

North Avenue Complete Streets Corridor Study Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Notes

<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/transportation/corridors/north-avenue-corridor-study/>

DATE: Thursday, May 1, 2014
TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 PM
PLACE: St. Mark's Church Family Center, 1251 North Avenue, Burlington

Members/Alternates Present:

Tom Ayres, W7 City Councilor
Katelin Brewer-Colie, Local Motion
Tad Cooke, Ward 3 NPA
Jim Holway, Ward 4 NPA
RJ Lalumiere, Alternate Ward 7 NPA
Jason L'Ecuyer, Alternate Ward 7 NPA
Nicole Losch, Burlington DPW
Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro, CEDO
Ken Peterson, Alternate Ward 4 NPA
Tony Redington, Alternate Ward 3 NPA
Sandrine Thibault, Burl. Planning
Barry Trutor, Alternate, Ward 7 NPA

Others Present:

Eddie DeMott, VT Dept. of Health
Liam Griffin, Resident Ward 7
Bob Herendeen, Resident Ward 4
William McGrath, Resident Ward 4
Rich Nadworny, Resident Ward 4

Staff/Consultants Present:

Joe Barr, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC
Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates
Nick Schmidt, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Sai Sarepalli, CCRPC

1) Welcome & Introductions

Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC welcomed the group and introductions were made. She welcomed Tom Ayres, City Councilor from Ward 7, who replaces Paul Decelles.

2) Briefing: Study Background, Goals/Objectives, Outreach Summary

Joe Barr of Parsons Brinckerhoff reviewed the study background (the presentation is available at: <http://bit.ly/north-ave>). The study is evaluating North Avenue from a Complete Streets perspective and developing recommendations for remaking the corridor to accommodate all users. Joe described the public process and provided a summary of the February public workshop. The feedback included a desire for consistency throughout the corridor, separated bicycle facilities, connectivity to existing paths, more crosswalks, and greater pedestrian visibility. Participants expressed concern about plowing and snow storage as well as protecting trees and the planting strip.

3) Conceptual Alternatives, Evaluation Criteria, and Scoring

The conceptual alternatives will be evaluated by looking at both cross sections and intersections. There are short-term (Option A) and medium/long-term improvement options (Options B-F). The evaluation criteria are based on study goals: accommodate safe and efficient travel for all users; improve safety for all users; balance transportation choices; and improve multimodal connectivity. Other goals include

consistent facilities throughout corridor and improvements that support a vibrant and livable community and sustainable economic growth. The alternatives were scored using a 1-5 point scale, with lower numbers indicating the most improved situation over the existing and higher numbers indicating a less improved situation.

4) Cross Sections: Alternatives and Evaluation

The design principles developed for cross sections include: rightsize corridor for all modes of travel; a consistent 25 mph speed limit, reinforced with traffic calming elements, consistent transportation facilities; parking, when present, on one side; and sidewalk/planting strip flexibility. Joe described each option and provided a summary of options.

Conceptual Alternatives: Typical Cross Sections

Corridor-wide	Existing	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
Rightsized Corridor, 25 mph Speed Limit, 10.5' Vehicle Lanes, and...	N/A	Bike Facilities in Existing Roadway Width	5' Min. Bike Lanes	Buffered Bike Lanes	Cycle Tracks	Raised Cycle Tracks	Raised Two-Way Cycle Track (SB Side)
Segment	Curb-to-Curb Width (ft)						
Plattsburg Ave to Shore Rd	40	Same	Same	43	43	29	29
Shore Rd to VT 127 Ramps	40	Same	41/50	45/54	45/54	31/40	31/40
VT 127 Ramps to Institute Rd	40	Same	Same	43	43	29	29
Institute Rd to Washington St	35	Same	Same	Same	Same	21	21
Washington St to North St	33	Same	40	43	43	29	29

There was discussion a variety of bicycle facility options and the types of separation between vehicles and bicyclists/pedestrians as well as the need of on-street parking along the avenue. There was discussion about funding improvements and whether or not the federal government will contribute to improvements. Some committee members felt that there needs to be clarity about how much city taxpayers would need to contribute. Eleni Churchill of the CCRPC explained that federal funding could be used for certain projects in the corridor. Grant programs are available for bike and pedestrians improvements/projects through VTrans. Major improvements to the avenue will be probably done incrementally. We won't know the level of federal contribution any time soon.

Jason L'Ecuyer and Tony Redington are talking with DPW about a roundabout pilot project at 127 or at Institute Road.

5) Intersections: Alternatives and Evaluation

Joe discussed the intersection design principles which include compact intersections, pedestrian facilities on all approaches, continuous bicycle facilities through intersections, and supportive of “placemaking.” Joe discussed options for each intersection: Plattsburg Avenue, Shore Road/Heineberg Road, Ethan Allen Shopping Center, Ethan Allen Parkway, Vermont 127 Ramps, Institute Road, and North Street.

6) Crosswalks

Joe described a series of additional crosswalks in the corridor.

7) Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for North Avenue Alternatives

Ed DeMott of the Vermont Department of Health explained that a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a flexible tool to look at how a project will impact the overall health of the community. The HIA for North Avenue alternatives was conducted by looking at existing data sets. It supports the transportation options that are the safest and encourage people to move more. The HIA includes a discussion of health equity – the concept that vulnerable populations (like the elderly, children, New Americans, people with disabilities) want to use this corridor safely to access basic needs. This is the first time the Health Department has drafted an HIA for a corridor study. Committee members will be provided a link to the Draft HIA and Ed welcomes comments and thoughts on the document.

8) Next Steps

The committee will meet after the public workshop to make recommendations to the City for moving forward with short, medium, and long term improvements. Nicole Losch of DPW reported that the online public input tool will be available soon.

Upcoming items:

- Complete the evaluation process (send comments to Eleni and Joe)
- Final public workshop (May 20, 7PM, St. Mark’s Church)
- Final Committee meeting to select alternatives (June)
- Complete corridor plan (**Update:** Completion Date will be extended to September 30, 2014)
- Presentations to the City Council Transportation, Utilities and Energy Committee, followed by the City Council (**Update:** Summer 2014)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.