

North Avenue Complete Streets Corridor Study Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Notes

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

DATE: Wednesday, June 11, 2014
TIME: 6:30 – 9:00 PM
PLACE: Miller Center, 130 Gosse Court, Burlington

Members/Alternates Present:

Tom Ayres, W7 City Councilor
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
David Lustgarten, Alternate Ward 4 NPA
Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro, CEDO
Jon Moore, CCTA
Dan Mulligan, BPHC
Ken Peterson, Alternate Ward 4 NPA
Tony Redington, Alternate Ward 3 NPA

Sandrine Thibault, Burlington Planning
Barry Trutor, Alternate, Ward 7 NPA
Charlene Wallace, Local Motion

Others Present:

Emily Boedecker, Local Motion
Ed DeMott, VT Dept. of Health
Two members of the Public

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.

2) Concept Refinement & Evaluation

Joe Barr of Parsons Brinckerhoff made a presentation (available at: <http://bit.ly/north-ave>).

2a) Public Meeting & Web Survey

The public meeting, held on May 20th, was attended by 85 people. Unfortunately, the voting for cross-sections did not provide a clear preference. The online voting tool continues to be available at: www.burlingtonvt.gov/public-input.

2b) General Cross-Section Concepts Pros & Cons

Joe described the difference between short term improvements (1-3 years, minimal design required, public process as required for regulatory changes), medium term improvements (3-7 years, design required, public process included in the design process), and long term improvements (7 plus years, evaluation, scoping, and design needed, public process included throughout).

For cross-sections, Joe recommended a series of corridor-wide improvements (next page). Jim Holway of Ward 4 would like to see parking removed along the corridor.

Short term Corridor-Wide Improvements:

- Parking on one side, where present
- Bike facilities where feasible
- One to three additional bus shelters (depends on funding, site restrictions, and land availability)
- Three to five high-priority pedestrian crossings: Gosse Court, Green Acres Drive/Cayuga Court, Loaldo Drive, Saratoga Avenue, Killarney Drive/Village Green Drive, Lakewood Parkway, Poirier Place, Burlington College, Ward Street

Medium term Corridor-Wide Improvements:

- Remaining pedestrian crossings
- Additional bus shelters at high use stops
- 15-minute peak bus service and new Sunday service
- Gateway treatments: Plattsburg Avenue, VT 127 ramps, Washington Street, and North Street

Long term Corridor-Wide Improvements:

- Stormwater treatments
- Planting strip with landscaping, lighting, and utilities

Joe presented short, medium, and long term cross-section concepts for the corridor—see presentation at: <http://bit.ly/north-ave>.

Discussion:

The study team (City of Burlington, CCRPC, and the Consultants) presented the advantages and disadvantages of the two short term cross-sections (see slide 9). There was extensive discussion about the interaction between cyclists and buses with the two-way on-street cycle track concept and the safety issues presented when CCTA buses enter the cycle track to pick-up or drop-off passengers. Jon Moore of CCTA reported that CCTA's operations department and bus drivers expressed concerns about visibility issues and potential conflicts between busses and cyclists, especially the ones traveling northbound/counter-flow direction. Joe described a treatment (when space isn't an issue) where a refuge island is created for bus passengers away from the cycle track. Alternatively, the cycle track could be raised to sidewalk level at bus stops. This can be awkward with a two-lane cycle track configuration and it will also move this concept out of short-term consideration due to additional costs. Tony Redington of Ward 3 would like to identify a segment where a cycle track would operate well, perhaps between Shore Road and Plattsburg Avenue. Eleni is open to studying this idea, but it's likely not a short-term activity.

Sandrine Thibault of Planning & Zoning asked why the four lane configuration is retained in the short term concepts. Eleni responded that since a paving project is not planned for North Avenue, a pilot three lane configuration isn't as quick a process as it was for Colchester Avenue (one year). There is a cost associated with a pilot project and a need to provide concrete information and data to residents of the area prior to a pilot launch. This likely pushes a three lane road configuration to the medium term. There is some information available regarding level of service and delay; people must realize that there are tradeoffs to changing the lane pattern. Some committee members felt very strongly that a three lane configuration must occur in the short term.

Jim Holway feels the role of the committee is to provide a vision for the corridor. Cost, political will, and time can be considered once our vision is clear.

2c) Intersection Concepts

For intersections, Joe recommended a series of short-term corridor-wide improvements: ADA curb ramps and crosswalks on all approaches, audible pedestrian countdown timers with 5-second (push-button) leading pedestrian intervals, and bicycle facilities (where provided) maintained through intersections. RJ Lalumiere of Ward 7 would like a high priority to be given to bicycle facilities. He recommends improvement of the bike lane at Institute Road with a northbound bike lane through the intersection. Nicole Losch of DPW will check if the lanes align to allow this to happen. Joe reviewed in detail short, medium, and long-term intersection concepts (Slides 21 – 31).

2d) Evaluation Matrix and Scores

Joe reviewed the Vision and Goals of the study and the evaluation criteria used to score the concepts under consideration. Evaluation results were then presented and discussed (Slides 36 – 45). Committee members had a variety of questions on the scoring methodology and the actual scores of specific cross-section and intersection concepts – particularly as they pertain to roundabout concepts. It was pointed out that the Evaluation Matrix sent to the committee and posted on the web site has more detailed information on the scoring. Charlene suggested that the committee should vote in concept for something like a roundabout without specifying that it be one or two lanes. There is a fair amount that is unknown now that will be better known when a final design decision is needed.

3. High-Level Cross-Section Estimated Costs

Joe provided high-level estimates of costs for each concept.

4. Advisory Committee Recommendations for Corridor Implementation Plan

Eleni noted that the study will not conclude at the end of June as had been expected. There will likely be a visit to the City Council's Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee (TEUC) in July and a visit to City Council in August.

Committee members offered their thoughts on priorities:

- Dan Mulligan: Two-way cycle tracks along the corridor.
- RJ Lalumiere and Tom Ayres: Three-lane configuration should be a short term recommendation.
- Jim Holway: Would like to talk to more residents before final voting.
- Charlene Wallace: It's important to include protected bike facilities somewhere on the corridor to encourage new bike trips.

Since time was short, it was decided to hold an additional meeting in the next two weeks. The committee will vote on recommendations for implementation at that time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.