



OXFORD PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA:

December 9, 2024

Municipal Building 15 South College Ave. Oxford, Ohio 45056 First Floor Conference Room

9:00 AM

Members

Carla Blackmar, Citizen Rep.

Kathy Fawley, Chamber Rep.

Lee Fisher, Citizen Rep.

Rick Bailey, Citizen Rep.

Staff Liaison: City Manager (or designee)

Matt Arbuckle, Planning Commission Rep.

David Prytherch, Council Rep.

Jon Ralinosky, Env. Comm. Rep.

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of the October 10, 2024, meeting.

Old Business

1. Staff and Member Updates:
 - Planning for Oxford Area Trails northwest arc (and related public safety improvements)
 - RFP for transit-related multi-modal planning and bike/ped initiatives
 - Planning for grade separated interchange
 - Next steps with Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Planning in Oxford's Mile Square planning

New Business

1. 2025 paving schedule, scan of Complete Streets issues and needed improvements

Adjournment

OXFORD PARKING & TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024

Location: Talawanda Middle School, 4030 Oxford Reily Road

Time of Meeting: 6:00 PM

Members present: Carla Blackmar (Chair), Matt Arbuckle, Kathy Fawley, David Prytherch, Rick Bailey, Jon Ralinovsky, Lee Fisher

No members absent.

Staff present: Sam Perry, Jessica Greene, Zachary Moore, Reena Murphy

Approval of Agenda

David P. moved to include staff updates to the agenda, before the review of the Northern Arc OATS Feasibility Study. Jon R. seconded. Motion passed.

David P. moved to approve the agenda. Rick B. seconded. Motion passed.

Business:

Staff Update

Sam Perry, Director of Community Development, shared 3 improvements complementing bike and pedestrian safety:

- The speed limit on Oxford Reily Road will be reduced from 55 to 45 near the middle school. This change is a result of a Butler County Engineer's Office speed study that was approved by the Ohio Department of Transportation.
- There will be a traffic signal installed by the City of Oxford at Dana Drive and Oxford Reily Road/732.

- In 2028, a roundabout will be constructed on Stillwell Beckett Road and Oxford Reily Road/732.

Review of Northern Arc OAT Feasibility Study

Jessica Greene, Assistant City Manager, provided an overview of the current trail system and planned routes. She shared that ~5 miles of trails have already been constructed and the connector between the Middle School and High School is slated for construction in 2026.

Jessica reviewed the public comments from 2021, during the first attempt to plan the Northern Arc. The main themes of the public feedback in 2021 were concerns with the trail going through neighborhoods and requests for more information i.e. what will the trail look like, information on the width etc.

Oxford is revisiting the Northern Arc after feedback from the Oxford Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, where residents identified finishing the trail and improving bike access as priorities in the plan.

In order to address the feedback from 2021 and the Comp Plan., Oxford hired Bayer Becker to conduct a feasibility study of the potential routes for “closing the loop” of the trail system.

Lastly, Jessica shared that the 10/10 OPTAB meeting is to make a recommendation to Council for the route. City Council will then vote on the route later in the year, and there will be additional opportunities for public comment. She stated that the earliest the Northern Arc could be constructed is 2027, but it is more likely to be 2028/2029, until after the Talawanda Schools connection is complete. Lastly, Jessica reported that there is no funding dedicated toward the construction of this section of the trail. Jessica noted the role of grant funding and the levy in the success of the OATS. The levy provides match dollars to pursue grants, resulting in a trail system that is ~80% is grant funded and ~20% levy funded.

Etta Reed, President of Beyer Becker, provided a segment by segment evaluation of possible trail routes. Her summaries of the routes are provided below.

Section: Oxford Community Park to Contreras Rd

This section is finalized, thanks to an easement with the Knolls. The trail will be on the east side of the Knolls, in the wooded area.

Section: Contreras Rd to US 27 N

5F (orange): The cost of this route is mainly due to the railroad crossing. The route and bridge would be easy to construct due to the topography. The route is more rural and not located near many users of the trail. This route would require easements from privately owned agricultural and commercial property.

5G (fuchsia)b: This route also requires a bridge for railroad crossing, similar to 5F. 5G is a suburban route, going behind homes and utilizing existing right of ways. This route it is more easily accessible to users. Vegetative buffers would be planted to maintain the privacy of private property owners. For the section along Reagh's Way, the sidewalk could be widened or sharrows could be utilized.

5I (red): The 5I route would allow an at-grade railroad crossing, utilizing the existing crossing at Ringwood Rd. This route is longer than 5G and 5F, resulting in similar construction costs despite not needing a pedestrian bridge. 5I is an industrial route, which may negatively impact the user experience, in comparison to the other options.

Section: 27 N to Brown Road

5C (blue): 5C would be a rural route with a good user experience. However, the topography makes construction and ADA compliance difficult. This route goes outside of Oxford's Corporate Boundary and into the township.

5B (green): This route also has challenging topography, but is more accessible to the users because it is closer to town. It is a mixed rural to suburban route, with some sections going behind homes. If selected, a vegetative buffer would be installed to maintain the privacy of the property owners. This route also has sections that go into the township.

5A (fuchsia): This route does not need easements and would utilize all existing right of ways. It could include sharrows or expand sidewalks. Expanded sidewalks would narrow the road slightly and be constructed as 11 ft asphalt on the north side of the roads. The tree line would be maintained throughout the expanded sidewalk, except for one “pinch point” on Jacob Drive. Bayer Becker and City staff noted safety concerns with a “sharrows only” approach to this segment.

Section: Brown Rd. to Covered bridge

4B (green): 4B requires easements and a pedestrian bridge parallel to brown road. The topography is challenging but the segment would be aesthetically pleasing. The route is rural and in the township.

4D (fuschia): This route would be a sharrow on Kelly drive, as the street cannot accommodate changes to the road or sidewalk widths. This route is fully urban.

4A (yellow): This route would connect with existing sidewalks north of Hawks Landing and require easements between properties.

4C (orange): 4C would also connect with existing sidewalks but on the south side of Hawks Landing. It would have closer connection to Northside Bark Dog Park and also require property easements.

Q&A from Commission to Bayer Becker and City Staff

Q: Is it possible to do a sharrow at the pinch point on Jacob Ave. For 5A? A: Yes. Any combination of sharrow and designated trail or bike lane can be explored.

Q: What will the vegetative buffers look like? A: An aesthetically pleasing combination of plants, not a straight tree line of evergreens. The intention of the buffer is to provide a visual screen where homeowners and trail users cannot see each other.

Q: Do the cost estimates include easements? A: Yes.

Lastly, staff noted challenges with getting easements in the township and noted safety concerns with sharrows for all communities. The goal is to utilize sharrows as a temporary solution, if needed.

Public comment

Julia Corso, 5301 Corso Rd: Julia lives next to the covered bridge and started her support for Phase 1 of the trail but opposes 4B because it goes through her property. She also expressed frustration with the planning process; she feels that the city is not being transparent with the planning of the trails and that her objection to the proposed routes in 2021 were not being heard.

Andy Cosgrove, 34 Lantern Ridge Rd.: Andy recently moved to Oxford recently, partly because of his enjoyment and use of the trails. He also expressed safety concerns about the trail crossing driveways, both drivers and trail users. Also expressed concerns about people blocking the trail with parked cars. He asked if it's possible to do a designated bike lane instead of sharrows and why an at-grade crossing is not possible at other locations along the railroad for the 5G and 5F.

Robert McCarrich, 222 Country Club Dr.: Robert supports the 5G path and would love to have increased bike access for commuting to work. He attempted to bike to work in the past, but it was not feasible when sharing the road with cars. He also noted how dangerous car doors can be to a bicyclist.

Sean Wagner, 601 Honor Lane: Sean lives along proposed route 5A. If selected, the route would be located on his property. He requested more consideration for partial vs full easements with the property owners. He also requested more safety studies and traffic mitigation strategies be implemented on North Ridge Drive. He does not oppose the path, so long as adequate consideration for safety and property owners are addressed. He also noted that the HOA for the neighborhood has sent a letter to the city expressing these concerns.

Karin Kallusch, 796 Dufour Lane: Karin expressed concerns with traffic safety on Dufour Lane. She stated she sat outside for ~1 hr and counted 14 cars passing, of which the majority did not stop at the stop sign. She is also not opposed to the route but has safety concerns. She also noted that the liability, should anything happen on the trail, to be on the City, not property owners.

Mahmud Khan, 591 Honor Lane: Mahmud agreed with Sean and Karin, emphasizing that no one stops at the 3 way stop.

Mike Pearson, 40 Savannah Drive: Mike lives along 5G pathway and stated that 6/7 houses along Savannah Drive are opposed to the trail route. He feels as if the path would impact the privacy he feels in his home with the field behind it. Mike acknowledged that the value of home would likely increase with the trail access, but he would rather have privacy.

Chris Sizemore, 792 Dufour Lane: Chris also noted stop sign running in his neighborhood. He stated that 5A would not feel safe with on street bike lanes or sharrows, due to the amount of vehicle traffic. He also expressed concerns with the islands on North Ridge Drive being removed if path 5A was selected. Lastly, Chris expressed concerns with route 5B, stating that the area is being used to avoid law enforcement and increasing access via a trail would increase activity.

Steve Sullivan, 104 Marti Court: Steve bikes daily and sees closing the loop as necessary for the success of the trail system. He voiced similar concerns for biker safety and also highlighted how the trails improve the health of our community through exercise. Steve praised the City for transparency in the planning process. He also applauded the city for a “Synergistic” approach, by using grant funding to pay for the trails.

Steve requested the use of 100% native vegetation in the buffers, to avoid the potential of invasive species. Lastly, he expressed support for dedicated lanes for bikes.

Adam Beissel, 602 Honor Lane: Adam is an active user of the trail system and wants to close the northern loop. He sees the trails as an asset to our community. He supports 5B to avoid the trail intersecting with driveways, even if more expensive. Adam noted that 4A-5A would have 70+ driveway crossings if selected.

Adam used to live on Brookville Rd, and felt his concerns with the trail along Brookville Road were not heard by city staff. He expressed safety concerns with pulling out of the driveway onto a busy road while also crossing the trail.

Jim Vinch, 85 Lantern Ridge Road: Jim expressed strong support for completing the trails, with no preference for alignment, so long as the loop is completed. He recently moved to Oxford and is an avid cyclist. He noted that he feels unsafe with on-street biking, in both the urban and rural areas of our community. He noted that he is not a property owner along a proposed path, but has “skin in the game” as biker.

Tim Hudson, 426 Jacob Drive: Tim supports route 5A over 5B, stating he would prefer to have the trail in place of the existing sidewalk, so the back of the property remains private. He noted that the sidewalk is already used frequently and the trail would increase this use, rather than splitting pedestrian use in front and behind the property. He felt 5A is safer so there’s only “one place to look”. He also echoes the traffic safety concerns of his neighbors.

Teresa Watts, 6141 Hester Road: Teresa is not supportive of 5B, and owns property along the route. She noted she wanted privacy for her family and animals. She questioned the City’s right to propose trail routes without the approval of private property owners. She states she is not against the trail but is not supportive of route 5B.

Christine Pacewicz, 260 North Ridge Drive: Christine has concerns with widening the sidewalk for trail routes, for the safety of bikers and children. She has concerns with children running out into a driveway and colliding with a biker.

Kevin Smith, 5470 Brown Road: Kevin opposes route 4B, which would be near his property. He noted that if 4B is chosen, his driveway and utilities would have to be relocated. He also voiced frustration with finding out about the meeting through word of mouth.

Doug Brooks, 227 Country Club Drive: Doug expressed frustration with “how the lines were drawn” and questioned the City’s right to propose trails along private property. He feels the City’s approach to planning the Northern Arc is the same as it was in 2021. He noted that he enjoys the current trails but does not want to see a trail in “that end of town”, calling it “congested + dangerous”.

Committee and Staff Responses to Public Comment

Carla shared that property owners along proposed routes were not individually notified because the Northern Arc is still in a high-level planning phase. Thus, staff has followed the standard procedure for a planning process by posting the meeting and agenda on the website and including it in the newsletter.

Sam shared that the reason we cannot add an at-grade railroad crossing is because there is a limit to how many Oxford is allowed to have by the railroad. Oxford already has 7, if we were to add another, we would have to remove an existing one or more.

David P. addressed that OPTAB and Oxford are encouraged and enabled to do long range planning by the Ohio Revised Code. He shared that our long-range plans are rarely limited to the corporate boundary, this the trail planning was not either. He clarified the City has a right to plan long term but does not have a right to plan a trail without an easement during the planning phase.

Carla also addressed why properties where owners are opposed were still considered. She emphasized that these are long-range plans and that owners may change, subdivide their parcel, or seek to develop. Urban development of land can lead to the incorporation of a planned trail in the future, even if it is not feasible now.

Etta spoke to the concerns of bike lane vs sharrows vs multi-use path. She said OPTAB can explore each option more deeply in the design phase. She also noted that some roads may not support 2 lanes of traffic, bike lane, and parking. She also addressed that the islands on North Ridge Drive and other traffic calming measures would be evaluated in the design phase.

Discussion as a board

OPTAB praised City and Bayer Becker staff, especially Zach, for the StoryMap and communicating the trail options in a digestible way.

The board then went through each route option by section.

Section: Contreras Rd to US 27 N

The Board discussed routes 5I, 5F, and 5G. The board considered routes from the Community Park to the railroad, and then to the railroad to US 27N . There was a consensus for proposed path 5G on both sides of the railroad. Discussion points included:

David P. focused on trails as transportation means and using the trail system to improve the access to the parks and green space. He sees the bridge over the railroad as a worthy investment to connect kids to the community pool without a long re-route.

Jon noted that this increases accessibility to the trail from the neighborhoods with route 5G. He also emphasized the City's commitment to supporting the privacy of homeowners. He voiced concerns with 5I and worried that users would try to find a shortcut over the train tracks; thus, he supports a bridge.

Lee empathized with private property owners, while recognizing that OPTAB has a responsibility for building a vision for the future. He emphasized that the City is committed to completing the trail loop.

Carla noted that the user experience walking and biking along US 27 is not good and 5G has access to Merry Day Park.

Section: 27 N to Brown road

The board considered 5C, 5B, and 5A. There was consensus for route 5A, but with more consideration for safety, traffic calming, and the use of sharrows. The board's preference is to replace sidewalk with the trail. Discussion points included:

Generally the board felt 5A was more feasible due to the use of right of ways and staying within Oxford's corporate boundary.

Staff shared that the safety concerns for traffic calming, driveway crossing, etc., will be addressed in the design phase.

Jon stated he is not supportive of sharrow use for safety concerns, esp. with kids riding bikes in the street.

Carla respectfully disagreed and views sharrows for adult use and that sidewalks are safe for kids biking.

Section: Brown Rd. to Covered bridge

The board discussed 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D. There was consensus on 4C as the primary preference, with 4A as an alternate. Discussion points included:

Carla noted that 4A and 4C similar in cost but 4A is steeper. She supports 4C, as it's a more direct path and connects to the dog park.

Jon and David P. shared their support for 4A or 4C, whichever is easier based on topography and amenable property owners.

Rick and Matt supported 4C, as it alleviates the terrain issues, while providing the same connection.

Complete proposed route: 5G, 5A, 4C.

Jon moved to recommend the proposed route to City Council. Matt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

Jon moved to adjourn. Kathy seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

