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**TOWN OF BELMONT
COMMUNITY PATH IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2016**

Present: Russel Leino, Chair; Brian Burke; Michael Cicalese; Heather Ivester;
Vincent Stanton

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

The Committee and Pare held a public engagement meeting to discuss 'Hot Topics and the Matrix'.

Prior to the meeting, presentation materials were available for the public to review at 6:30 p.m.

1. **7:00 PM** - Mr. Leino, introduced the consultants and opened the meeting. He provided a brief overview of Study, the past meetings, and the purpose of this meeting. He discussed the need for useful feedback on the information provided by the consultants – he asked that people state why they prefer something and not just that they do not like it.

2. Presentation:

The consultants presented a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the route segments from the last 3 meetings, how the matrix will be used to help sort through the various route options, and the definitions of the matrix criteria. The consultants asked for feedback on the matrix and how the criteria should be applied, i.e., should there be a priority placed on specific issues or should everything be weighted the same.

3. Discussion:

- Concern was expressed about crossing major roadways, such as Leonard and Brighton Streets, and that narrowing the roadway under the railroad bridge in Belmont Center does not seem to be a workable solution. The need for traffic signals in Belmont Center was suggested to make the Center a safer place.
- Support was stated for a wide path to separate bikers from pedestrians. Also for a dedicated bike lane since bikes and vehicles do not mix. Concern was also stated that temporary fixes often become permanent.
- Question was asked about funding and ways to reduce costs. The consultants suggested ways to fund the path including phasing of it and breaking out amenities that can be funded later. Question also stated about funding the Alexander Avenue underpass if the path is not built near it.

- Strong support was expressed for vehicle crossings being heavily weighted and that a Fatal Flaw should be if a vehicle can block the path, such as on Concord Avenue where cars drive in the existing bike lanes.
- Concern was expressed that several route options were circuitous and that the path should be more direct. Directness of the path was stated as important as it may impact other aspects of the community.
- Discussion occurred regarding the complexity of weighting the matrix and that the matrix should be simplified – perhaps 2 tiers with the first one for the critical safety issues and the second one for fine tuning the design.
- Questions were raised about the hours of operation and the potential impacts on abutting residences. Suggested that this should be reflected in the matrix.
- Support was stated for access to Waverley Square and for the Beech and Waverley Streets couplet.
- Discussed Alexander Avenue underpass and potential pedestrian and bike conflicts.
- Concern was raised about pedestrian conflicts with those accessing the post office and other businesses nearby and the path. Concern was also expressed about pedestrian conflicts on Concord Avenue when high school kids are dropped off and picked up.
- Support was stated for the criteria in the matrix since it will help articulate people's issues and concerns but it was acknowledged that the matrix makes the process more complex.
- Questions were raised about how the matrix will be used to determine a route.
- Discussed the need to weight vehicle conflicts more than other issues since these conflicts are serious safety concerns.
- Question was raised regarding how the reduction in vehicular traffic, as a result of the path, is reflected in the matrix.
- Discussed the need to reach out to other Town entities that may be impacted by the path, i.e., Belmont Housing Authority.
- Questions were raised about how the number of driveway conflicts was defined as a criterion in the matrix.
- Support was expressed to weigh a route's viability higher than others, i.e., the route through the high school is dependent on where the rebuilding of it will occur, which won't be decided for a number of years.
- Suggested that the height of the path above abutting residences should be a criterion.
- Discussed the purpose of the path and how it will be used will dictate how the matrix is applied.
- Reminded that the cost of the path is quite important since the Town may have to pay for a portion of it.
- Suggested that the number of conflicts in general, not just those with driveways, is a concern that should be in the matrix.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the consultants noted that the PowerPoint presentation and a link to the Belmont Media Center broadcast of the meeting will be made available online through the Town of Belmont webpage.

The meeting concluded at 10:05 p.m.