

**HARVARD TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

Chris Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, under M.G.L. Chapter 30A S20 and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

**Members Present:** Stacia Donahue, Bruce Leicher, Gabriel Medjanis, Rene Turnheim, Kara Minar, Suzie Allen

**Others Present:** Chris Ryan (Director of Economic Development); Tim Kilhart (Harvard DPW); Neil Angus (Devens Enterprise Commission); Jonathan Vos (MRPC); Brad Harris (MRPC – Transportation); Deborah O' Rourke, Larry Doe, Loretta Espey, Ron Ostberg, Julie Anne Medjanis, Rebecca Wright, Mary Ciummo, Rebecca Wright, Robert Roemer, Ellen Sachs Leicher (CRWG), Christiane Turnheim (CRWG and AgCommission), Justin Brown (PB), Nicky Schmidt

### **Transportation Plan Update**

CRyan shared a power point presentation to cover/review the history of Harvard's transportation planning related efforts as it related to various Master Plans over time.

TAC's focus now is the current 2016 Master Plan. Chapter 8 (Circulation and Traffic) and Chapter 11 (Action Plan) are the areas that discuss transportation.

CRyan provided the Complete Streets list as of 2017 which the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has recently re-prioritized and updated. The updated 2021 Complete Streets list was reviewed later in the session.

Timeline of DLTA funded project from MRPC to provide our Transportation Plan. It is expected that it should be ready for Select Board review by January 2022 at the latest as DLTA funding is annual and runs out at the end of the calendar year.

### **Discussion of 2021 Complete Streets List**

The revised list (Complete Streets 2021) was shared/reviewed. Items 1 thru 3 would be covered by the TIP project if that funding is rewarded from the Federal program for our project. These are being held in our list for Complete Streets in case the TIP funding is not received.

### **Projects from Other Plans**

CRyan asked - Should we be considering the Five Points area (Stow/Slow/Mass Ave) as it was listed in prior, older Master Plans?

Other things to consider might be a Park and Ride lot or possible Town Center parking area for carpooling or mass transit stop.

Traffic Calming is also something that has come up frequently as something the Town would like to see implemented. How best to implement this?

CRyan noted that all this information is available under the Planning Board tab under the Town of Harvard website if anyone wanted to review in more depth.

### **Mission Statement Review**

TAC's Goals

- 1 – Increase walkability and bikeability through Harvard and the region
- 2 – Create a transportation facilities maintenance plan.
- 3 – Enhance safe and secure transportation facilities within Harvard
- 4 – Create sufficient and convenient parking for destinations through Harvard.

## Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question – What is the new proposed width of Ayer Road (in the TIP)?

CRyan and TKilhart responded. The road will have 11' travel lanes with 4' shoulders. The SUP will be separated from the road bed by a width that may vary over the length of the project but would ideally be about 5' from the edge of the shoulder. TKilhart noted that the SUP is required by MassDot to be included with this project. CRyan clarified that road width will be 11' which is reduced 1' from the current 12' width. TKilhart noted that this narrowing of the travel lane is called a 'road diet' and is intended to slow the traffic. CRyan reminded everyone that the meeting with MassDot on the Ayer Road TIP project (nearing the 25% design review phase) will be in January/February timeframe and encouraged everyone to attend. The TIP is currently scheduled for FY26, but that can change, so comments now are encouraged.

Question from CRWG – What items related to climate is being included or thought of in this plan?

CRyan noted that EV charging stations will be in the plan. The other main items that will tie into the CRWG work are pedestrian and bicycle paths being proposed so there are options other than cars to move about town (carbon reduction). The regional shuttle could also count toward a climate action measure but we need to find a location in town for this item.

Question from CRWG – What about permeable pavement or stormwater runoff mitigation in the new designs?

CRyan noted that this would need to be incorporated in a per project basis as projects are designed and developed.

Question – When was the last updated traffic count for Ayer Road?

TKilhart noted it was 2019 prior to pandemic and it needs to be updated as it was before many new additions at Devens and the new truck stop in Ayer. BHarris (MRPC) noted that the traffic counting program was being restarted soon.

Question – What will be the surface of the SUP?

TKilhart noted it would be asphalt. The permeable materials degrade when the road salt/sand get into the material. Asphalt is still the best choice for our Town based on maintenance issues with permeable.

Question – Is run off being handled appropriately in the new designs?

(There is so much run off now that it should be reviewed to confirm that it's being handled appropriately.)

CRyan noted that this should be reviewed/addressed on a per project basis and noted that it should be added to our TAC review list for the TIP project to confirm they are accounting for the increased rainfall we have been experiencing.

Question – What is the status of round-about vs T intersection at Lancaster County Road/Gebo Lane connection?

CRyan noted that the TIP engineers reviewed the traffic counts and confirmed that the volume of traffic (coming from the side roads) did not currently qualify us for a round-about. The current TIP design is for straight intersections and the closure of Lancaster County Road entrance. CRyan encouraged participation in the MassDot 25% design review meeting of the TIP project that will be scheduled in January/February timeframe.

Question – Timeline of when the plan (Townwide Transportation Plan) would move forward?

CRyan noted that the plan needs to be completed by end of year (2021) as it's a DLTA funded program. The hope is to present the plan to Select Board in December/January with edits and comments being picked up after that time. The plan should be finalized shortly after that (early 2022). The PB, SB, and others will begin work immediately after it has been determined as to which is the highest priority. BLeicher also noted that projects might be funded differently so

sometimes we will work out of order depending on where we can get funding for the various projects.

Question – Does the Ayer Road TIP plan require some imminent domain or easements?  
TKilhart noted that they are trying to stay within the existing right of way, but there will likely be a need to some temporary and some permanent easements required. More will be known as the plan develops.

Question – There was a proposed connection to Devens for ambulance access at the end of Old Mill Road in the original design – is it still in the plan?  
BLEicher noted that the path will be primarily for bicycles and pedestrians and there is no plan for vehicular access. CRyan noted the plan has not been fully developed at this time, so the possibility of bollards or a gate to allow emergency access could be in the final design.

Question – Does the (SUP walking/biking) trail end at Rt 2?  
BLEicher noted that the SUP in the proposed TIP project ends at Rt 2, but there is a mapped bicycle/pedestrian path to connect to Town center via Lancaster County Road to Depot Road (unpaved path) and then from Depot Road to Under Pin Hill (shared on the road). The improvements to the unpaved path portion are item number 4 on the Complete Streets 2021 list.

Question – Will the curve at Doe be corrected (during the TIP)?  
TKilhart noted it will be smoothed a bit in the TIP plan and the poor drainage in that area will be corrected, however straightening too much would lead to speeding. Speeding is something that we're trying to reduce so straight was not desirable at all.

**Adjournment:**

Webinar format – Meeting was concluded by consent when there were no additional questions from meeting attendees. Meeting ended at 8:00pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Stacia Donahue, Clerk