



MEMORANDUM

To: Eleni Churchill

From: Joe Segale, P.E./PTP

Re: Colchester Avenue September 7, 2011 Final Public Meeting Summary

This memorandum presents notes from the final public meeting for the Colchester Avenue Corridor Plan. The meeting was conducted at the McClure conference room at Fletcher Allen Health Care located directly on Colchester Avenue.

Meeting Overview

The purpose of this meeting was to gather feedback from residents and other stakeholders on the draft September 1, 2011 Colchester Avenue Corridor Plan which was made available to public on the project web site at www.colchesteravenue.org. The meeting format included a presentation by RSG that provided an overview of the draft plan and its recommendations, followed by a comment and question period. The following three members of the Colchester Avenue Task Force sat at the front of the room and assisted the consultant with addressing comments offered by the public: Sharon Bushor, Ward 1 City Councilor; Bob Penniman, CATMA; and Nicole Losch, Burlington DPW.

Approximately 35 people participated in the meeting, not including the consultants, City and CCMPO staff and others helping to run the meeting. Several methods were used to make the general public aware of the meeting. Postcards were mailed directly to land owners along and near the corridor; flyers were dropped off at every house and apartment along the corridor and posted in CCTA bus shelters; an invitation was posted on the neighborhood, on-line newsletter Front Porch Forum, and press releases were sent to the Burlington Freepress and Seven Days. Invitations were sent to the Burlington Business Association and Church Street Marketplace; Burlington Bike/Walk Council; AARP City of Burlington; the City of Winooski City Council, Planning Commission, and Development Review Board; and legislators in Burlington and Winooski. The meeting notice was posted on the CCTV events calendar, City of Burlington Website and Twitter/Facebook pages, and on the Colchester Avenue Corridor Plan web site.

Meeting Notes

Two members of the Colchester Avenue Task Force, Sharon Bushor (Burlington City Council) and Bob Penniman (CATMA) welcomed the group. Joe Segale of RSG, Inc. provided an overview of the Draft Corridor Plan (available at: www.colchesteravenue.org).

1. Corridor Plan Overview

Joe reviewed the study area (Colchester Avenue from the Winooski Bridge to Prospect Street). He explained the process included a Task Force, Technical Steering Committee, and a total of three public meetings since January 2010. The City undertook the Complete Street demonstration project during this time and Joe presented the results. Joe reviewed input from the two previous public meetings (May 2010 and February 2011) and the Vision and Goals.

The plan is in its draft form now, with written comments accepted by the CCRPC through the end of September. The plan will then move to various City Commissions and finally to the City Council for approval. The recommendations of the Draft Plan are as follows:

Short Term (One year) Recommendations

- Make the 3 lane pilot/demonstration “complete streets” design for the western corridor segment (Prospect to East Ave) permanent.
- Reduce speed limit to 25 mph
- Transit service consolidation study
- Continue to review and optimize traffic signals
- Improve end connections of the existing shared use path
- Maintenance like pruning trees, etc.

Medium Term (1-5 Year) Recommendations

The Draft Plan has specific recommendations for the mid-term including:

- New sidewalks and streetscape for western corridor segment
- New sidewalk Greenmount Cemetery to Colarco Ct.
- Scoping and conceptual design for a the Trinity mid-block pedestrian crossing
- Install pedestrian cross-walk on Colchester Ave at the eastbound approach (west side) of the East Ave/Colchester Ave intersection.
- Scoping and design of Prospect/Pearl and Riverside/Barrett/Mill intersections; and eastern segment of the corridor (East Ave to Winooski Bridge)

Long Term (More than 5 Years) Recommendations

Western Segment: East Ave to N. Prospect Street

- Reconstruct the western segment of the corridor retaining the 3-travel lane configuration with designated bike lanes, sidewalks, streetscape improvements and bus pull-offs.
- Reconstruct and re-align the Prospect/Pearl Street intersection.
- Reconstruct and realign the East Avenue intersection.
- Construct the Trinity Mid-Block Pedestrian Crossing - Install a barrier along the sidewalk that guides pedestrians to the midblock crossing. Provide in-pavement flashers and driver signage.

Eastern Segment: East Avenue to Riverside Avenue

- On-street parking “pockets” concept.
- Reconstruct the Riverside Ave/Barrett St/Mill Street intersection



Capital Costs for all improvements are estimated at \$11.15 million, without right-of-way acquisition or major utility and stormwater reconstruction.

2. Questions & Comments

Martha Lang asked about the possibility of iron fences installed by the City alongside iron fences installed by property owners and the difficulty of plowing the sidewalks. Nicole Losch of the City's Department of Public Works felt that there would be an adequate buffer available.

Jeannie Keller of Bilodeau Parkway supports the intersection realignments, especially at East and Colchester Avenues. She does not support maintaining on-street parking at the end of East Avenue, because that space could be used for right-turning vehicles. She doesn't agree with the traffic studies that show slightly longer queuing with the three-lane option. She and her neighbors have experienced a much longer delay at rush hour. She would like to see the mid-block pedestrian crossing moved toward Fletcher Place as far as possible so as not to cut off the through traffic headed to Winooski from East Avenue. There is gridlock on East Avenue for at least two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. With the three-lane configuration, it can take 20-25 minutes to get from downtown Burlington to East Avenue.

Bob Penniman agrees that the midblock pedestrian crossing should be moved to the east as much as possible, while still respecting Martha Lang's access. There is a midblock crossing in Jericho with in-pavement flashers that has been very successful.

Wayne Senville believes the Prospect Street intersection realignment will help alleviate the backups along Colchester Avenue. Joe agreed.

Tom Derenthal of Nash Place is concerned about bus movements with a partial green strip. Joe responded that more work needs to be done to make the pull-offs successful. Tom would like bicycles prohibited from the sidewalk, like in the downtown core, when the on-road bike lanes are striped. Tom would like to see a lighting plan, especially at the new crosswalk. He's also concerned about how this proposal would be a constraint on further development downtown. Joe responded that the plan looks at how to move people downtown, not only cars. Tom doesn't feel the plan does that; there is nothing to enhance alternative transportation. Sharon responded that the struggle is trying to accommodate all types of transportation and keep a viable downtown. The plan is a balanced approach to meet these goals. Tom likes the three-lane configuration but thinks there needs to be communication to other groups that will be impacted.

Meredith Birkett of CCTA noted that the proposal to change the Essex route to avoid the FAHC entrance will save 20 minutes on that route; this is attractive for riders. In addition, amenities like shelters and preemptive signals will improve the transit riders' experience. Bob offered that transit is being enhanced in this corridor, with the Essex route on 15-minute headways at peak hour and a new traffic signal at Fort Ethan Allen. It's an ongoing effort to market transit; even with free service to the institutions' employees it's a struggle.

Nancy Kirby lives on Colchester Avenue next to cemetery. She walks, bikes, and drives. Although she wasn't happy about the new lane configuration, she thinks it can work. She's most concerned about the drainage on Colchester Avenue and the missing curbs that cause erosion.



The speed limit should be 25MPH up the hill. The lighting is poor and she's concerned about the iron fences. Bicyclists have almost knocked her over when she's on the sidewalk. She isn't supportive of spending money on the improvements until we fix the maintenance problems.

Mark Porter thinks this plan should be more about getting people in and out of the City. The backup on East Avenue is long. The pinch is going down the hill; there is only one lane going into Winooski. This makes drivers get aggressive. A pedestrian bump-out makes the road pretty, but it slows cars down. Bike improvements do the same thing. At what point is it worth it to accommodate pedestrians and bikes? We get no less queuing and no transit improvements for a \$12 million investment. Joe responded that we are trying to strike a balance for all users and trying to address congestion.

Tracy Clemens likes the three-lane configuration because she gets splashed less with more buffer between her and vehicles. Between East Avenue and the cemetery there is on-street parking which makes it tight for bicyclists. Joe responded that the section is difficult; the goal is to provide a bike lane there, but it isn't worked out yet.

Phil Terry is concerned about snow storage and the snow piling up on people's front entries. Joe and Nicole responded that this is an ongoing challenge and they are aware of people's concerns.

Jared Wood is concerned about the Prospect intersection because left-turning vehicles block traffic. He'd like to have green/red arrows incorporated in to the traffic signals. He's also concerned that reducing the access to FAHC on the Essex bus route will adversely impact those with limited mobility.

A participant voiced support for the realignment of the Pearl/Prospect intersection. He has a friend who was hit at that intersection while bicycling. Bike lanes and pedestrian improvements are needed in this area. He supports the changes and hopes they can happen soon.

Vincent Cohen of Colonial Square is very impressed with what's happened so far. The big bottleneck is crossing the Winooski Bridge. He'd like two lanes going onto the bridge before the traffic light and having Riverside open into two lanes.

Serrill Lash supports the three-lane configuration as a bicyclist and a driver. The corridor has improved markedly.

Wayne Senville, a member of the Steering Committee, lives on North Prospect. He commends the consultant for a well-written report. He's supportive of the recommendations; the three-lane configuration is a good approach and the intersection realignment makes sense.

Lani Ravin works at UVM and is supportive of the plan and appreciates the description of the trade-offs that need to happen to make the corridor work better.

A participant asked about the sequence to the short and long term goals. Also, he supports additional signage going into the Winooski roundabout/circulator.

In closing remarks, Sharon and Bob thanked everyone for participating in the process and attending the meeting. Sharon encouraged participants to submit their comments on the draft plan by the end for September. Bob added that there are numerous recommendations that already happened and next steps that are going to happen: the cemetery sidewalk is going to



happen; the signal has been upgraded at the FAHC entrance; and scoping can start soon for the chokepoints at either end of the corridor (this allows for more detailed design and public process). In the long term, the whole project will be done.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45PM.



