



North Avenue Corridor Study Public Workshop #2 Notes

DATE: Thursday, February 20, 2014
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: St. Mark's Church Family Center, 1215 North Avenue, Burlington
PRESENT: See Attached

1) Welcome & Overview of the Study

Nicole Losch of Burlington DPW welcomed the group and provided an overview of the Study.

2) Study Presentation

Joe Barr of Parsons Brinckerhoff made a presentation including the status of the study, draft vision & goals, and overall issue and improvement options for the corridor. The presentation is available at: http://www.ccrpcvt.org/corridors/NorthAve/20140220_NorthAvePublicForum2Presentation_Final.pdf

Question: Why doesn't the study include North Street to Battery Street? A: (Nicole Losch): This segment will be part of a future study that includes North Champlain and Park Streets. We needed to limit the scope of the study to make it manageable.

Question: The vision statement includes "economic development." How is that defined in the context of the study? A: (Nicole Losch): We want the transportation system to support existing economic activity as well as expected future growth. The Planning Department assisted us with growth projections. The twenty-year growth projections vary between 5-15 percent along the corridor.

Question: How do you factor in the Beltline as a mover of people in this area? A: (Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC): We have accounted for it through traffic counts and turning movement studies.

Question: Is your report about employment and traffic online? A: (Eleni): The "Existing & Future Conditions" report will be posted soon.

3) Breakout Groups

Participants were divided into four small groups to discuss corridor issues in detail. Each group reviewed a specific corridor segment, rotating to all four stations (i.e. – each group reviewed each corridor segment).

TABLE 1: Nicole Losch/Christine Forde - Washington Street to North Street

Improvements for Discussion

Option	Timeframe	Description
A	Short-Term (Less than 3 years, working within existing curb line)	Two 12.5' travel lanes Sharrows on both sides One 8' southbound parking lane
B	Mid-Term (Less than 7 years)	Two 11' travel lanes Two 5' bike lanes One 8' southbound parking lane
C	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes Two 5' bike lanes with 2' buffers One 8' southbound parking lane
D	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes Two 5' cycle tracks with 2' mountable curbs One 8' southbound parking lane
E	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes One 8' southbound parking lane Landscaped strip with raised cycle track and sidewalk

Corridor

Need to keep parking but conflicts with bikes

"A" not better than existing (existing has problems with debris)

Consistency across all corridors is desirable – a standard design

More bikes will Option "E"

Is it feasible to shrink green strips?

Should include Depot Street

Need bike lanes – no one will ride in lane with cars

Short-term – narrow lanes for bike lanes

Separation in "E" too wide – need separation for bikes – a physical barrier

"B" may not increase number of riders

Concerned with losing trees in green belt

If bus stop at Ward needs a crosswalk

North Street may be a good place for a mini roundabout

Bike box may not be necessary at North Street

Study should consider zoning changes and the impact of increased density

Evaluate on-street parking usage

Drainage of bike lane important

Consider cycle track

Buffered lanes to prevent car doors conflicting with bikes and to prevent cars from parking in bike lane

Cyclists use VT137 path or waterfront path

Cycle track not safe because of driveways

For option “A” don’t eliminate lane – needs separate lane
 Option “C” is better for snow removal; Option “D” – no plowing, would need to be plowed
 Bike box is not really necessary at North Street

Intersections

Flashing beacons at all intersections because traffic doesn’t stop for pedestrians and lots of beacons sets a tone for the road when pedestrians are present
 Crosswalk at Ward Street needed
 Raised or colored crosswalks to make them more visible
 Parking at curb ramps

TABLE 2: Joe Barr/Nick Schmidt - VT 127 to Washington Street

Improvements for Discussion

Option	Timeframe	Description	
		Institute Rd to Washington St.	VT 127 to Institute Rd.
A	Short-Term (Less than 3 years, working within existing curb line)	Two 12’ travel lanes Two 5.5’ bike lanes	Two 11’ travel lanes Two 5’ bike lanes One 8’ southbound or northbound parking lane
B	Mid-Term (Less than 7 years)	Same as Option A	Same as Option A
C*	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11’ travel lanes Two 5’ bike lanes with 1.5’ buffers	Two 11’ travel lanes Two 5’ bike lanes with 2’ buffers One 8’ southbound or northbound parking lane
D	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11’ travel lanes Two 5’ cycle tracks with 2’ mountable curbs	Two 11’ travel lanes Two 5’ cycle tracks with 2’ mountable curbs One 8’ southbound or northbound parking lane
E	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11’ travel lanes Landscaped strip with raised cycle track and sidewalk	Two 11’ travel lanes One 8’ southbound or northbound parking lane Landscaped strip with raised cycle track and sidewalk

*Note: Option C for Institute Rd to Washington St also works within the existing curb line.

Cyclists swerve to avoid potholes
 “Dooring” a concern with bike lanes next to parking
 Plowing issues for cycle track
 “D” safer for cyclists than “C”
 Cycle tracks may remove trees
 Pedestrian crossings at bike lanes needed at bus stops

All options assume same traffic levels
 Cars get stuck on ice behind northbound bus stop at Institute Road

“C, D, E” different than Table 1 (narrower street)
 Whichever option is chosen, make consistent with other segments
 Option “D” - less impacts to landscape, but maintains separation
 Option “E” may have pedestrians walk in bike lane
 Bike/pedestrian conflicts a dangerous recipe
 Some hesitation about curbs being a tripping/falling hazard
 Agree that short-term options are pursued quickly
 Concern at rock outcropping – make space for greenbelt
 Question of bicycle traffic at roundabouts
 VT 127 right lane merge for cyclists is scary – used to have normal right turns 10 years ago
 VT 127 – like the pedestrian island in dual-turn lane option

Left turn issues from cycle tracks with driver visibility
 Don’t assume any option can’t be done
 Clearly list what needs to happen for each option
 Think of accommodating future travel modes with these improvements (trolley, light rail, EVs)
 Additional property for VT 127 roundabout may come from portions already used for transportation (i.e. ramps)
 Bike connection through Ethan Allen Park circuitous for commuting
 Why aren’t there more bus riders? Question of access, headways, or better buses?
 Think about bus/bike conflicts for cycle track options
 Gateway treatments at VT 127 to slow traffic

Parking may not be needed at portions where there are no housing/other issues
 Think about signage, especially speed limit signs
 Think about bike buffer for “A” and “B” south of Institute Road. No need for 12 foot lanes
 How to account for snow removal for the options – “C” seems to be best option from this perspective
 Much to upgrade because of cycle track
 With VT 127 roundabout, no gaps in traffic for drivers turning from side streets onto North Ave.
 Consider bus loop operations at Institute Road. They can block Institute Road intersection traffic.

TABLE 3: Peter Keating/Sai Sarepalli - Shore Road to VT 127

Improvements for Discussion

Option	Timeframe	Description
A	Short-Term (Less than 3 years, working within existing curb line)	Two 10’ travel lanes One 10’ center turn lane Two 5’ bike lanes
B	Mid-Term (Less than 7 years)	Two 11’ travel lanes; One 11’ center turn lane/raised median; Two 5’ bike lanes
C	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11’ travel lanes; One 11’ center turn lane/raised median; Two 5’ bike lanes with 2’ buffers

D	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes One 11' center turn lane/raised median Two 5' cycle tracks with 2' mountable curbs
E	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes One 11' center turn lane/raised median Landscaped strip with raised cycle track and sidewalk

Right of way
 Bring back trolleys (reserve option)
 Neighborhood shuttle to move aged population
 Continuous cycle track along corridor
 Increase in aged population in this neighborhood
 Options for aged population's mobility
 Short-term option preferred with low speed.

Accommodate buses without impacting through traffic and bikes
 Wide lanes, bus pullouts
 Favor option "C"
 Increase bus service frequency
 Improve signage northbound at Ethan Allen intersection
 Bike box northbound at Ethan Allen intersection
 Relocate park entrance – option "B"

Sidewalk lower than road elevation – safety hazard in winter
 10 foot option in "B" with buffer strip
 Favor option "B" with buffer strip
 Potential crosswalk at Village Green

TABLE 4: Eleni Churchill/Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro – Plattsburg Avenue to Shore Road

Improvements for Discussion

Option	Timeframe	Description
A	Short-Term (Less than 3 years, working within existing curb line)	Two 11' travel lanes Two 5' bike lanes One 8' southbound or northbound parking lane
B	Mid-Term (Less than 7 years)	Same as Option A
C	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes Two 5' bike lanes with 2' buffers One 8' southbound or northbound parking lane
D	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes Two 5' cycle tracks with 2' mountable curbs One 8' southbound or northbound parking lane
E	Long-Term (More than 10 years)	Two 11' travel lanes One 8' southbound or northbound parking lane Landscaped strip with raised cycle track and sidewalk

Option "A" is better than what we have now with a minimal investment
Like bike lane between sidewalk and parking lane
Concerned about raised curb for street maintenance
Existing conditions are superior to any options because wide spaces with cars and eventually need to turn; I had to pick like option "E"; focus on other areas of corridor first
Do not like "E" – concerned about separation between pedestrians and bikes
More trees is more inviting – like a real neighborhood!!
Lighting for all modes to improve safety
Plattsburgh Ave. Intersections
North Ave. intersection with Tracey has light/prohibit lefts
People need to take left at Tracey
Skeptical of roundabouts
Do not understand roundabouts (reference Winooski and Taft Corners)

Intersections

How will people get in and out of Merola's?
Bulb-out OK – more time for pedestrians
Pedestrian lead signals
Pedestrian exclusive signals
No right on red when pedestrian crossing
Staniford Road/North Ave. is bad – it needs attention with focus on pedestrians – consider rapid flashing beacons where appropriate
Concerns about adjacent land uses
Lots of improper use of left turn lanes at Heineberg and Shore Roads

Road

Options "D" and "E" are preferable but must be maintained, especially plowing
"E" best for bikes
"C" no good for bikes due to car doors
Love short-term – best to do now

Intersections

Pedestrian crossing at Staniford
Like bulb-out to slow traffic down at Plattsburgh
Vehicle access (esp. left) at Merola's
Maybe Merola's access from Tracey Drive – then roundabout
Shore/Heineberg – right-size road – worked well on Colchester Ave.

Road

Like car parking on one side especially with more mid-block crossings
Like option "D"
Like option "C" or "D" better with separation and clarity for bikes
Like "A" or "B" – do not need to do "C, D, E"
Choices need to consider costs
"C, D, E" expands amount of asphalt – more heat and increased stormwater

Whole bike in different color

“A” and “B” do not meet complete streets – won’t increase more casual bicyclists

Sigh distance for cyclists at intersections with parking lane

Use granite curbs for maintenance by plows

Intersections

Need pedestrian crossing at Staniford

More time for pedestrian crossing at Heineberg

Crosswalks at Plattsburgh now!

Like bulb-out at Plattsburgh to slow traffic

Roundabout at Plattsburgh then Tracy drive can turn right or left

Like modern roundabout for Plattsburg (2)

Like gateway at Plattsburgh

Gateway closer to 127 not at Plattsburgh

Like long/medium term for Shore Road

Road

Images do not show curb cuts – this is important

Car doors opening into bikes plus curb cuts

Don’t do anything until can get to options “C, D, or E” – not safe and creates attractive nuisance

4) Report Back by Facilitators, Wrap Up, & Next Steps

Each group summarized its findings. Joe, Nicole, and Eleni thanked everyone for attending. Next steps include:

- Post the Existing & Future Conditions Report online
- Start to develop proposals for short and long term
- Spring workshop will be scheduled in late April

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58PM.

Participants

Ayers	Tom
Becot	Florence
Bogdan	Karen
Bogdan	Dave
Branch	Nick
Branch	Pat
Bristow-Johnson	Robert
Buchanan	Kara
Buchanan	Gus

Carter-Lovejoy	Lorraine
DeMott	Ed
Duncan	Bob
Fandrich	Karl
Foss	John
Gomez	Guillermo
Grey	Jamie
Lefebvre	Theresa
Leopold	Mark
Ode	Carol

Parsons	Tim
Pibus	Lynda
Purcell	Nora
Reutter	Alex
Seleen	Chuck
Sullivan	Pat
Terhune	Lea
Trutor	Barry
Weigel	Brent
Winter	Kate

Advisory Committee Members: Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro, Jim Holway, Tony Redington, Charlene Wallace

Workshop Breakout Group Facilitators: Joe Barr (Parsons Brinckerhoff); Eleni Churchill (CCRPC); Christine Forde (CCRPC); Peter Keating (CCRPC); Nicole Losch (City of Burlington); Sai Sarepalli (CCRPC); Nick Schmidt (Parsons Brinckerhoff); Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro (City of Burlington).

Other Consultants: Diane Meyerhoff (Third Sector Associates)

Written Comments Received

From: Laura Schutz
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 5:53 PM
Subject: North Ave

Thanks for the posting about the North Ave meeting this Thursday. I will not be able to attend (have already made other plans), but wanted to mention that I think the intersection of Plattsburg Ave and North Ave is in desperate need of attention to improve pedestrian safety!!!

Besides that issue, I will mention that I do support the idea of moving to a single lane of traffic in both directions with a median turn lane - I feel this line has worked well on Williston Rd. (with the exception of how it widens to 2 lanes by the airport & shrinks back down - it would be better to add just a rt turn only lane instead of briefly having 2 lanes that merge again). It's strange & a bit confusing to have the road go from 1 lane by the HS to 2 lanes from 189 to St. Mark's then back to 1 lane. The wide lanes north of St. Mark's make for some confusion as does the northbound left lane becoming a turn only lane at St. Marks's.

Thanks for your work here!

Laura Schutz, 30 Valade St.

From: Michael McGarghan
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 7:47 PM
Subject: comments on the plan

I cannot attend the public meeting this Thursday due to conflicting schedules. I wanted to include my concerns that bicycles are kept out of the traffic lanes in the North Avenue. While there might be some who feel they might want to give the right of way over to a bicycle on this corridor, there must be careful consideration that it never come at the expense of taking away a lane of car traffic, or the safety of pedestrian that will be caught off guard from fast moving bikes that don't obey traffic rules that licensed motor vehicles on the road must do. That is what the community bike path is for, and they can and should use the sidewalks and designated bike paths or walk their bikes if they have no other choice. They are not entitled to the use of the North Avenue traffic lanes until they put a license plate and register that bike and obey every stop sign, intersection and other rule of the road. Slow moving bikes up the hill by BHS will be a dealt with how?

Thank you for listening to my concerns. Mike McGarghan, 111 Birch Court

From: Kel Rossiter
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 8:10 AM
Subject: North Ave Meeting

Hello,

I am unable to attend the upcoming Feb 20th meeting, but I am interested in staying abreast of project plans/developments. Speaking generally, for purposes of my own public input, I am very much in favor of making that corridor more bike-friendly.

Thanks, Kel Rossiter, 83a N. Champlain Street

From: Andrew Mack
Date: 02/19/2014 12:01 PM (GMT-05:00)
Subject: North Avenue re-imagined

Given how well the three-lane approach has worked in the several places it has been installed in the city, I think having a trial period with these markings would be productive. Even if it slows traffic some, it would probably encourage more use of the belt-line.

Andrew Mack
Burlington Choral Society
Taiko Aikokai New England (BTG)
Run for Jump

From: Lea Terhune
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 12:14 AM

I attended the public workshop at St, Mark's tonight. Related documents on website were easy to access and read. Thanks. Central location, space set up beautifully, everything about the logistics of the meeting was great. The facilitators were wonderful, the format was fun and interesting. The brownies were delicious! Good turnout, too!

The problems I see are

- we are planning for yesterday, not 2035 and beyond,
- senior mobility options are not included, and
- there are some practicalities that are being ignored.

We should have constructed complete streets as you show in the plans years ago. By the time 2035 rolls around, we will have spent our transportation dollars to catch up to where we should be now. To design for 2035, we need to plan reduce cars in the city and dependency on cars for the short trips on the Avenue. It is not practical to imagine that many more people will walk and bike. It's not safe to bike until there are separated, protected bike lanes. They are in the long-term plan, but is that practical? If you build it, will they come? My neighbors say no. Most people can't or won't walk or bike in cold or inclement weather, and a large percentage of seniors can't or won't walk more than a mile, or bike, even in the best weather. Parents won't let their kids bike there. So long term bike lanes aren't practical for most people we want to move around, and short-term they aren't safe. Share the road with reduced speed limits costs nothing and it is safer.

Roundabouts to make intersections safer for biking and walking are a nice idea, but bike lanes aren't safe as long as the bikers have to navigate among parked cars and curb cuts. If we create bike lanes as designed in the short-term plan, the city would be knowingly creating hazard zones. Encouraging people to use bike lanes that are not safe is unconscionable. People aren't stupid; most will not use them. Most don't use them now. And, we don't use buses, either. Roundabouts make intersections safer for seniors. Well ok, but wouldn't it be simpler to reduce speed limits and lengthen crosswalk time? Roundabouts are safer for cars. Yes. Roundabouts are more attractive than signalized intersections. YES!

The most practical planning investment for 2035 is a street design that includes step on and off solar light rail. That would get a plan into the pipeline that takes us into the future. Shuttles run routes into the neighborhoods connecting schools, senior housing and residential areas to the rail stops on the Avenue. Bike lanes flank the center rail line, and cars are on the outside. (photo attached) Buses/shuttles fan out from the avenue. I think it was at a transportation conference in Portland that they demonstrated state of the art light rail, cars made in Barre VT! We could buy local.

For bike commuters (my husband is one), connect the existing bike paths and create a safe, separated express bike lane on the beltline. If it is prohibited, enlist the assistance of our VTrans, our legislators and our congressional delegation to get a waiver. Speed limit on that road needs to be reduced anyway. It is ridiculous to speed from North Ave to Park Street just to maybe get somewhere a few seconds faster. For recreational cyclists and walkers, improve/widen the existing bike paths.

Frequently when table reps reported out, I heard them say "we heard many of the same things..." But you want to listen for what wasn't the same. If you wanted a lot of the same, why bother to get us together at all? In every group I heard points that the scribes did not relate, because they weren't the same! Repeatedly I heard facilitator say we couldn't do something when of course we could. One woman said, "we shouldn't dismiss an idea because we can't do it now, only to find out 20 years from now that many other cities did it because they challenged the can't's." Example in VT is single payer. They said it couldn't be done, but we got a waiver.

Why continually play catch-up? Look for the next thing, and plan for that. To make intersections safer for all users now, reduce speed limits and lengthen crosswalk time. Simple, and it doesn't cost a dime. For bikers, continue to share the road with reduced speed limits, instead of building bike lanes that aren't safe because of parked cars and curb cuts. Put an express bike lane on the beltline -- oh, there's already a separated path there! Make it useful, accessible, figure out why people can't use it.

Thanks for inviting more comments. Those are mine.
Lea Terhune, 22 Appletree Point Lane

From: Jean Markey Duncan
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 8:30 AM
Subject: North Ave.

I was wondering if you could clarify something for me. When I read, "North Avenue Re-Imagined", I actually thought we were going to be reimagining the street in its entirety. I thought we might be considering a complete regrading of the streets, to lower the roadway so that the street is not higher than the sidewalk and so that puddles at the curb do not threaten walkers and bikers with total saturation when the streets are wet, as they do now. I imagined strategically placed islands along the avenue to breakup the runway affect. These islands would be beautifully planted and act as an oasis for people crossing the street. Turning lanes would be located near islands. I imagined streetscape improvements like eliminating the ugly fencing along the avenue between Little Eagle Bay and Lakewood estates and replacing it with sound barrier walls that could be planted with trumpet creeper or other attractive foliage. I had hoped that we might establish some limits on rooftop antennae that is threatening to make the street look like an industrial corridor. (i.e.. new structure recently erected on top of Ethan Allen shopping center building.) Maybe a low but densely planted circle by the Alliance Church to move traffic down North Ave. or onto the beltway? How about some art? A given, of course, would be bike lanes and all accommodations for alternative means of transportation and all the smart street design elements that would make sense. Goal would be to beautify the roadway and surrounding area, improve the environment with plantings and rain gardens and make it safe for everyone day and night while keeping traffic moving slowly but steadily.

Now I am beginning to think that the reimagining might be limited to painting new lines on the existing street?

I am e-mailing because I am out-of-state now with my father who was in an auto accident and therefore I won't be able to be at the meeting. Thanks in advance for your reply. Jean

Comments from the Meeting Evaluations

- I appreciate the work taken to develop these options – please maintain focus on physical separations to protect bike lane.
- Need a 20 year assumed area development (density impact) changes (residential/commercial, etc.) to make this activity to be useful.
- I love the idea of not having four lanes and having a left turn lane instead. I best liked options A, B, or C. The other options aren't necessary.
- Don't tell us something can't be done. Tell us why it can't be done today and what needs to change.
- Does the bus company have an active participant in the process positioned at the highest level? If not, please.
- All examples of street options should indicate total new curb-to-curb dimension to more easily understand loss of greenbelt width.
- While my group was composed of bicycling advocates, I'm hoping other modes were disproportionately rep. in the remaining groups. No way to know – but the point I suppose is to be sure the vision stays comprehensive and equitable.
- I'm concerned about traffic congestion when construction is being done.
- Gateway treatment @ 127 (to slow traffic)
- For Table 3: short-term preferable to midterm because mid-term=wider car lanes near on-street, biking-speeding-injuries!
- Important to highlight the different ways in which residents can provide input after the meeting. Overall it was a valuable meeting. It is important for short term measures to be implemented as steps in the right direction, but not forgetting the vision of the corridor in the long term.
- It seems that a huge improvement to bikers' experience and safety would be to fill the many potholes that are close to the curve.
- Bring back the trolley.
- Standardize a single (professional) concept for all corridors. Then, show how it would apply to all corridors (with modifications), then lay opinions can make a difference.
- Allow bike access from 127 bikeway to North Avenue at the North Ave and "Beltline" 127 access.
- Do you have a best chance option – why?
- Do you have costs, etc.?
- 10 foot lanes and bike lanes in pavement separators
- Excited at having any sort of bike lane – we can't judge which option is best without cost data!
- Is the advisory committee comprised of folks from all relevant sectors?