

Williston Road Network Transportation Study Phase II Community Meeting #1 Notes

DATE: Thursday, March 3, 2016
TIME: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
PLACE: South Burlington City Hall, 575 Dorset Street
PRESENT: See Page 4

1) Welcome & Presentation

Ilona Blanchard of the City of South Burlington welcomed everyone. She introduced David Saladino and Evan Miller of VHB who made a presentation about the project. The presentation is available at: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/transportation/corridors/williston-road-network/>

The study area encompasses Williston Road from Dorset Street to Hinesburg Road. The goals of the study:

- Identify opportunities to make Williston Road complementary to a new downtown
- Strike a balance between serving “to” and “through” trips
- Integrate design elements to facilitate safe movements at a reasonable pace
- Ensure safe and comfortable accommodations for all travel needs

The study will consider improvements in the short, medium, and long term. Dave discussed form-based code zoning in which Williston Road is considered a “commercial boulevard.” This boulevard acts as a major thoroughfare meant to provide access to principal commercial concentrations and other predominantly automobile-orientated land uses. While commercial boulevards serve as conduits for through traffic and as the origin and destination of many motor vehicle trips, they also provide safe and enjoyable accommodations for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips. Moderate delay is acceptable at peak periods and medians are required with left turns only permitted within medians. Dave reviewed other proposed projects for the area.

The Study Schedule

Phase 1: Preliminary Traffic Analysis	Completed in 2015
Phase 2: Public Outreach Group/Individual Land Owner Meetings Community Meeting #1	January-February 2016 Today
Alternatives Evaluation	April –May
Selection of Preferred Alternative Community Meeting#2 / City Council	June
Scoping Report	July
Implementation	Phased

Questions & Comments

What is the traffic volume along Williston Road and how much of the traffic is through traffic moving east-west to access the Interstate? A new interchange would significantly reduce through traffic.

David: Average daily traffic is 28,000 cars and the majority of the traffic is through traffic. Ilona: City policy supports a new interchange.

Will your report be as detailed as the 2007 US Route 2 Corridor Study? Dave: This study is targeted towards this area of Williston Road between Dorset Street and Hinesburg Road; a preferred alternative will be chosen for short-term and long-term improvements.

Ilona encouraged participants to consider other modes of transportation and things like [Transportation Demand Management \(TDM\)](#).

What are the physical dimensions of space and width available on Williston Road? Ilona: The City owns varied amounts of right-of-way throughout the Williston Road corridor. There is an opportunity to acquire easements as parcels are redeveloped.

Will the utility poles disappear? Dave: We can talk about this in the breakout groups as that may depend on the input received and alternatives developed.

Why is the study limited to such a small section of Williston Road? Ilona: The boundaries were set from Dorset Street to Hinesburg Road because there are a number of new projects proposed in this area.

Are there any givens (foregone conclusions) that we should be aware of? Is the median a given? Dave: There are no foregone conclusions; this study is a process. Form based code would suggest a median for this type of road (commercial boulevard), but it's the City's decision.

Let's add prioritizing the reduction of through traffic and increasing South Burlington-focused traffic to the break-out group priorities.

2) Discussion/Small Group Work and Report Back

Three breakout groups discussed a series of questions (see next page for results).

Break-out Group Discussion: Results of Three Groups

1. What is the top issue or concern you have for the Williston Road Corridor?		
Diverting/Accommodating Traffic	Safety and Improved Flow	Divert through traffic to intelligently promote and control local traffic for both safety and complete streets emphasis. Lane shift at Dorset Street – I wouldn't ride a bike through there. New right-turn lanes at Hinesburg Road
2. What is the most important to you on the corridor (Pick 3) Numbers in parentheses indicate number of votes		
(4) Provide options to divert through traffic and prioritize only local traffic (4) Additional parallel streets; extended grid network (3) Improved traffic flow (2) Safer and more accommodating for cyclists (2) Safer and more accommodating for pedestrians (2) Fewer curb cuts (1) Safer and more accommodating for transit users (1) Raised median	(4) Improved traffic flow (4) Provide options to divert through traffic and prioritize only local traffic (3) Reduce speed (2) Safer and more accommodating for cyclists (2) Safer and more accommodating for transit users (2) Additional parallel streets; extended grid network (1) Raised median (1) More trees and landscaping (1) More development	(11) Provide options to divert through traffic and prioritize only local traffic (6) Improved traffic flow (6) Put utilities underground (5) Safer and more accommodating for cyclists (4) Safer and more accommodating for transit users (2) Fewer curb cuts (1) Safer and more accommodating for transit users (1) More trees and landscaping
3. How can cyclists be better accommodated in this section of Williston Road?		
Reduce curb cuts Separate facilities – unidirectional Divert cyclists off Williston Road to Market Street with a bike/ pedestrian bridge	Alternate route with bike bridge Grade separated, commuter lane Protected commuter bike lane Family bike lanes	Wide shoulders/continuous lane; don't dump snow on bike lane; separate bike/pedestrian facilities; separation of bikes from roadway; continuation along rest of road to Kennedy Drive or Williston
4. How can pedestrians be better accommodated in this section of Williston Road?		
Crosswalks; pedestrian signal technology and integration; refuge islands; bike/ped bridge	Signalized crosswalks; sidewalks separated from curb	Fewer curb cuts; benches; crosswalks; garbage cans; wider walkways; plows don't dump snow on sidewalks (landscape strips?); separate bike/pedestrian facilities; safer lighting (lights!); aesthetically pleasing; no right-on-red during pedestrian crossings
5. How can transit riders be better accommodated in this section of Williston Road?		
Pull-offs; extended service; shelters, technology (app)	Lighting at bus stops; covered waiting area; stops close to crosswalks; dedicated stop area	More bus pullouts so buses are out of travel lanes; get more people to use the bus; give perks for riding bus; benches/shelters; easier to cross Williston Rd; make bus routes more transit friendly, more bus stops, better facilities for folks who are differently-abled.
6. Do you support the idea of an expanded street network (grid) to the north and south of Williston Road?		
✓++	Yes	More cross streets and less curb cuts; more network to spread traffic/multiple choices; take out all curb cuts in front of Chicken Charlie's

Dave made an observation that the raised median did not garner much support. The group responded that many consider the raised median as a means to achieve the priority of safely improving traffic flow and that in the list of “most important” features when they could only choose 3, this just did not top the list. Not to be mistaken with no support, but only that they wanted their opinion to be heard louder on other aspects. The common denominator of all the groups was the need to strike a balance between users and transportation modes. There are a number of suggestions that could be addressed in the short-term.

There was a concern about raised crosswalks and the difficulty of gasoline trucks to access Gracie’s for delivery. The median would also make it difficult to make left-turns into many of the businesses – Shelburne Road saw a lot of businesses close because of the median. If the traffic volumes were reduced, a middle turn lane would make sense.

For cyclists, turning cars are a dangerous. Opportunities for turning vehicles would be reduced with fewer curb cuts, medians, and creating access only at signals and/or cross streets. Justin Rabidoux of DPW noted that the City has requested funds to consider a bike/ped bridge over the Interstate. Justin also suggested that South Burlington doesn’t have to accommodate all the county’s through traffic. He also suggested that as properties are redeveloped there are opportunities to improve the roadway for more modes.

There were a number of ideas presented that landowners could make happen in partnership with the City. A meeting with a group of landowners could solve some issues in the short term.

3) Thank You, Next Steps, and Adjourn

Next steps will be to evaluate a series of short and long-term improvements based on input from this meeting and engineering practices, followed by another community meeting and City Council meeting to approve a preferred alternative. The Scoping Report will be drafted recommending the preferred alternative and implementation can be phase as appropriate.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50PM.

This meeting was videotaped by Channel 17/CCTV. See: <https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/municipalities/south-burlington>

Participants

Nic	Anderson
Bissonnette	Lee
Bob	Britt
Nancy	Chamberland
John	Dinklage
Sandy	Dooley
Matt	Drew
David	Duell
Rebecca	Dutil

Joshua	Goldstein
Greg	Goyette
Anthony	Handy
Rick	Hubbard
Miranda	Jonswold
Lainnie	LaCroix
RJ	Lalumiere
Debbie	LaRose
Roy	Neuer

Pat	Nowak
R.	Nowak
Merrilee	Phelps
Russell	Jack
Gerry	Silverstein
Mike	Simoneau
Margaret	Sunderland
Peter	Taylor
Maida	Townsend

Staff/Consultants: Ilona Blanchard and Justin Rabidoux; City of South Burlington; Christine Forde, CCRPC; Dave Saladino, Erin Parizo, Evan Miller, Geoffrey Morrison-Logan, VHB; Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates.

Comments Received Prior to the Community Meeting

Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2016 9:21 AM
To: Ilona Blanchard
Subject: RE: Reminder - Workshop Tonight!

Thanks for the notice. Have a previous engagement at that time. My idea is to make Williston Road look like Shelburne Road from Dorset Street to Harvest Lane starting with this initial segment from Hinesburg to Dorset.
R, Paul Lyon

From: Ilona Blanchard
Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 8:31 AM
To: Barbara P. Sirvis
Subject: RE: Williston Road

Thank you Barbara – I am forwarding your comments to the project team – sorry you will not be at the meeting. It will be the first, so hopefully the second will work with your schedule. Ilona

From: Barbara P. Sirvis
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2016 9:38 PM
To: Ilona Blanchard
Subject: Williston Road

Ilona, Thank you for the informative email about the continuing evolution of City Center and South Burlington. Unfortunately, I cannot attend the Williston Road meeting on March 3rd. I'm hoping it is appropriate to send along some thoughts by email.

The "Bike-Ped Committee" is mostly a bike committee, so I want to be sure the "voice" for pedestrians is heard. I walk 3-4 miles daily, often on or around Williston Road. When I need to go to U.Mall, Trader Joe's, the Library, or other places within two miles or so of Summer Woods, I walk. My experience is much like that in the report. Most bicyclists do NOT use the "complete streets" bike lane. Those I ask indicate they are fearful of being hit by cars; it does not feel safe to them. When they ride on the sidewalk, it is not safe to me as a pedestrian. That said, we need a different configuration so bikers and walkers can coexist peacefully AND safely!! We are all trying to do the right and healthy thing, but there is not enough space for us.

Another major impact of the "complete street" was the elimination of a lane for traffic. It appears that is not a consideration for the section of Williston Road under study here. If so, I need comment no further. If I am incorrect, my vote is not to eliminate a lane!

I am also very concerned about thinking ahead if the Catamount Center is to become reality. Williston Road will be a nightmare when there is an event. I have great concern about excited fans (dare I say students who may have consumed a bit of alcohol?) emerging onto sidewalks that are not large enough to accommodate them.

So, there are some initial thoughts. I can only hope there will be another meeting I might attend. If not, I have great faith in you to listen to all the voices and create a plan that does the most to accommodate all of the concerns.

Thanks so much for listening.
Barbara P. Sirvis
24 Arbor Road

Williston Road Study Community Meeting – Evaluation Form South Burlington City Hall, March 3, 2016, 7:00PM

(4 responses received)

1. How did you hear about the Meeting? (check all that apply)

a) Email from Friend/Colleague	
b) Email from Sponsors	1
c) Email from Other	
d) Flyer	
e) Postcard	
f) Front Porch Forum	2
g) Burlington Free Press	
h) Seven Days	
i) Television	
j) The Other Paper	2
k) Other - Facebook	1

2. Please rate the following aspects of the meeting:

Aspect	Fantastic	Very Good	Good	OK	Poor	Terrible
Welcome & Presentation	1		2			
Quality of the Discussion		2	2			
Physical facilities for this event	1	2	1			
Amount of time allowed for input		2		1	1	
Overall value of this event to you		3		1		

Comments:

Need to get serious about moving traffic off Williston Road by having a northbound I-89 ramp at Hinesburg Road – Exit 12B.

Need handout of who's who, printout of first slide.

3. Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Crosswalks needed on Hinesburg Road between Williston Road and Kennedy Drive - at Roth Street and others.

Need alternative Interstate exchange for traffic. 12B or Exchange by Technology Park – whale's tails area, or north. Patchen Road can't take the traffic that is increasing on it. At Burlington/South Burlington boundary, the road is within 2 yards of cliff/gully to the north. Needs barrier and planning how to protect from erosion.