

**KENNETT TOWNSHIP  
TRAILS & SIDEWALKS COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**

March 12, 2021 Minutes

Held virtually via zoom.

**Present:**

Committee Members:

Christina Norland, Chair  
Diane McGovern  
Tim Plemmons  
Rudy Karkosak  
Abbie Kessler  
Tom Janton

Township Representatives:

Eden Ratliff  
Amy Heinrich  
Gretchen Flack

Guests:

Peter Doehring  
John Wilkens  
Michael Guttman  
Claire Agre (Unknown Studios)  
Jennifer Dowdell (Biohabitats)  
Rachel Griffith  
Steve Giampaolo (McMahon)  
Dan Wanger (McMahon)  
Mark DiMonte (Meliora)  
Michelle Adams (Meliora)  
Diane Wilson  
Paul Hoyle  
Chris Robinson

Ms. Norland called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Administration:**

- Ms. Norland requested comments on both February minutes. Mr. Janton moved to approve both. Mr. Karkosak seconded and minutes approved with all in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Kennett Greenway Updates:** Ms. Norland provided a brief overview of the Greenway before focusing on the key portions underway and the current schedule. Ms. Dowdell highlighted the current spot on the schedule as they are in the review phase of the various projects in the works. Ms. Agre did a brief recap of the survey. Mr. Wanger presented examples of other trails in the region to provide access. Ms. Agre highlighted the philosophy for the project based on the survey, conversations, and work completed to this point:

1. Safety
2. Connected to Neighborhoods
3. Access to Green Spaces
4. Natural Aesthetic
5. Walking is #1 Priority
6. Maintenance

*West South Street Preliminary Engineering:*

Ms. Agre introduced the goals of safe passage along South Street as pedestrians connect to the stores and Greenway. Design does include some ecological restoration as well as the safety features as part of the design.

Mr. DiMonte stated that the design was done to meet PennDOT standards despite the road not being a PennDOT road. Road will remain the same width. The sidewalk route will cross South St by Chandler Mill Rd to be on the north side to the east and the south side to the west. Culvert crossing is simpler if done on the south side and switching sides keeps pedestrians out of the loading dock drive and away from the employee parking lot, which helps create a safer route. The traffic calming items will help create a safer route for bikes to share the road. The sidewalk will have a vegetative strip between it and the road for stormwater management and the tributary will be restored as part of the project for MS4 credits if it fits within the budget.

They are proposing to raise the existing crosswalk for the mushroom house employees as an additional traffic calming item in conjunction with the other two raised crosswalks at Chandler Mill Rd and Pennock Park. Permitting is not extensive as limit of disturbance is under one acre and so stormwater management is up to the Township. Estimated cost is \$1,978,362. \$690,000 of this total is the tributary restoration and is not required, but is attractive for grants and works well with the sidewalk project so the goal is to do them together if at all possible. Ms. McGovern clarified the numbers. Mr. Karkosak asked which side the Borough's sidewalk is on and it was confirmed that it is on the north side and will connect to this plan. Ms. McGovern asked about timing. Ms. Adams clarified that it depends on the grants. Ms. Adams said that design and permitting takes between 8-12 months and then apply for grants next year. Mr. Giampaolo said that with the grant schedule, earliest to really get moving is over a year if not two, unless as Ms. Adams pointed out, the summer grant round could provide more money by the end of the year to get the project moving faster.

*Chandler Mill Preliminary Engineering:*

Ms. Dowdell introduced the ideas behind the plans, which include the aesthetics, experience, and natural resources (both protection and restrictions). Ms. Agre showed a large overview of the trail and introduced some renderings of what the trail could look like.

Mr. Giampaolo discussed the analysis of Chandler Mill Rd and its usage to determine volume and traffic conditions. Average daily traffic calculated at 400 vehicles per day. Posted speed limit is 35 mph with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 36-42 mph. This data dictates the design elements of the project. Chandler Mill Rd is classified as a level of stress 2 by DVRPC, which means about 50% of bicyclists feel comfortable riding on it. McMahon used Federal Highway Administration and used their AASHTO guidelines when completing the design.

Two low-cost options considered were a one-way configuration and advisory shoulders. The advisory shoulders create a liability issue and what they have found is a large majority of Chandler Mill Rd does not have the required sight distance lengths to install advisory shoulders safely.

The primary design option is a greenway trail alongside of the road with two-way one-lane sections in the tightest spots and for traffic calming. Those two sections are based on stopping sight distance requirements. Path alongside the road would be six feet wide and ADA compliant. A planted two feet wide buffer and four feet wide in curved sections would provide a visual separation. The road will be a share the road situation for bicyclists, but bikers who aren't comfortable would not be forbidden from using the path.

McMahon is suggesting the road be posted to 25 mph and consider a few other ideas such as one lane chokers to add additional traffic calming measures. Delineators would be used in the more curved sections to help designate the trail. Environmental impacts will include stormwater pipe extensions and reinforce the stream and/or path embankment to prevent deterioration. They have surveyed the trees along Chandler Mill Rd and some will have to be removed, but they are trying to retain all the thickly wooded canopy to help maintain the soil. Removed trees will try to be recycled for benches and fencing wherever possible.

McMahon proposed a way to make the section of Chandler Mill Rd south of Round Hill look more like a driveway by adding a stop sign on Chandler Mill southbound and then choke down the entry to the rest of Chandler Mill Rd so it is clear the road does not have an outlet and is really a driveway for TLC and its neighbor. An offset cul-de-sac is on the plan, but may not be needed with the proposed changes from the intersection with Round Hill Rd. Other options such as a ten-foot-wide path was deemed to be an overbuilding for the usage and needs of the Chandler Mill corridor.

Estimated wetland disturbance is .013 acres based on the preliminary design. They do not believe this will be an issue for permitting.

Estimated cost is \$4,014,390 and McMahon proposes splitting it into phases as is common with such projects. Mr. Giampaolo also mentioned that utility pole relocation may end up not being a cost because the utility companies might be required to move them at their own cost if they don't have an easement to have them where they are. If they do increase the path to ten feet, the cost would go up by \$1 million. Ms. Kessler questioned whether the cul-de-sac is included in the cost and it is. Ms. McGovern questioned whether there were any boardwalks and Mr. Giampaolo said there are not. The only location that may need something like that is up along the edge of Whittle where the stream is very close to the road. They will do a stream analysis when doing final design to ensure what they are proposing is feasible.

Mr. Guttman questioned whether the proposed plan will have a positive effect on the long-term maintenance of Chandler Mill Rd if completed as shown. Clarifying, is it going to help fix the flooding and washing issues currently occurring on the road? Mr. Giampaolo said absolutely as they will help fix a lot of the stormwater infrastructure while building the trail. Mr. Guttman requested a monetary amount to help illustrate the savings to help support the cost of the project.

Ms. McGovern asked about the need for additional right-of-way. Mr. Giampaolo referenced the ultimate right-of-way and they are looking into whether those were ever secured from those properties when the right-of-way was offered.

Mr. Doehring referenced again that he would like to see the Township pursue advisory shoulders in other places in the Township. He questioned the LTS2 classification because the DVRPC doesn't consider sight distance. His final question was whether the lack of sight distance for advisory shoulders would still apply when cars pass bicyclists on the planned route. Mr. Wanger said they stick with the

DVRPC designation as they are the regional expert that stays on top of the various topics and research studies. He then clarified that McMahon highlighted the sight distance concerns as an issue with the current conditions and short fallings of Chandler Mill. Ms. Norland asked if Mr. Doehring thinks the trail width is the issue and he said no. He believes the LTS should be a 3 more than a 2. Mr. Wilkens said he sees large bicycle groups and are definitely going at close to car speed and would be comfortable on the road. Mr. Hoyle agreed with Mr. Wilkens that bicyclists would not go on the trail.

Ms. McGovern asked whether Chandler Mill residents have an opinion on the one lane sections. Mr. Hoyle said he wasn't sure how long they were so he couldn't say how comfortable he is with it. Mr. Wanger said the northern section is about 300' long and the southern section is about 230' long. They are designed to be able to see the other end of the one lane section as they approach it so they can yield appropriately. Ms. Heinrich questioned if it is similar in length to the one lane bridges and it is much longer. Mr. Wanger referenced the area example of South Concord Rd at Old Bailey Rd in Concord/Thornbury Townships. They created those ideas based on stopping sight distance so it is feasible.

Mr. Wilkens asked about the large trees along the edge of the road. Ms. Dowdell is looking at the size, species, and health of the tree when considering whether they are to be removed. At least a quarter of the trees are invasive, ash, or dead/dying. Further assessment is going on to complete the plan and they are planning an extensive amount of tree planting of natives and such to help restore the route. She also mentioned that there is some ability in the final design work to adjust the trail to protect some trees. Mr. Wilkens hopes this is the case. Mr. Guttman and Mr. Doehring both discussed the benefits of the trail balancing out the need to take out some trees. There is a balancing act of removing the trees as Ms. Agre stated and they would prefer to remove as few trees as possible. Ms. Heinrich highlighted the amount of vine growth and the frequent power outages so removing the unhealthy trees is a benefit to the area residents.

Ms. McGovern questioned the shortfall between the price and grant amount and Mr. Ratliff said they will assess that and the desire to move forward after the completion of the public engagement.

Ms. Dowdell highlighted the current schedule and that a decision relating to the design and engineering will be made by the Board of Supervisors in April. That will dictate the right-of-way needs, permitting, and development of construction documents.

Mr. Guttman asked whether the current grant would cover the South Street and half of the Chandler Mill project so is part of the decision which of the projects to pursue and direction? Ms. Norland said the township is processing the plans and steps forward in real time so there is not a clear decision outside of the need for permitting to move forward to prevent missing out on the existing grant funds due to the time needed for permits. She believes if we move forward, then the plan will break down into a phase 1 with plans continued for a phase 2 to include further grant applications. Mr. Guttman asked when they expect to see a ramping up of the project based on the existing funding and a decision as to which project or portion will move forward? Mr. Ratliff restated that the goal is April for the Board to make a decision due to the permitting constraints.

Mr. Ratliff asked for overall opinions from the committee and public.

Mr. Wilkens requests a way to bypass the large trees and is glad the advisory shoulder plan is considered dangerous.

Mr. Karkosak liked the report from McMahon and appreciated the research put into it regarding the trees and EMS. He really likes the South St plan and thinks it's long overdue.

Mr. Hoyle says he is still concerned over the two one lane sections, but really likes the choker design at Chandler Mill and Round Hill. His concern is cars at speed entering the one lane section will create conflict, specifically with bikes when cars often don't yield anyway. He doesn't like the idea of the two large, but dead, trees removed from the road as they are landmarks. Mr. Hoyle does like the reduced speed limit and thinks it should be done immediately.

MS. McGovern likes both plans as well and thinks we can act faster on the South Street plan, especially since NGT is working on coming to the township line. She doesn't want to give up on Chandler Mill Rd, but is concerned on the costs and the shortfall.

Mr. Guttman said given the size and costs of Chandler Mill Rd needs a little more time so agrees with Diane and Rudy on South St. Thinks it needs more time to build up the project as an ecological and transportation element for the variety of benefits. Thinks South St is a key to connecting the communities across multiple areas and is practically shovel ready. He thinks Chandler Mill is more valuable than most people even realize, but needs a little more time.

Ms. Norland asked the consultants to clarify the amount of time that South St would take. Mr. Giampaolo said South St is not shovel ready and one of the issues there is the utilities, right-of-way, and permitting. Even if money is in hand, the project wouldn't go to construction until construction period or late spring in 2022. It is a perfect candidate for the TSA set aside funds, but it would take two years to get through the bells and whistles of the grant and construction wouldn't start until 2023 or even 2024. Mr. Giampaolo thinks the best route is federal dollars for South St and use the existing funds to do Chandler Mill. Chandler Mill could be phased and the existing budget could be utilized on phase 1. Such phasing will be evaluated in the next weeks. Mr. Hoyle wants to see that and if phase 1 has the reduced speed and skips the one lane sections, it would be interesting to evaluate. Mr. Giampaolo asked if they thought neighbors would be ok with a temporary public works installation to test the one lane sections. Mr. Hoyle thinks that would be great before construction.

Meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.

NOTE: Next meeting will be April 6, 2021 at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Abbie Kessler, Secretary