

**Belmont Community Path  
Public Engagement – Suggestions for Meetings and Outreach Approach**

**10/15/19**

**AGENDA**

*Purpose of today's meeting: Discuss / confirm public engagement & outreach approach including meetings and means of outreach*

- 1) Lessons learned from prior outreach (key take-aways from review of documents)  
*\*Discussion Note: Gain feedback on what worked well in the past (for Visioning process etc.)*
- 2) Purpose of outreach & engagement  
Examples: Inform about project, create enthusiasm for project, develop positive experience associated with community path, improved connectivity, how the path can strengthen local businesses, other
- 3) Discuss Stakeholder List (on next page) & engagement of targeted stakeholders
  - Stakeholder List (on next page) - meet with abutters, schools, art & historic community, etc.)
  - Targeted outreach meetings – beginning October 21, 2019
  - Site walks with abutters – beginning October 21, 2019
- 4) Discuss approach for upcoming meetings
  - a. Visioning meeting – week of December 16, 2019\*
  - b. First public meeting – week of January 13, 2020\*
- 5) Means of supplemental outreach and responsibilities (in addition to meetings above)
  - a. Website (Town or Nitsch?)
  - b. Branding (e.g. tagline) / via online survey
  - c. Supplemental, no-tech outreach (suggestions box or wishing wall)
  - d. Coordination of outreach through Town Administrator and Engineer

\* Suggested dates for meetings are tentative and will be scheduled based on input received from Town based on room availability and preferred day of week time of day

## Selected discussion points from Agenda

### **1) Stakeholder List (Town)**

#### **First Tier: Abutters & key stakeholders (decision makers & regulatory bodies)**

- Abutters – Separate Focus Group meetings (S)
- Community Path Project Committee (CPPC)
- Community Development (Engineering & Planning)
- Department of Public Works
- Public Safety (Fire Department, Police Department)
- Belmont Select Board
- Historic District Commission
- MBTA (S)

#### **Second Tier: End users or groups with vested interest in project** (i.e. due to location)

- Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee (S)
- Belmont School Committee / Safe Routes to School representatives at each school (S)
- Belmont Light
- Belmont Citizens Forum
- Belmont Center Business Association
- Friends of the Community Path
- Runners club
- Council on Aging
- Conservation Commission

#### **Third Tier: Groups with common / related interests (& Groups to possibly engage in project design):**

- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Disability Access Commission
- Belmont Art Association (S)
- Recreation Commission
- Belmont Garden Club
- Shade Tree Committee
- Mass Audubon
- Vision 2020 Committee
- Sustainable Belmont

(S): Separate Focus Group meetings

\* We suggest holding combined meetings with stakeholders whenever possible. Targeted outreach meetings with stakeholders listed below would be held. Additional focus group meetings may be added as needed.

## 2) Targeted stakeholder outreach meetings with the following groups

### a) Community Path Project Committee (CPPC)

- Purpose: coordinate public process to ensure successful outreach, review design concepts and presentation documents prior to public meetings
- Dates: CPPC typically meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month from 8:00AM - 9:30AM
- Nitsch will attend CPPC meetings as requested to provide updates on project progress and to discuss elements of the public outreach

### b) Abutters

- Purpose: learn about concerns and discuss opportunities to meet their needs within the project scope
- Underlying goal:
  - acknowledge that abutters are heard;
  - convey an understanding of decisions that have been made to date;
  - engage abutters by discussing design opportunities, such as:
    - materials and screening etc. used in backyards;
    - potential connection to pathways or specific locations in town;
    - discuss wayfinding
- Dates: 3 meetings – beginning week of October 21, 2019
- Materials for meetings:  
Examples of palette of amenities, screening options, fences, plantings, signs, benches, bike racks, etc. used on similar projects
- Meeting Location: neighborhood site meeting near proposed path
- Additional site visits with specific stakeholders present (held throughout the preliminary design phase as needed)

### c) Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee:

- Purpose: coordinate design, discuss construction, interventions and mitigation measures during construction & opportunity for engagement
- Participants: High School and Middle School Building Committee representatives
- Date: Week of October 21, 2019

### d) Belmont School Committee

- Purpose: Discuss opportunity and desire to engage school kids
- Participants: Catherine Bowen, School Committee (tbc)
- Date: Week of October 28, 2019
- Underlying goal:
  - Create enthusiasm for project;
  - Develop positive experience associated with community path that may be shared with a broader network via social media
  - Opportunity to tie into curriculum (e.g. health or social lesson – biking & exercising as health benefit)
- Details:  
Opportunity for learning (hands-on engineering & construction lesson)

- Engage students in brainstorming exercise:
  - Sample questions: “What would you like the community path to look like? Would you bike or walk to school?”
- e) Belmont Select Board
  - Purpose: Present concept design prior to finalizing 25% Submission documents
  - Participants: Belmont Select Board
  - Date: Week of December 9, 2019
- f) Conservation Commission
  - Purpose: Informal meeting with Conservation Commission Agent prior to finalizing 25% Submission documents
  - Participants: Conservation Commission / Agent
  - Date: Week of November 4, 2019
  - Meeting with Conservation Commission will occur during 75% design phase
- g) Community Development (Engineering & Planning); Department of Public Works; Public Safety (Fire Department, Police Department); Belmont Light
  - Purpose: Design review meetings with Town Departments to review design concepts and plans
  - Participants: Department heads
  - Date: Occur throughout the design phase as required
- h) Historic District Commission; Transportation Advisory Committee; Recreation Commission; Belmont Garden Club; Belmont Art Association; Mass Audubon; Runners club
  - Purpose: Review goals and desires of Town Boards and Committees and review design concepts
  - Participants: Board/Committee Members
  - Date: Preference is to have multiple groups attend meetings to discuss similar viewpoints, possibly during – will occur throughout the preliminary design phase as required

### 3) Visioning Meeting – Draft Agenda

Date: Week of December 16, 2019

Precedents: meetings with abutters, school building committee, school committee

Suggested Participants: CPCCC, Town, school building committee, school committees art community, historic committee, abutters

#### Purpose of Visioning Meeting:

- Identify project goals and desires
- Identify design opportunities
- Identify potential risks
- Define the path for a successful design process

#### Draft Meeting Agenda:

- Define consultants' project scope for design & construction project
- Summarize the results of work conducted to date (Feasibility Study, previous outreach and engagement, Board of Selectmen decision on path location; design parameters)
- Tools: Visioning exercise with large wall boards and prompts to give input on via sticky notes
  - SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats): identify critical issues/ / needs, goals, vision for the project.
  - Opportunity for feedback on various design aspects and alternatives for how path may interconnect to downtown areas, other paths, sidewalks, trail heads, Belmont Center Station, etc.
  - Wall boards with example images and prompts for input on the following topics:
    - Opportunity for storytelling & place making (Interpretive signage, public art, programming)
      - Wayfinding, Signage
      - Incorporation of local content (art, history etc.)
    - Landscaping / screening options (e.g. on abutting properties)
    - Wishes / desires for the project
    - Share how they may use the community path (benefits)
    - concerns (safety, flooding, etc.)
    - ideas for branding and wishes for engagement
    - other ideas or concerns?

#### 4) **First Public Information Meeting**

Date: Week of January 13, 2019

Precedents: initial meetings with targeted stakeholders including abutters and schools & others as needed; Visioning Meeting

Participants: General Public

Purpose:

- Inform about the project (share information on work etc. done to date & how we build on previous work & outreach (Feasibility Study)
  - install positive excitement about the project
  - announce opportunities to engage in the project (e.g. branding, school kids, art community etc. – as agreed upon w/ CPCC/Town
- Meeting Advertisement: newspapers, website, blog, flyers etc.?

#### 5) **Forms of Outreach:**

- Media, Social media & web (continuous throughout design phase):
  - Use Town website for status updates and potential platform for survey
- Discuss opportunity for branding (e.g. through schools or art community; competition with prices)
  - Discuss opportunity for community survey as means of branding
- Creative engagement opportunities:
  - Site walks
  - Bonding Events with the other “ends” of the rail trail??
  - Excursion to other rail trail that leads through neighborhood & exchange w/ abutters there?
  - Participate in creating display, e.g. mural at proposed wall (tbd)
- Opportunity to raise (positive) awareness at local events
  - What upcoming neighborhood/city-wide events, e.g. art events, library events etc.?
- Discuss opportunities associated with the project:
  - Storytelling & Placemaking
  - Opportunities for Interpretive Signage, Public Art & Programming
    - Would it be desired to have art community or schools participate in creating local art, or signage (e.g. with information on Belmont’s history along the community path)?
    - Wayfinding similar as on Minuteman Bikeway connecting to Downtown Arlington locations (e.g. “Town Hall and restaurants 0.2 mi”)
    - other