

Plymouth Planning Board
Obery Street Master Plan Committee
August 8, 2005

Overview

The Obery Street area in Plymouth is currently being reshaped by development. In the early 1990s, Town Meeting rezoned from residential to commercial approximately 6.95 acres of land on the north side of Obery Street. New county facilities for the Registry of Deeds and the Plymouth Trial Court are currently under construction. In addition, Jordan Hospital continues to expand its facilities. Over time, other potential changes to the Plymouth North High School and the County Farm will change the character of this area. Growth in local and regional traffic and development in surrounding areas also has the potential to result in impacts on the Obery Street corridor with increased congestion and delays in peak travel periods. In recognition of the impacts of the County's development projects, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has allocated \$1 million for road and infrastructure improvements in the Obery Street corridor. The advocacy group Friends of the Plymouth County Farm has been working with the County Commissioners toward preservation of remaining farmland and open space at the Farm. Finally, the majority of the neighborhood, including the abutting Sandwich Street, Woodvale Ave. and Nook Road areas, remains residential and the residents of these areas are becoming increasingly concerned about the potential impacts of development on their quality of life. The Obery Heights Neighborhood Association (OHNA), an active group founded in the late 1990's, attests to the residents' intense interest in these issues.

Clearly, the Obery Street neighborhood is an area in transition. In combination, these changes present both significant challenges and opportunities for the Town.

The potential exists to create a cohesive mix of uses that incorporates the proposed public and institutional facilities, as well as limited commercial development that also protects the quality of life of the homeowners in the neighborhood.

Tasks

The Obery Street Master Plan Committee is charged with:

- Collecting and reviewing existing information (development, traffic, land uses, number of residents, etc.) for the area.
- Analyzing and summarizing this information.
- Defining the area's strengths and weaknesses.
- Defining and examining the external threats and opportunities.
- Documenting its findings in a brief summary accompanied by a series of summary maps of the area (Composite Site, Urban Design Issues and Opportunities, Transportation Issues and Opportunities, and Open Space Issues and Opportunities)

- Preparing a “land use” vision for the corridor.
- Suggesting land use, zoning and policy recommendations to help achieve the preferred vision.
- Suggest road design and streetscape improvements.

This initial process should be completed within 12 months with preliminary recommendations presented to the Planning Board within 6 months. The committee will continue beyond the initial planning phase to assist in the implementation of the recommendations and to serve as a resource for the other planning and preservation initiatives contemplated for the area.

This study effort must include significant community and stakeholder participation. Participation through a series of workshops with residents, OHNA, School Officials, Department of Public Works, Plymouth County and Jordan Hospital will contribute directly to the success and effectiveness of this effort.

The County Commissioners have created a County Owned Land Study Committee and the School Department is examining several alternatives for the Plymouth North High School Complex. The committee should also assist in the coordination of activities of these study groups.

The Committee will also serve as a liaison between the study effort and the larger Plymouth community. The following activities are of particular importance:

- Various Town officials have suggested several development alternatives for the North High School Campus.
- The newly created County Land Review Committee.
- Future Jordan Hospital expansion plan.
- Obery Street traffic and streetscape improvements.
- Regional civic center.

Committee Make-up

The Master Plan Committee shall consist of seven members as follows:

- 1 Planning Board members
- 1 Board of Selectmen member
- 1 School Committee member
- 1 County Commission designee
- 1 Plymouth Center Steering Committee Member
- 4 Neighborhood citizens