

**NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON December 9, 2015 at 7:00pm.**

Maplewood Avenue & Adjacent Areas Project  
Portsmouth, NH  
(GPI Proj. No. MAX-2015086.00)

DATE PREPARED: December 22, 2015

LOCATION: Conference Room A, City Hall, Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth

ATTENDEES: Terry Desmarais, DPW  
Eric Eby, Portsmouth DPW  
Joe Johnson, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.  
Raymond C. Pezzullo, DPW  
Peter Rice, Portsmouth DPW  
Juliet Walker, Portsmouth Planning Department  
Bob White, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.  
See attached sign-in

PURPOSE: Public Information Meeting

Discussion:

Mr. Desmarais began the presentation by reviewing the meeting agenda and introducing the members of the consultant team and City staff that were present. He explained that the project involves the collaboration of many City Departments, consultants and stakeholders.

Mr. Desmarais reviewed the project need and explained that the primary motivation for the project was the need for the water main replacement along Maplewood Avenue as recommended in the 2013 Water Master Plan. The plan also indicated that there were adjacent areas in need of work. Grouping these needs together into one project makes sense given their proximity. While making such utility upgrades, the project will seek to include complete street type principles to be consistent with the "Complete Street" Policy adopted by City Council in 2013. At the same time, the project will take this opportunity to include recommendations from the 2014 "Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan" where possible.

Mr. Desmarais briefly reviewed the project funding and implementation. The Preliminary Design for this project will include cost estimation so that a construction phasing strategy can be considered if needed.

Next, Mr. Desmarais reviewed the anticipated project schedule which includes three public meetings prior to the summer of 2016. It is anticipated that project construction could begin in Fall 2016 or Spring 2017.

Mr. Desmarais then turned the presentation over to Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson provided the meeting purpose stressing that the project is in its infancy stages. Although a project scope is understood, the intent is to engage the community at this early stage to get a better handle on the issues and concerns of the neighborhood. Means of providing public feedback are offered at

tonight's meeting using comment forms, post-it notes and the breakout groups. Post meeting input can also be provided by reaching out to the City contact whose information will be provided later in the meeting.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the project limits as well as the anticipated scope of work for each location. The project is basically split into 4 locations:

1. Maplewood Avenue from Woodbury Avenue to the North Mill Pond
  - a. Utility improvements and complete street principles.
2. Fairview Drive
  - a. Sewer replacement
3. Cutts Street/Central Avenue
  - a. Water, sewer and drainage evaluation and replacement
4. Leslie Drive
  - a. Sewer and drainage evaluation and replacement

Mr. Johnson provided some existing condition information along the Maplewood Avenue corridor and reviewed photos taken along the project length in order to get a sense of the abutting uses. It was pointed out that the character of the roadway changes noticeably as one goes east of the Route 1 By-Pass Bridge where vehicle traffic picks up nearing the downtown. In the end, this corridor primarily serves residential uses and a project objective is to certainly enhance the neighborhood that already exists. Given that the Route 1 By-Pass Bridge was recently re-opened, the traffic data collection for this project will be delayed until January to allow traffic volumes to 'normalize'.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the design objective which was a re-iteration of information previously provided by Mr. Desmarais. Mr. Johnson also provided a definition of 'Complete Streets' so that folks understand the intent of improvements along Maplewood Avenue.

*"Complete Streets" means streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, so that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street." – City's 2013 Complete Street Policy*

At this point Mr. Johnson turned the presentation over to Ms. Walker who explained more about the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which includes recommendations to enhance and promote biking and walking citywide. When the City implements transportation improvement projects, the plan is used as a reference and guide so that individual improvements can be made which positively contribute to a larger citywide vision/network. Ms. Walker reminded folks that the intent of the bicycle and pedestrian improvements are to encourage multi-modal means of transportation even if the current demand may not warrant such treatments. Specifically along the Maplewood Avenue corridor, the plan recommends sidewalk along at least one side of the street for its entire length. Within the stretch from Central Avenue and Cutts Street, sidewalk is recommended on both sides of Maplewood Avenue. Likewise, there are existing sidewalks on both sides of Maplewood Avenue from Dennett Street to the North Mill Pond which may require reconstruction. In terms of bicycle improvements, the Plan recommends striped bike lanes along the length of Maplewood Avenue within the project limits and suggests buffered bike lanes within the limits of Edmond Avenue to Central Avenue. Example photos of these types of treatments were shown.

At this point Mr. Johnson asked folks to break into three groups dependent on the location of concern within the project limits. The purpose of the groups is to gather information so that the design team has a better handle on the following:

- What do we need to know?
- What are the issues?
- What are the concerns?
- What would you like to see?

Mr. White provided some group rules and directed folks to the various locations for discussion. The discussion group areas were broken out as follows:

1. Maplewood Avenue from Woodbury Avenue to the I-95 Bridge
2. Maplewood Avenue from the I-95 Bridge to North Mill Pond
3. All other neighborhoods adjacent to Maplewood Avenue

Each group was charged to discuss their area and the issues for about 20-30 minutes and then report back to the larger group the top 3 or 4 major concerns/issues they agreed upon.

Following are the notes for each group with the major points **highlighted**.

Maplewood Avenue from Woodbury Avenue to the I-95 Bridge:

- **Cars going too fast on Woodbury turn at speed onto Maplewood.**
- **Drainage problems in low areas**
- **Coordination with other utilities**
  - **Gas/Unitil Survey – ½ mi of Maplewood Ave has no gas service over the crest of the hill.**
- **Visibility at Intersection of Maplewood Avenue and Woodbury Avenue**
  - **Particularly the right turn off Maplewood onto Woodbury travelling northwest towards the shopping centers has poor visibility.**
  - **Turns into and out of McGee Drive have bad sight distance over the crest of the hill making it dangerous.**
- **Pedestrian and Bike Safety along the whole road with emphasis for the school children at crosswalks.**

Maplewood Avenue from I-95 Bridge to North Mill Pond:

- Could there be a new signal or 4-way stop at the intersection of Cutts at Maplewood?
- **What is the implication for Wholefoods and increased traffic on Maplewood?**
- Will there be traffic counts? When/how will those be done and how will they be used in the design?
- Planting for By-Pass buffering.
- Slow down PM peak traffic exiting downtown.
- **Through bike access and bike safety needs to be improved.**
- Could temporary striping be implemented now to improve safety?
- There is a perception that “city services end” at the railroad tracks with lesser attention to plowing and road/sidewalk maintenance.
- **The Maplewood improvements for bikes and pedestrians should be carried all the way into downtown.** Pavement conditions southeast of the mill pond are dangerously deteriorated for bikes.
- Interesting landscape features make Maplewood a civilized street and a legacy neighborhood worthy of attention and respect in the street design. **Make it a beautiful walk all the way downtown.**
- Need better tree plantings.

- Turns at the Dennett St. to Maplewood Ave. intersection are fast and dangerous for cars, peds and bikes.
- **The new exit/entrance ramps at the bypass and the Cutts Street intersection exit/entrance approach is driven very fast - but it's stop and go traffic and there will be accidents.**
- The driveway for the Cutts Street mansion is dangerous in the present one-way condition and the dangerous angle how it meets the intersection.
- **Define walking routes to the schools and make them safe. More crosswalks are needed.**
- Stop sign needed on Leslie Drive/Cutts Street intersection?
- Need new I-95 destination signs.

All other neighborhoods adjacent to Maplewood Avenue:

- Concerning sidewalks along Maplewood Avenue, there was concern expressed about the current maintenance particularly with vegetation growing into the sidewalk and the snow plowing during the winter.
- There was a desire for bike lanes on Maplewood Avenue.
- Some of the sidewalks along Maplewood Avenue are in poor condition.
- **There are major problems with drainage in the Cutts/Beechwood areas.** Maybe curbing would prevent flooding off roadways into adjacent properties.
- Pavement in Central/Cutts/Leslie is in poor condition.
- **There are low points on Leslie and on Beechwood where significant ponding occurs.**
- There have been recent drainage improvements near Leslie Drive that have improved the drainage conditions.
- **There is a concern of speeding on Cutts Avenue.** If the pavement condition on Cutts is improved, will the speeds get higher? It is not uncommon for folks who are lost to use Cutts to try to access I-95.
- There were some in the group who thought a sidewalk on the interior of Cutts and Central would be nice to make a loop connecting to Maplewood.
- The on-street parking at the end of Cutts near Maplewood is too narrow. The road is not wide enough for the on-street parking.
- The path/trail from Cutts to Market Street needs to be improved. It is not plowed in the winter and is often overgrown. The path is not inviting.
- Along Fairview Avenue there were concerns with storm water and sewer.
- **At the intersection of Maplewood Avenue at the Route 1 NB By-Pass, it is difficult to take the left hand turn.** This intersection is used heavily by truck traffic that is trying to access the truck stop area on the Rt 1 By-Pass SB side.
- Exiting at Cutts at the Maplewood intersection can be difficult. Could a roundabout at this location be an option?

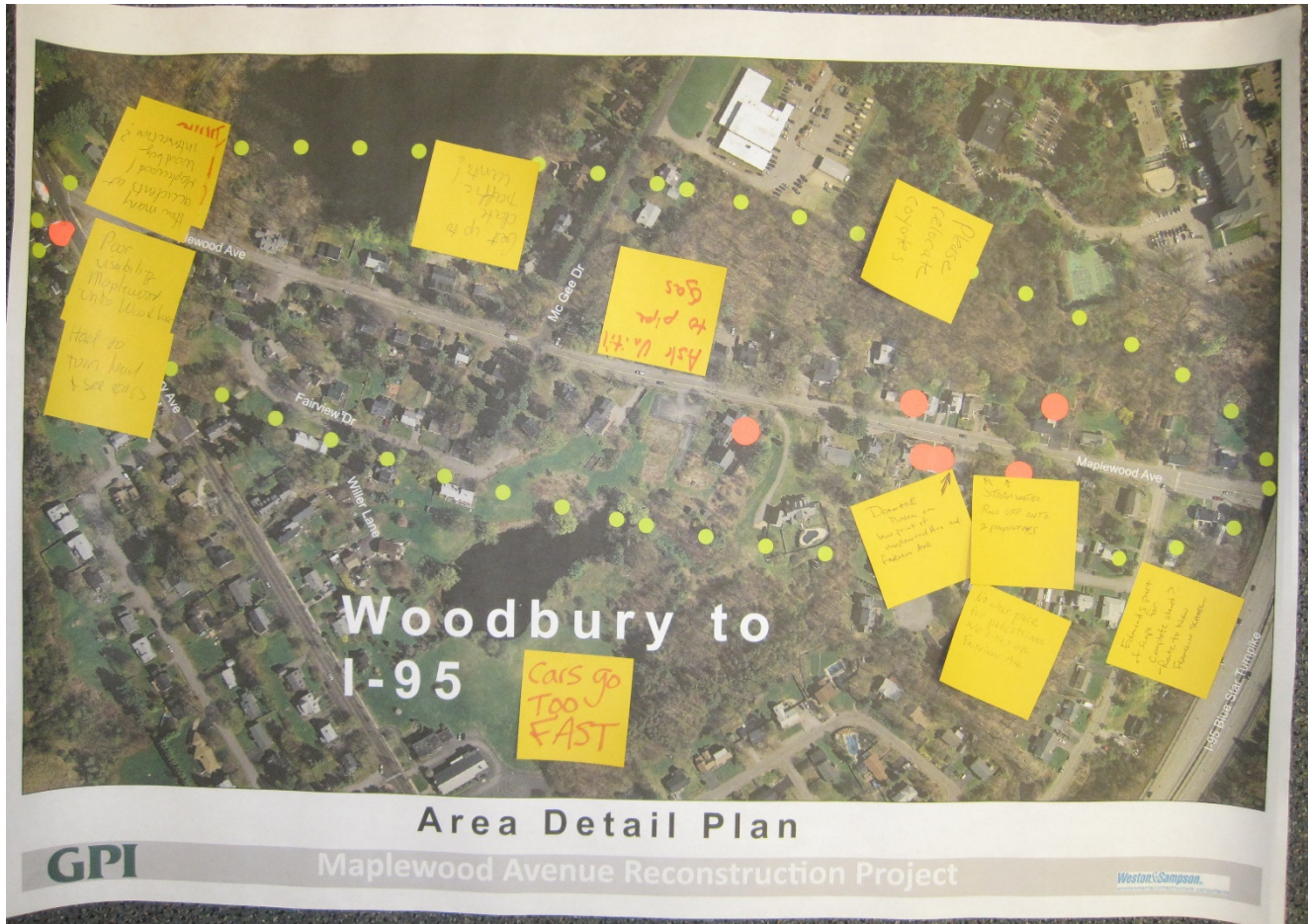
After each group shared their major concerns, Mr. Johnson quickly reviewed the next steps on the project which included a site walk to be held on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Johnson concluded the meeting by providing Mr. Pezzullo's contact information (rcpezzullo@cityofportsmouth.com or 603-766-1755).

All written comments that are received from tonight's meeting and within the 10 days that follow will be compiled and provided on the City's project website. (<http://cityofportsmouth.com/projects/maplewoodave.htm>). If possible, the design team will provide responses or clarifications to any questions asked.

Following are the comments that were noted on the various plans made available at the meeting:

Section from Woodbury to I-95:



1. Cars go too fast.
2. Drainage problem on low point of Maplewood Avenue and Fairview Avenue
3. Stormwater runs off onto two properties (just east of Fairview Ave).
4. No clear place for pedestrians and/or bikes on Fairview Avenue.
5. Edmonds part of scope for complete street?
6. Edmonds a route to New Franklin School.
7. Please relocate coyotes. ☺
8. Ask Unitil to pipe gas.
9. Get up to date traffic counts.
10. At Woodbury – Hard to turn head to see cars.
11. Poor visibility Maplewood onto Woodbury.
12. How many accidents at Maplewood/Woodbury intersection?



Cutts Street/Central Avenue/Leslie Drive Neighborhood:



1. Need crosswalks at Cutts/Central and Maplewood. Walking to school difficult.
2. Intersection is too wide at Cutts and Maplewood – Can we look at a roundabout?
3. 4 Ashland Street
  - a. Ashland needs repaving.
  - b. Sidewalk on west side of Cutts needs new curb and new surface.
  - c. Parking on north side of Maplewood between Cutts and Central blocks view of traffic on Maplewood.
4. 2 Beechwood Street
  - a. Street is a mess (pavement).
  - b. Water from Cutts flows down street and into yards in rain storms.
  - c. Deep storm drain exists next to our driveway and floods in rain. Needs to be moved onto street.
  - d. Cutts needs a storm drain up next to fire hydrant and needs slope to get water to drains.
5. 91 Cutts Street – Constant gravel in front of house.
6. At Leslie and Cutts – DRAINAGE.
7. On Cutts Street:
  - a. Water flow from top by Maplewood down to bottom, creates icy path in winter at bottom (55 and 77).

8. Road is narrowest at the Cutts/Maplewood intersection. Parking should be limited on south side of Street to Beechwood.
9. A traffic island is desperately needed at intersection of Maplewood and Cutts so cars travelling away from town and turning to By-Pass south do not run over cars leaving the By-Pass.
10. Maplewood/By-Pass intersection is absolutely dangerous to make the left from the exit ramps. Light or 3-way STOP?
11. Is there a way to keep the trucks off Maplewood that want to get to truck stops? Can we open up the By-Pass like in Kittery? A turning lane on the By-Pass to keep the commercial traffic on the By-Pass and it would increase economic development so you can access businesses NB or SB.
12. When is Leslie Drive being done? Drainage.
13. 140 Cutts St
  - a. Drainage bottom of Cutts gets runoff from 3 sides. Down Leslie and both sides of Cutts. The culvert in front of the house gets backed up during heavy rain. Flooding our driveway and across the street #91.
  - b. Speed of motorists on Cutts and Central need for "speeds bumps".
14. 149 Cutts St
  - a. New pavement.
  - b. Sidewalks all the way to Maplewood.
  - c. Full light at Maplewood and Cutts Street.
  - d. Drainage from where Central meets Cutts down to where Leslie/Cutts intersect.



Fairview Drive Neighborhood:



1. Corner has a lot of blind spots where it turns near 2 Fairview.
2. Would prefer not to dig up backyard for dead sewer line.
3. Street recently paved but already has a lot of cracks/frost heaves at underground utilities.
4. There are sewer crossings of Fairview Drive at Willer's and OBriens.
5. Fairview Drive stormwater has nowhere to go. Need complete system to deal with heavy downpours etc. Water settles in small ponds.

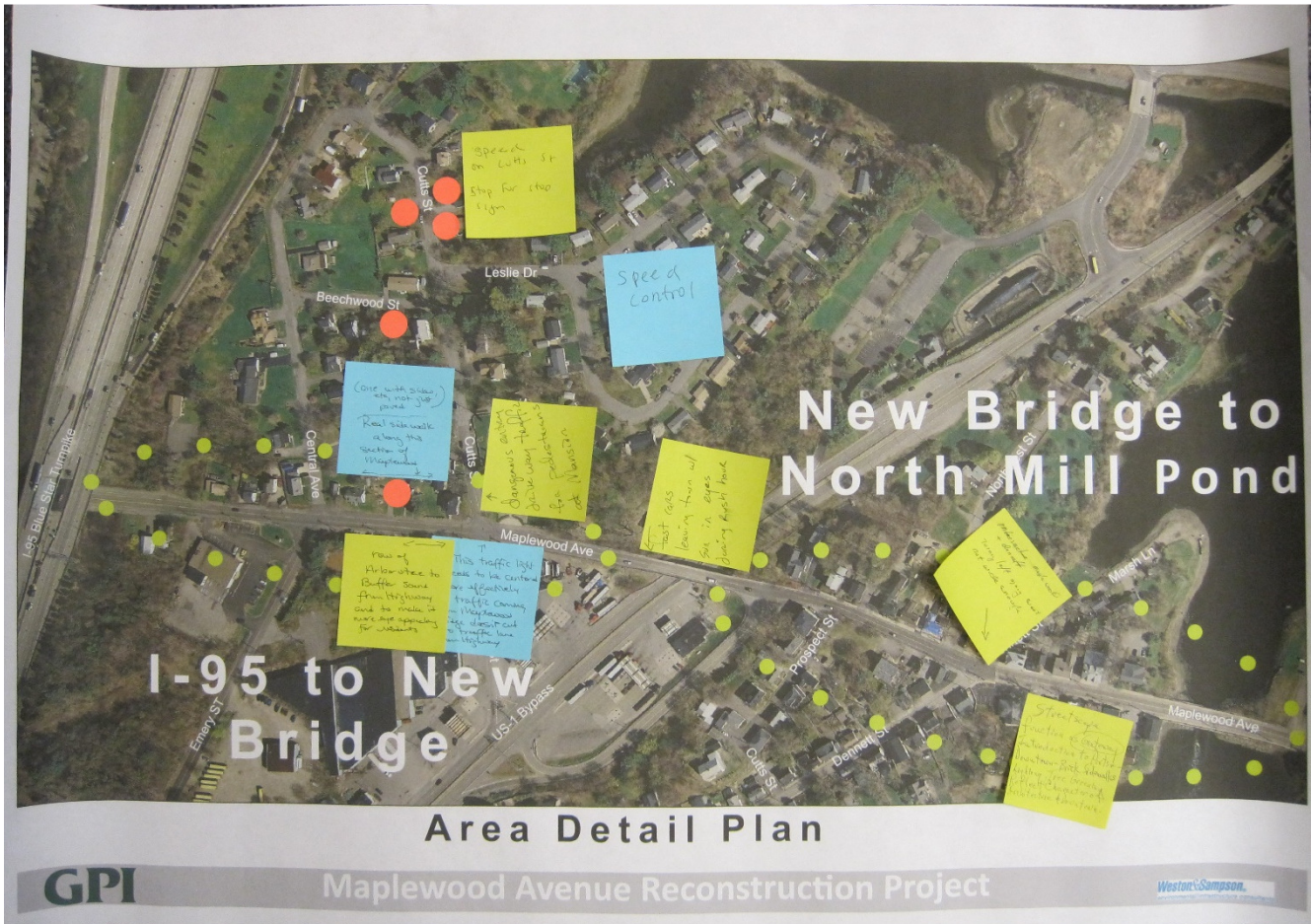


Along Maplewood Avenue:



1. Because of the hill coming out of Town, it's very difficult to see oncoming traffic turning left onto Maplewood from McGree Drive.
2. Landscape/sidewalk like Woodbury design.
3. Need crosswalks everywhere:
  - a. Maplewood at Woodbury
  - b. Maplewood at Edmond
  - c. Maplewood at Emery
  - d. Maplewood at Cutts
  - e. Maplewood at Dennett
4. White line Leslie/Cutts (stop bar on Leslie?).

Section from I-95 to North Mill Pond:



1. Real sidewalk along this section of Maplewood (north side of Maplewood between Central to Cutts).
2. Row of arborvitae to buffer sound from highway and to make it more eye appealing for residents (south side of Maplewood between Emery and Cutts St).
3. The traffic light at Maplewood and Cutts needs to be centered more effectively so traffic coming from Maplewood Bridge doesn't cut into traffic lane from highway.
4. For the driveway to the Cutts mansion – dangerous entry driveway traffic for pedestrians at Mansion.
5. At Route 1 By-Pass – Fast cars leaving town w/sun in eyes during rush hour.
6. Speed control.
7. Speed on Cutts Street. Stop for STOP sign.
8. Intersection Maplewood at Dennett – turning left going west not wide enough.
9. Streetscape function as gateway. Introduction to Portsmouth Downtown – Bricks sidewalks, lighting, tree greening reflect character of architecture and downtown.



Other general comments (below in **bold**) that were brought up during the meeting included the following:

**The North Mill Pond Culvert needs to be improved in terms of accessibility and bike improvements. This is especially important if the length of Maplewood is improved to the west.** City staff noted that the culvert is programmed for future improvements but is dependent on the NHDOT's schedule since the bridge is eligible for 80% State funding.

**Betty's Dream is not located too far from the corridor. Maplewood should be accessible.**  
Comment noted.

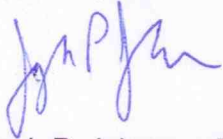
**There is a portion of Maplewood Avenue that has no gas service.**

It is not clear if the gas company has plans to extend limits of current service. This will be discussed with the provider as part of the project's utility coordination.

These notes constitute my recollection of the Public Information Meeting to the best of my knowledge.

Please note that this meeting was an information gathering session. Specific comments may not necessarily be included in the design, but the overall concerns will be considered and evaluated, and, where possible, incorporated into the conceptual design plans.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph P. Johnson, PE, PTOE  
Senior Project Manager

cc: City Staff Attendees

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING  
12/9/15

MAPLEWOOD AVENUE AND ADJACENT AREAS:

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