

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
February 6, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, in the Selectmen's Chamber by Chairperson Maguire. Members present: Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Polhamus, and Weber. A quorum was present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Maguire.

III. PUBLIC HEARING: None

IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS: January 9, 2020

On a motion made by Mr. Bernetich, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council accept the minutes of the January 9, 2020 Meeting as drafted.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Speich, Weber, Polhamus, and Bernetich voted in favor.

V. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE

Rinaldo Tedeschi, 100 Woodford Hills Drive, has lived in Avon for over twenty years and commented on the rapid increase with development on the northeast side of Town and concerns him regarding traffic, more specifically at both Route 10/44 intersections which are classified as "F"; we need to improve that versus making it worse; and does not want it to look like the Berlin Turnpike. He recommended a more balance approach to growing the Grand List. He is concerned about the environmental issue with idling and more asphalt, as well as the inconvenience which will affect housing values. He suggested forming a Citizens Committee to look at a more universal approach with what development should take place and provide guidance for the Town Planner to take into consideration. He has spoken at Planning and Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands Commission meetings and written to both Commissions. Chairperson Maguire agreed with the amount of traffic on Route 44, the Citizens Committee is a good idea; we have a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) that lays out the plans for our Town and we want to maintain the rural character; applicants come in for apartment complexes and they have a right to pursue those possibilities. Mr. Tedeschi noted that these parcels are zoned agricultural so we have something to work with. The Town Manager recommended that Mr. Tedeschi attend the Planning and Zoning Commission meetings regarding the application pending for the complex off Waterville Road; if you spend some time reviewing the POCD will provide a better idea on long-term planning in place to keep Route 44 from looking like the Berlin Turnpike; and to keep in mind the balance between private property rights and Planning and Zoning discretion with regards to the statutory land use process and what is in the POCD. Mr. Tedeschi responded that he has looked at the POCD and it is pretty good; maybe a partnership can be formed with what can be done with property around Town. Mr. Speich thanked Mr. Tedeschi for coming in; he has lived

in Town for thirty-six years and the Route 10/44 intersections have changed almost every ten years; it is not too bad; as surrounding towns grow more traffic funnels down Route 44; and none of us here want the Berlin Turnpike.

Adam Lazinsk, 88 Deepwood Drive, commented on the proliferation of throw away commercial temporary signage around Town and to consider empowering the Zoning Enforcement Officer or Town staff to pick-up these signs if they are in violation of the Town's signing regulations. He also commented on tree trimming being done by Eversource/Asplundh at the power lines but expressed the need to trim leaners on the opposite side of the street that could still affect the power lines; maybe legislatively something needs to be done or there may be occasions where Public Works needs to be more proactive with tree removal; they have a lot to do but we did just recently purchase them a brand new tree truck, have a good chipper, and have trained staff who do this work very well. He noted that the Old Farms Road Bridge is spectacular.

Steven Mitchell, 345 Waterville Road, commented that he is here tonight to help Avon become a bicycle friendly community; Simsbury, Canton, Farmington, and West Hartford have gone through the process; the process can be found at bikeleague.org; there are ten bicycle friendly communities in Connecticut; Avon has the backbone of the East Coast Greenway; the State has changed their vision, called Complete Streets; the idea is to be environmentally responsible and be able to rely on active transportation. He noted that the first meeting, Bike Walk Avon CT, will be held in the Library Board Room on February 25th at 7:00 p.m. and all are invited to attend. The Town Manager commented that we will look into the program and how it might work in Avon. He noted that about seven years ago we attempted to do a pilot project with bike sharrows in the vicinity of Burnham Road and no one wanted it. Chairperson Maguire commented on the bicycle lane to be installed along Old Farms Road and looking into other safe areas around Town.

VI. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL

Mr. Polhamus thanked all involved with the recent fire stations tour and gave him a greater appreciation for their needs along with recruitment challenges and would support a committee being formed to discuss their needs. He requested a similar tour of the schools and the Avon Police Department facilities. He attended a meeting with Moms Demanding Action, gun safety group which discussed statistics regarding children injured by gun incidents; Project Child Safe founded after Sandy Hook offer gun safety locks to police departments for free and asked for Avon to participate with this program and advertise in the Town newsletter. He attended the last Planning and Zoning Commission meeting that discussed Avon Gardens; it was visually difficult to see what the developer was presenting and we should investigate other options/venues during these instances. Chairperson Maguire responded in agreement. Mr. Polhamus mentioned a report about a town in Maine receiving a free electric school bus paid for by the Volkswagen grant; Durham, CT recently received \$500,000 to upgrade to modern diesels. The Town Manager commented he will speak with the Superintendent of Schools about this item.

Mr. Speich thanked all involved with the recent fire stations tour. He too would like a tour of the Police Department facilities.

Mr. Weber thanked all involved with the recent fire stations tour; it was an eye-opening experience. He referenced a January 13th article in the Hartford Courant about Zac Spivak raising \$10,000 for

Vie for the Kids, a foundation which helps to fund pediatric cancer trials, and asked if the Town could formally recognize him. He commented that after reviewing the Plan of Conversation and Development it is very thorough and he would highly recommend that we follow it and our Town will be better off for it.

Chairperson Maguire thanked all involved with the recent fire stations tour and the need for a committee and to show our support. She noted the Council's Budget Workshop scheduled for this Saturday morning. She commented on businesses/retail closings along Route 44 and requested a summary regarding these properties and how we might be able to help. The Town Manager responded that he can provide a history of Route 44 with regard to commercial development and discuss long-term vacancies. Chairperson Maguire noted a letter received by Robin Baran regarding school overcrowding and the Superintendent of Schools is putting out a request for qualifications to do a study; Council offers their support. Mr. Weber, a teacher in West Hartford, shared that about a decade ago a similar study was done and the long term projection was that enrollment would decline and it pretty much has except at the school he teaches at which had an influx, the bi-product of a very good school system, and are now trying to make classrooms. She also agreed with requests to tour Police Department facilities and the schools. She mentioned charging stations and asked the Town Manager to look into this. She reminded all about the Paleo Indian Artifact Presentation being held at the Avon Senior Center on Saturday, February 15 at 5:00 p.m.; Terri Wilson has worked so hard on this.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

14/15-20 Old Farms Road and Old Farms Road Bridge and Intersection (State Project #04-116/118): Update by Town Engineer

Larry Baril, Town Engineer, gave a presentation (which is attached and made part of these minutes). He noted that we are considering the Complete Streets Program to get pedestrians/bicycles off the road. He commented that we applied for and were awarded a \$378,000 Connectivity Grant to help with building the trail. He noted that a dedicated bike path to the trail system at Fisher Meadows is huge. He commented that we still have to work with various State agencies regarding approvals for the probable north/south alignment concept. He noted that the current design plan does not have any roundabouts as they were too expensive for their value and would take a fair amount of land area. With regard to the Old Farms Road Bridge Project, Mr. Baril applauded the excellent work done by Rotha Contracting Co., including finishing the project about seven months ahead of schedule. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, Mr. Baril responded that the key beautification feature will be the boat launch area. He noted that all the bridge concrete work will be stained the brownstone look in the spring. He reported that there will be shifting traffic on Route 10 this spring to complete the construction work. He noted that rumble strips will be added along Route 10 once construction is done. Council thanked him for the presentation.

19/20-15 FY 20/21 Budget Development

Chairperson Maguire noted that Council will hold a Budget Work Session this Saturday, February 8th starting at 8:00 a.m. in the Selectmen's Chamber.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

19/20-31 Traffic Enforcement

Jim Rio, Director of Police Services, and Lt. John Schmalberger, provided a brief update. He noted there were seventy-three motor vehicle stops over a two-week period between the hours of 6:00 to 9:00 a.m. He added that the Police Department has a new Facebook page and will advertise public awareness on items in Town. He noted that the dispatchers received a few phone calls with positive feedback following the recent traffic enforcement event. Mr. Weber thanked the Police Department for their efforts with this. In response to a question from Mr. Speich, Mr. Rio responded that it is not legal to take enforcement action based on traffic cameras. He noted that West Hartford has their own cameras and will send warnings but that also takes clerical support. Mr. Speich commented that his feeling is that the west side of Town is not as well patrolled as the main part of Town. Mr. Rio responded that it has been a long time since a districting of the Town has been looked at as far as police patrols and would be good to another analysis. In response to a question from Mr. Polhamus, Mr. Rio responded that he will look into any data collection from the speed signs. Mr. Bernetich thanked the Police Department and he would like to see this effort continue. Chairperson Maguire noted that utilizing the Department's Facebook page and through the Town web site we can send out reminders for vehicles to slow down. Mr. Rio also noted that they do have gun locks through the program mentioned earlier by Mr. Polhamus and they will advertise their availability via Facebook.

19/20-32 Sustainable CT

The Assistant to the Town Manager reported that the best first step would be to pass the proposed resolution. She noted that then the Sustainability Team would take stock of what has been completed to date and then break off into working groups for each different task; we would be working towards submitting an application for bronze level certification in August with hopes of achieving certification in the fall. Mr. Polhamus expressed appreciation and proud we are getting involved with this. He noted that Carrie Firestone is participating in the Farmington Valley Green Living Festival on May 16th at the Avon Congregational Church. The Assistant to the Town Manager responded that Ms. Firestone has reached out to Chairperson Maguire and the Avon Clean Energy Commission regarding partnering at the festival. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, the Town Manager responded that the working group may consist of staff from the Library, Social Services, Recreation & Parks, Public Works, Engineering, Planning, and Town Manager's Office. Council suggested adding the Board of Education. The Town Manager commented that a liaison from the Avon Clean Energy Commission might be an idea as a conduit with the working group. The Assistant to the Town Manager also suggested reaching out to other community groups like the Avon Land Trust, Avon Historical Society, Gifts of Love, etc. In response to a question from Mr. Speich, the Assistant to the Town Manager responded that the lookback period is different based on what category the sustainability item falls under. Chairperson Maguire noted that there is grant money available. The Assistant to the Town Manager responded that Carrie Firestone was at the Avon Clean Energy Commission meeting when a Sustainable CT representative attended to speak about the program and we can take advantage of it if Council adopts the resolution. Council waived the reading of the resolution.

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

WHEREAS, On behalf of its residents and businesses, the Town of Avon wishes to engage in an ongoing process to work toward creating a more sustainable community, and;

WHEREAS, Sustainable CT is a comprehensive, statewide, action-oriented, voluntary certification program, built by, and for, municipalities, that envisions thriving, resilient, collaborative, and forward-looking communities that build community and local economy, equitably promote the health and well-being of current and future residents, and respect the finite capacity of the natural environment, and;

WHEREAS, Through its varied menu of voluntary actions, Sustainable CT aims to boost local economies; to identify and implement efficiencies in municipal operations, including operating cost reductions; and to provide grants and other support to participating municipalities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby authorizes:

1. The Assistant to the Town Manager to serve as the Town's contact person for the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification process and to complete the Municipal Registration on behalf of the Town;
2. The Town Manager to appoint a Sustainability Team in order to focus attention and effort within the Town on matters of sustainability and to work toward Sustainable CT Municipal Certification;
3. The Sustainability Team to convene its first meeting within 90 days of the date of this resolution and to meet as frequently as needed thereafter, but no less than quarterly, to report to the Town Council on its progress toward Sustainable CT certification at least annually, and to make such reports available to the public.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Weber, and Speich voted in favor.

19/20-33 Supplemental Appropriation: Public Works Administration Vehicle, \$35,000

Chairperson Maguire reported that this is to replace a 2008 Ford Crown Victoria with over 200,000 miles and a failing transmission. The Assistant to the Town Manager noted that its replacement will likely be a crossover SUV. The Town Manager added that we have very few employees outside of the Police Department that have the ability to take Town vehicles home; over the last several years we have been reducing it, now down to two, the Director of Public Works and the Deputy Director of Public Works; this vehicle is for the Deputy Director.

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Mr. Speich, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council favorably recommends to the Board of Finance, an appropriation not to exceed \$35,000, from General Fund, Other Financing Sources, Assigned to Capital Reserve, Account #01-0390-43914 and transfer from Account #01-8700-58000, General Fund, Other Financing Uses, Interfund Transfers Out

to

Account #02-4844-53450, Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Town CIP-Equipment, DPW Vehicle and Account #02-0390-43918 and Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Other Financing Sources, Interfund Transfers In, in the amount \$35,000, for the purpose of purchasing a replacement vehicle for the Department of Public Works.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Weber, Polhamus, Speich, and Bernetich voted in favor.

19/20-34 Approval of Motor Vehicle Tax Refunds, \$3,761.47

On a motion made by Mr. Polhamus, seconded by Mr. Speich, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council approve motor vehicle tax refunds to Porsche Leasing Ltd. in the amounts of \$1,998.35 and \$1,763.12.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Speich, and Weber voted in favor.

19/20-35 Approval of Real Estate Tax Refund, \$1,988.47

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council approve a real estate tax refund to Garrett Jarvis in the amount of \$1,988.47.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Weber, and Speich voted in favor.

19/20-36 Appointment: Planning & Zoning Commission-Alternate (R – 12/31/2021)

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 19/20-36 Appointment: Planning & Zoning Commission-Alternate (R – 12/31/2021) to the March 5, 2020 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Speich, and Weber voted in favor.

19/20-37 Appointment: Building Code Board of Appeals (U – 12/31/2023)

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 19/20-37 Appointment: Building Code Board of Appeals (U – 12/31/2023) to the March 5, 2020 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, Speich, and Bernetich voted in favor.

19/20-38 Appointment: Youth Services Advisory Board (R – 12/31/2021)

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 19/20-38 Appointment: Youth Services Advisory Board (R – 12/31/2021) to the March 5, 2020 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Speich, and Weber voted in favor.

19/20-39 Appointment: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission (R – 12/31/2021)

On a motion made by Mr. Polhamus, seconded by Mr. Speich, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council appoint Tom Armstrong as a regular member to the CRCOG Regional Planning Commission to fill a vacancy with a term to expire on December 31, 2021.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Polhamus, and Speich voted in favor.

19/20-40 Appointment: Plainville Area Cable TV Advisory Council (R – 12/31/2021)

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 19/20-40 Appointment: Plainville Area Cable TV Advisory Council (R – 12/31/2021) to the March 5, 2020 meeting.
Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Speich, and Weber voted in favor.

19/20-41 Appointment: Lower Farmington River & Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee (R – 12/31/2021)

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 19/20-41 Appointment: Lower Farmington River & Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee (R – 12/31/2021) to the March 5, 2020 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, Speich, and Bernetich voted in favor.

IX. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT/MISCELLANEOUS

Misc. A: Purchasing Update: The Town Manager provided a brief update. He noted the upcoming implementation with our new banking partner, Webster Bank.

Misc. B: Construction Update: The Town Manager provided a brief update. He noted that regarding the Communications Tower, staff is working to identify other solutions; WFSB seems to be a good fixed location and other options are attempting to co-locate on existing facilities. In response to a question from Mr. Speich, the Town Manager responded that John Zematis and Tom Kline took a field trip to Middletown to look at the State’s operation a few weeks ago and were favorably impressed; the State has come a long way from when we initially looked at that option in 2017; he is still hesitant in terms of the relationship and uncertainty around it, but other things have changed that make him lean more toward that direction and it would be worth the discussion. In response to a question from Mr. Bernetich, the Town Manager responded that Tom Kline would be better to comment on FirstNet but his understanding is that FirstNet would not supplant the need for the P25 system that was identified. Mr. Bernetich explained that FirstNet gives a band just to First Responders, Police, Public Works, and the Board of Education after a disaster happens; the infrastructure exists for it. With regards to Fisher Meadows, Mr. Weber commented that we spent funds improving the fields and asked if we have considered improving the pavilions there to provide a safe space for youths in the event of a thunderstorm. The Assistant to the Town Manager responded that we have funding leftover in the capital account with a laundry list of items that can be completed there. Mr. Weber noted that it is a nice place for residents outside of Avon to come and see so we want to have it be a shining spot for our Town. The Town Manager noted that a conversation will be needed pretty soon about the Library geothermal system; our consultant has identified three options, coming in higher than anticipated and pretty serious drawbacks particularly with the external requirements.

The Town Manager suggested that perhaps on a Saturday we can schedule a tour of the Town offices, Police Department, the Library, Public Works, and the Senior Center.

Misc. C: Bicycle Friendly Community: This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Misc. D: Census Information 2020: The Town Manager reported that we met with a representative with the Census last week; it is important that we get an accurate count in the

community; the information is used for district apportionment and federal funding decisions; residents will be alerted about door to door responses via the Police Department's Facebook page.

Misc. E: Micro Grid-Avon Village Center: The Town Manager reported that we continue to follow-up with the developer.

XI. ADJOURN

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 10:01 p.m.
Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Polhamus, and Weber voted in favor.

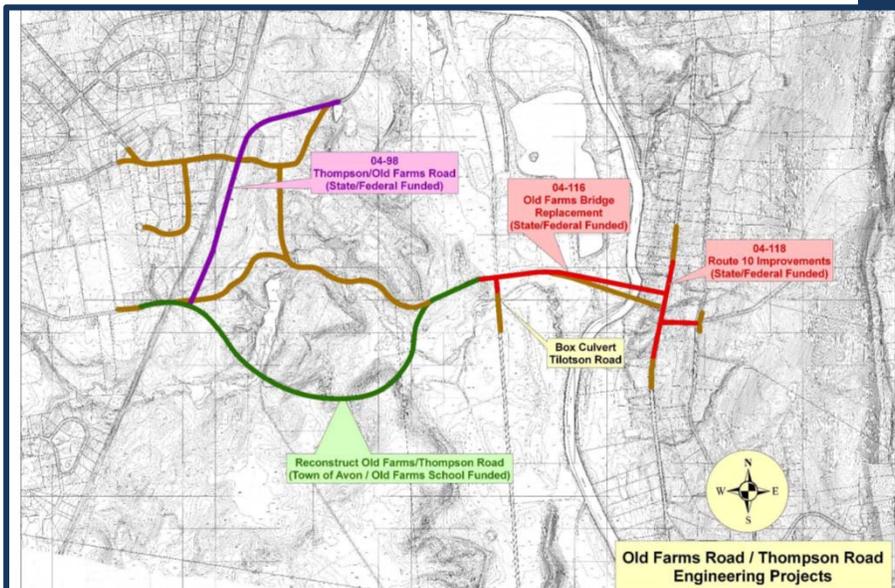
Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk

Old Farms Road Projects Overview

Old Farms Road Reconstruction
& Old Farms Road, Bridge, &
Route 10

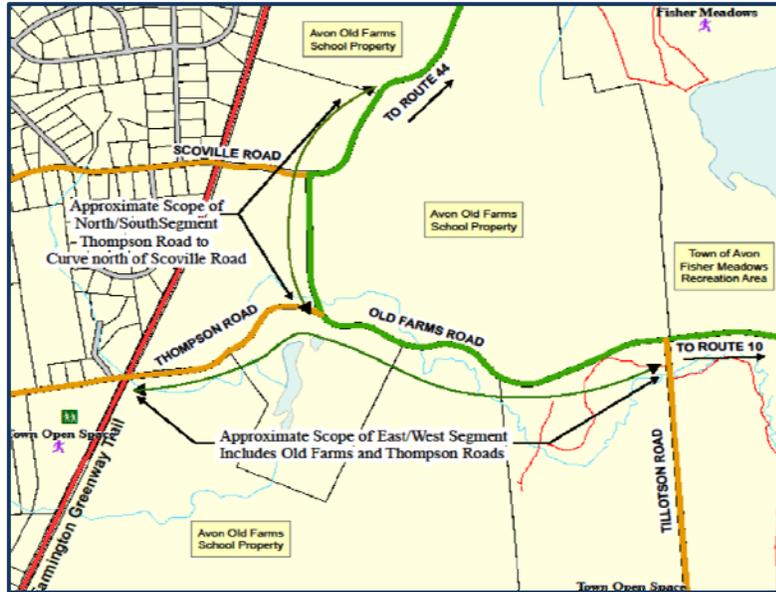
February 6, 2020

Project Locations



Old Farms Road Reconstruction

North/South vs East/West Sections



Old Farms Road Reconstruction

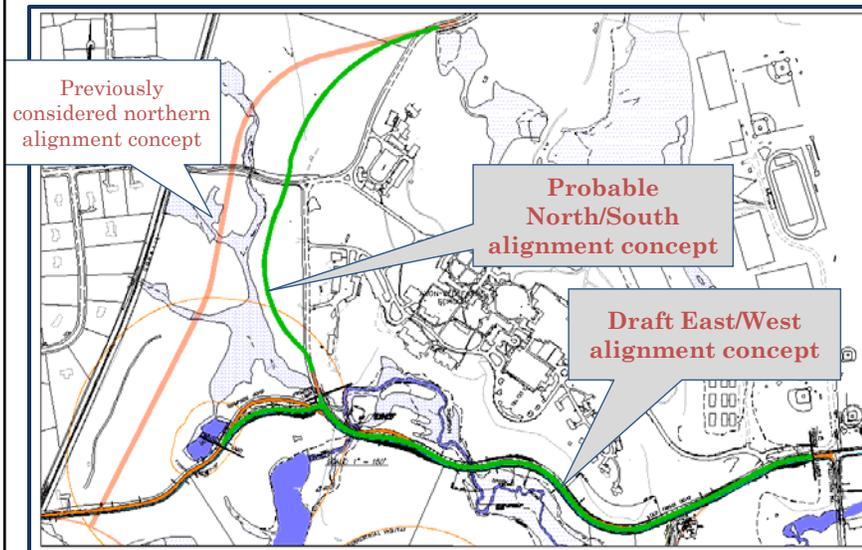
Brief History

- Under consideration since the late 1960s
- Numerous design concepts since then
- Several Environmental Studies and reports
- Unique in that there is only one abutter (AOFS)
 - AOFS Memorandum of Understanding
- Much TOA energy spent in the early 2000s to move forward
- Received STP-Urban funding for North/South Section which was partially used to fund a Feasibility Study over entire area(2016)
- Results:
 - Proceed with new alignment for North/South section
 - Rebuild East/West section in current alignment

Old Farms Road Reconstruction Current Status – North/South Section

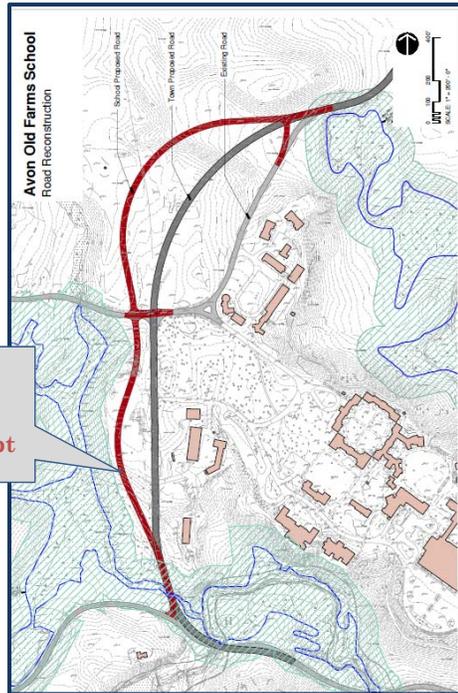
- Reallocated remaining STP-Urban \$\$ to LOTCIP (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program)
- Applied for LOTCIP construction funding (\$3.6M)
- Received LOTCIP Commitment to Fund letter
- AOFS letter confirming participation November 2017
- Notified that a more rigorous CEPA process required – awaiting CTDOT further definition
- Will be proceeding with design once CEPA process is underway/completed

Old Farms Road Reconstruction Current Status – North/South Section



North / South Section

Probable
North/South
alignment concept



Old Farms Road Reconstruction Current Status – East/West Section

- Preliminary design prepared as part of feasibility study
- Will be applying for LOTCIP construction funding – competitive solicitation just advertised
- Max LOTCIP Funding per project is \$3M – construction funding only
- Feasibility-based estimate just over \$7M for construction

Old Farms Road, Bridge, Route 10

Current Status

- Construction began December 2018
- Significant Archaeological find – field work completed April 2019
- Allowed Road closure July 2019 to facilitate Old Farms Road portion
- Bridge opened to traffic December 2019 – 4 to 5 months ahead of schedule
- Current work on Rt. 10, demolishing old bridge
- Short-term road closure July 2020 for final paving
- Hard deadline end of October 2020, but goal to complete ahead of schedule