pointed out, there were other difficulties involved in making choices. Using the City of Canandaigua plan for a connection location, two alignments using the Auburn branch are not possible. One has been built on and the other has a gas line. The need to cross Route 332 also eliminated some projected routes.

B. Impact on Evaluation Criteria

Mr. Ast explained that there are other factors to be considered in narrowing down possible alignments. Costs are a major factor. Some routes will be more expensive to construct. We must consider the costs of clearing and ditch work.

The next factor is environmental. This includes wetland and stream crossings. These also impact costs.

A third concern is the impact on properties. The consultant reminded everyone that the path should target the edge of agricultural fields to preserve farmland. The number of properties impacted is an important factor.

A final evaluation criterion is safety, including:

- a. The length of travel on an asphalt road,
- b. The length adjacent to a public road,
- c. The scenic value,
- d. Crossing any major roadways such as Route 332, County Road 30 or Town streets.

C. Consensus on any Revisions to Objectives or Evaluation Criteria

When all these factors are applied, Mr. Ast said, we are left with eight alignments in three corridors: #6, #10, #11, #16, #1-1, #1-2, #1-3 and #2-2. They have almost equal values. Of course, obtaining easements will be an issue for some routes. Two are located along Brickyard Road along the right-of-way of the Peanut and Auburn railroads. These would have less property to acquire.

Mr. Beauvais pointed out that a major question is the willingness of adjacent property owners. Opposition by key property owners is a huge factor. Will their elected officials be willing to pursue eminent domain? Mr. Emelson said this was not a problem in Victor although they were ready with alternative plans if there was opposition. He added that securing the right-of-way should be the next concern. Ms. Schmid said that this is, indeed, the next step. It was necessary to narrow down the choices before talking with property owners.

VI. Consensus on Ranking Methodology Revisions

Mr. Ast pointed out that there are advantages to using each corridor. They have leveled the playing field. Ms. Schmid said that the trail can always be moved slightly to avoid opposition from a particular property owner. Mr. Brewer commented that it sounds as if we are on the right track.

Mr. Ast continued by recalling that three corridors was an early goal and we now have three corridors with options because there are eight possible routes. Mr. Meck noted that nothing is set in stone.

VII. Questions/ Comments/Discussion

The members of the advisory group then commented on proposed alignments.

Mr. Beauvais said that there are potential environmental and safety issues in going through prime agricultural districts. Applications of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides near the trail are a danger to the public. We need to avoid putting a right-of-way through or next to active fields. Mr. Torzynski suggested discussing this with farmers who would be impacted by a trail route. Mr. Ingalsbe added that there is a difference between land which is actively farmed and fallow land.

Mr. Beauvais also commented that some landowners might object because they do not want undesirable activity in their neighborhood but this will change once the trails are open and there are no problems. Mr. Spittal suggested flexibility in planning routes with alternatives available. Mr. Ingalsbe noted that the property owner might be able to suggest an alternative route.

Mr. Spittal also asked if spur pieces could be added to connect the trail with housing developments or destinations. Ms. Schmid responded that we can speak with these additional property owners. Mr. Ingalsbe suggested linking the trail with Route 332 without crossing it.

Mr. Ast explained that trails are usually built in sections as funding becomes available. Right now, the next step is to identify impacted property owners and speak with them. Ms. Schmid added that municipal leaders would be the best persons to talk with landowners. Since time is a factor, it might be possible to speak with groups of property owners. First, however, the property owners need to be identified.

Mr. Emelson recalled that Victor based their alignment plans on landowners' responses of yes or maybe. Their main problem was with steep slopes. Mr. Spittal noted that they are still working on extending the Lehigh Trail.

Mr. Beauvais suggested involving the Planning Boards in the process. This could be part of the Towns' "in kind" matching services. Town governments reserve easements but these are also a type of subdivision. Planning Boards approve subdivisions. Mr. Ingalsbe commented that involving Planning Boards is a good idea.

VII. Next Steps

Ms. Schmid listed the next steps:

1. List involved property owners,
2. Strategize—involve local officials,
3. Have a meeting of property owners in the involved Town (Farmington or Canandaigua).

Mr. Ast added that they will start between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Mr. Fennelly asked what order they plan to follow. The consultants explained that the Brickyard and McIntyre routes seem best so they will start with them. Mr. Fenelly asked which is more scenic. Mr. Ingalsbe said a scenic filter could rule out Brickyard.

Mr. Ast noted that one option would involve one big property owner. This could make the task easier if he cooperates.

Mr. Neale asked if the trail would follow the shoulder of any roads on the route. Mr. Ast said the 10-foot wide trail would parallel a road but be separate from it.

Mr. Emelson and Mr. Ingalsbe warned that you need to double check for utility easements. The Town Highway Superintendents should have this information. It should also be on Comprehensive Plan maps. Mr. Beauvais advised that this information is sometimes very hard to get.

Ms. Schmid asked the Board members to study the maps provided and provide her with any comments or suggestions.

All present agreed to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. No date was set for the next meeting.

Clerk O'Malley and Mr. Ingalsbe made sure the building was locked.

These Minutes were taken and respectfully submitted by

Leslie C. O'Malley, Ph.D.
Clerk