

North Avenue Corridor Study Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Notes

DATE: Tuesday, June 11, 2013
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: Miller Center, 130 Gosse Court, Burlington

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jon Moore, CCTA
David Casey, BPHC
Tad Cooke, Ward 3 NPA
Jim Holway, Ward 4 NPA
Nicole Losch, Burlington DPW
Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro, CEDO
Kelly Stoddard Poor, BLCP/AARP
Sandrine Thibault, Burl. Planning

Charlene Wallace, Local Motion

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eleni Churchill, CCRPC
Ron McGarvey, NNE Resident
Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates
Tony Redington, Alternate Ward 3 NPA
Steve Rolle, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Sai Sarepalli, CCRPC

1) Welcome & Introductions

Nicole Losch of the City of Burlington and Eleni Churchill of CCRPC welcomed the group and introductions were made.

2) Advisory Committee Overview

Nicole explained that the study team tried to bring together a diverse group of perspectives for the Advisory Committee. She asked that members communicate regularly with their stakeholder groups. The role of the Advisory Committee is to represent a range of perspectives; review study materials and provide feedback; communicate with and provide updates to their organizations/constituents; and participate in developing the vision, goals, options, and recommendations for consideration by the City. Ultimately, the City Council will consider and approve the final recommendations of the Study.

Anticipated Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule

June 2013	Project initiation (tonight)
September 2013	Existing and future conditions; vision and Goals
November 2013	Evaluation process; issues and options
January 2014	Preliminary evaluation results
March 2014	Recommendations

3) Project Overview

Steve Rolle of Parsons Brinckerhoff explained that the study will evaluate North Avenue from a “Complete Streets” perspective and develop recommendations for remaking the corridor to better accommodate all users.

A vision for Complete Streets in Burlington was established during workshops conducted in 2012, which is:

- Burlington streets will evolve into complete streets corridors that provide **safe, inviting, and convenient travel for all users of all ages and abilities** —including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders.
- Within each neighborhood, the **need to move people through the corridor will be balanced with the need to provide access to homes, businesses, and local institutions** within the corridor. The most effective use of finite public space will be determined through interdisciplinary collaboration with a wide range of community members considering economic, environmental, and equity concerns.
- The corridor will develop into an **attractive public space** through creative streetscape, signage, and other site design features. The corridor will become **more livable and desirable by promoting social interaction and public health.** *-Complete Streets Workshop Next Steps Memo, July 2012*

Study Process

Each step of the process includes public outreach:

- **Collect Information:** Review plans and studies; Generate mapping; Compile traffic data; Collect bike/pedestrian info; Collect transit info; Inventory corridor
- **Existing & Future Conditions:** Assess from a Complete Streets perspective : Vehicular traffic, Pedestrians
- **Bicycles, Transit riders:** Current conditions and projected for year 2035
- **Corridor Vision & Goals:**
 - Vision: Concise statement that paints a picture of the desired future for the corridor.
 - Goals: Specific statements that define how to achieve the vision, and form the basis for evaluating options
- **Identify Options:** Identify issues and deficiencies; Reflect City policies and standards; Compile toolbox of options and best practices; Public workshop, Near- and Long-term options.
- **Evaluate Options:** Evaluation criteria derived from Study Goals; Quantitative and qualitative measures; Consider needs of all corridor users
- **Implementation Plan:** Recommendations; Priorities; Implementation timeframe; Next steps; Agency Responsibilities

Tony Redington, the Ward 3 NPA Alternate, asked if the study team could post presentations online prior to the meetings to allow committee members to follow along on their own devices. Eleni explained that the advisory committee would receive materials through email prior to the meetings. She stated her preference for the Committee to have an opportunity to comment on materials before they are posted for the public, but noted there would be a website and she would try to post presentations in advance.

Tony asked about the Existing Conditions and whether or not they reflect a recent decrease in traffic. Eleni responded that although traffic may have decreased in some areas, the City still expects some level of growth in the study area. We need to consider both historic trends and expected future development that impacts trip making. This will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Sandrine Thibault of Burlington Planning & Zoning mentioned that PlanBTV added the private realm to its complete streets perspective. Although the corridor study will mostly consider public right-of-way (ROW), one must keep in mind the character of what is beyond the ROW.

Kelly Stoddard Poor of the Burlington Livable Communities Project at AARP asked if we could include walking audits to better understand barriers to bicycle and pedestrian access. It's a great way to get people involved in the study. Sandrine offered her webmaster to help implement this online. Others expressed interest in a walking tour of the corridor. Since the corridor is long, Eleni asked that committee members provide specific areas in which to focus and we'll try to incorporate them into the first public meeting, or offer self-guided options in advance of the meeting.

Tony noted that the Burlington Walk/Bike Council (<http://www.burlingtonwalkbike.org/>) has a "Blueprint for Action" that outlines how to encourage people to switch from driving alone to public transit and biking. Demand management must be included in this discussion - increasing bus frequency will impact how people commute in this corridor.

Jim Holway, from the Ward 4 NPA, noted that some side streets along North Avenue are long; the bus serves North Avenue but it may be a long walk for those who live on the side streets.

4) Virtual Tour & Discussion of Major Issues

North Avenue can be divided into five segments for this study. Steve described each segment, its characteristics, and observations:

Segment 1: Plattsburgh Avenue to Shore Road

Physical Characteristics:

- 40 foot curb-to-curb width; 65 foot ROW (corridor-wide)
- One travel lane in each direction with on-street parking
- Sidewalks with landscape strip
- No designated bicycle accommodations
- Traffic signals at Plattsburgh Avenue, Woodbury Road and Shore Road

Traffic: 10,800 AADT

Land Use: Single-family residential, multi-family, scattered retail, institutional

Observations:

- Few opportunities to cross North Avenue (corridor-wide issue)
- Many school children walking to/from school
- ADA curb ramps are present but outdated (corridor-wide issue)
- Wide travel way – unclear where on-street parking is allowed
- Frequent driveways (corridor-wide issue)
- Several offset intersections

It was mentioned that cars sometimes drive as if there are two lanes in each direction. Some residents are reluctant to park on street because of this.

Segment 2: Shore Road to VT 127

Physical Characteristics:

- 40-43 foot curb-to-curb width; Two travel lanes in each direction
- No center turn lane except at Shore Rd (northbound) and VT 127 (southbound)
- No on-street parking
- Sidewalks with landscape strip
- No designated bicycle accommodations
- Traffic signals at Ethan Allen Shopping Center, Ethan Allen Parkway, and VT 127

Traffic: 13,700 north of Ethan Allen Parkway; 19,100 south of Ethan Allen Parkway

Land Uses: Mix of residential and retail

Observations:

- Left turns frequently block through lanes
- Travel lanes are relatively narrow
- Highest concentration of retail on corridor
- Ethan Allen intersection difficult to negotiate
- Ethan Allen Parkway – VT 127 is the busiest segment of the corridor

New housing developments are focused in this area and may impact travel patterns.

Segment 3 - VT 127 to Institute Road

Physical Characteristics

- Typical 42 foot curb to curb width; One travel lane in each direction
- Northbound center and southbound right turn lanes at Institute
- On-street parking on both sides
- Sidewalks with intermittent landscape strip
- Northbound bicycle lane.
- Traffic signal at Institute Road

Traffic: 12,000 AADT

Land Use: Residential, institutional

Observations:

- Northbound bike lane is very wide in some locations
- No provision for southbound bicyclists
- Bike lane discontinuity at Institute Road

In this segment, there is a concern that people do not understand that a red arrow means do not proceed. Perhaps a “No Turn on Red” sign is needed at North Avenue/Ethan Allen Parkway. It was also noted that the Ethan Allen Parkway intersection is a natural connection for bikes accessing trails to the east, but is difficult for bicyclists to negotiate. South of the 127 intersection, bike lane trials were considered unsuccessful due to parking and road width, but different configurations should still be considered.

Segment 4 - Institute Road to Convent Square

Physical Characteristics

- Typical 35 foot curb to curb width; 65 foot ROW
- One travel lane in each direction
- No on-street parking
- Sidewalks with landscape strip
- Bicycle lanes both directions

Traffic: 12,000 AADT

Land Use: Primarily undeveloped or institutional; some single-family on east side of street

Observations:

- Considerable open space and low intensity uses on west side of the roadway
- No on-street parking for residences on the east side of the street
- "Midblock" Crosswalk at Champlain Farms

Burlington College has a new Master Plan. Steve will procure a copy. This section is the first mid-block crossing on the corridor. It was mentioned that cars often park the bike lane in this section, and the official parking lane begins at an awkward point for bicyclists.

Segment 5 - Convent Square to North Street

Physical Characteristics

- Typical 33 foot curb to curb width; 65 foot ROW
- One travel lane in each direction
- On-street parking on southbound side only (south of Berry St)
- Sidewalks with landscape strip
- Northbound bicycle lane

Traffic: 12,000 AADT

Land Use: Densely developed single-family residential with some multi-family

Observations:

- Northbound bike lane is narrow
- Narrowest road width of any segment along the corridor
- More densely developed; different scale and feel than the rest of the corridor

In this section, it was noted the existing bike lane is narrow and difficult because of storm drains.

5) Next Steps

- Complete existing and future conditions analysis
- Develop draft vision statement and goals
- Prepare for first public meeting
- Next AC Meeting: September 2013

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.