

Public Meeting

Colchester/Riverside/Barrett/ Mill Intersection Study / 195311163

Date/Time: March 8, 2016 / 7:00 PM
Place: UVM Medical Center Conference Room
Next Meeting: May/June
Attendees: See Attachment 1

Public meeting:

Introductions

Jason Charest (CCRPC) starts the meeting by introducing the project leaders of the scoping study:

- Greg Goyette and Thad Luther, Stantec
- Eleni Churchill and Jason Charest, CCRPC.

He also introduces Diane Merenhoff from Third Sector Associates as a leader in helping organize and facilitate the meeting.

Jason encourages all to fill out an evaluation form provided near the door to help improve the project process.

Presentation- Purpose



Tonight's Purpose

- Review project area
- Review project development process
- Discuss previous and on-going plans and studies
- Review existing conditions research
- **Gather feedback on issues, concerns, ideas - open public discussion**
- Discuss next steps and next public meeting



Greg Goyette (Stantec) begins the presentation.

Greg discusses the purpose of the public meeting. He emphasizes that the project is in the initial phases of development. The main purpose of the meeting is to collect feedback, concerns and recommendations from the public to shape Stantec and the CCRPC's intersection recommendations.

Design with community in mind

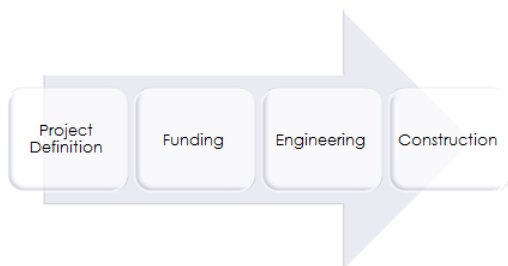
Public meeting:
Project Area



Greg shows the project area on the map. He adds that the project area has the potential to expand dependent on the communities concerns and the project's surrounding impacts.

Project Process

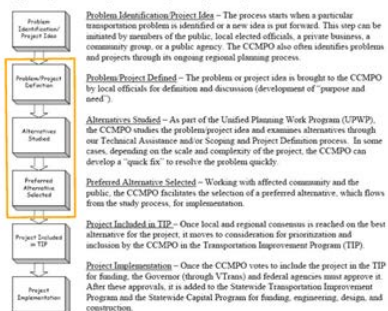
Typical Project Process



Typical Project Process

The Life of a Project: From Concept to Reality

Typical Stages in the Development and Funding of Transportation Projects



Greg briefly discusses the project process. This scoping study is currently still in the definition stage. The goal is to look at various alternatives to produce a preferred alternative from the area. Following the scoping study the community has the potential to pursue funding and follow through with the development and implementation of the preferred alternative.

Greg provides the second slide for anyone who would like clearer and more thorough explanation of the project process.

Public meeting: Study Tasks and Timeline

Study Tasks and Timeline

- Task 1: Data gathering ,existing conditions analysis;
January-February
- Task 2: Local concerns public workshop; **March**
- Task 3: Alternatives development ,PAC meeting,
public workshop; **March – June**
- Task 4: Alternative evaluation, draft scoping report,
PAC meeting ; **July- September**
- Task 5: Alternative presentation, final report;
October - December



Greg summarizes the study tasks and timeline of the project. The current public meeting is task two. After the public meeting the next task will be to develop alternatives for the intersection. Greg continues to explain the timing and purpose of the two meetings to follow Task 3.

Related Projects

Colchester Ave Concept Plan

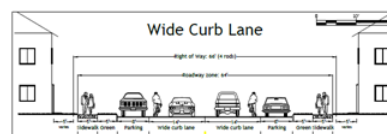
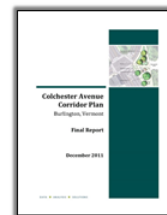
- Consolidates intersection
- Removes Mill Street from signal
- Creates pocket park

"Reconstruction of the Riverside Avenue-Barrett Street-Mill Street intersection...requires additional design, engineering and public outreach."



Colchester Avenue Corridor Plan

- Complete street corridor
- Gateway to Burlington
- Safety, Bicycle/Pedestrian Access, Transit, Streetscape, Traffic Congestion



Greg discusses the previous projects and studies that Stantec is reviewing to help develop alternatives for the intersection. He introduces the Colchester Avenue Corridor Plan that studied Colchester Avenue between Union Street and Mill Street. From this study it was determined that this intersection required additional analysis and public outreach. The project did produce a concept plan but requires further analysis of the area's impacts.

Design with community in mind

Public meeting:

Burlington Transportation Plan Street Design Guidelines



Greg introduces the Burlington Transportation Plan as another guide in the development of a recommendation. The Transportation Plan incorporates various modes of transportation and focuses on providing an experience for the intersection's users.

Related and Concurrent Projects

- Concurrent feasibility study of a bicyclist and pedestrian bridge over the Winooski River upstream/east of the existing bridge
- On-going Walk Bike Plan BTV
 - Improve intersection safety
 - Protected bike lanes
- Grove Street Housing Mitigation – Pedestrian signals
- Brisson Mill Street building redevelopment



Greg briefly outlines other past and present projects that are being used and referenced throughout this scoping study. He references the interactive map on the Walk Bike Plan BTV Website where people can go and note specific complaints, recommendations and concerns on specific locations throughout Burlington. The concerns in reference to this intersection will be reviewed.

Public meeting:

Project Advisory Committee

- Burlington City Staff – Nicole Losch, Meagan Tuttle
- Burlington City Council – Sharon Bushor
- Ward 1 NPA – Wayne Senville, Richard Hillyard
- CCTA – David Armstrong
- CATMA & Hill Institutions – Sandy Thibault
- AARP – Kelly Stoddard-Poor
- Winooski City Staff – Alex Sampson
- Local Motion – Jason Van Driesche
- Redstone – Linda Letourneau
- CCRPC – Eleni Churchill

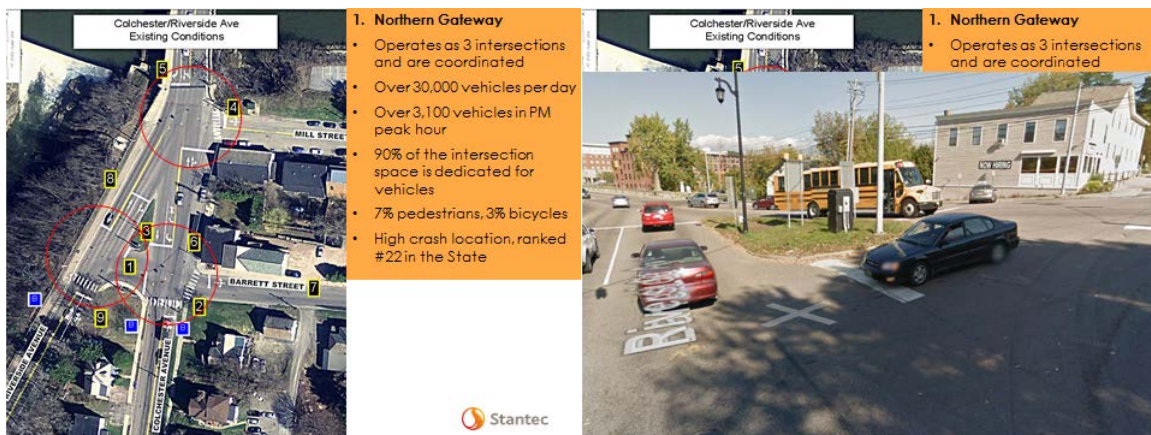
PAC Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend and participate in at least 3 PAC meetings
- Review and comment on distributed materials
- Provide guidance, insight, and feedback throughout
- Update representing entities on study progress
- Indicate preferences for improvements



Greg introduces the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) which is made up of representatives from various entities having a diverse constituency. Greg outlines the roles and responsibilities of the PAC.

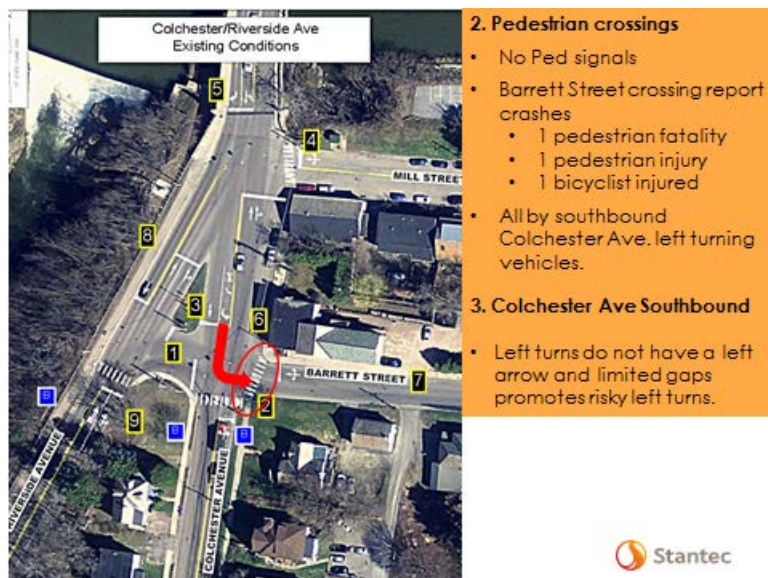
Existing Conditions



Greg discusses the existing conditions of the intersection.

1. This intersection is a northern gateway to Burlington. This three intersection junction is in a tight area that sees very high volumes of car, pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Using 2014 VTrans data, the intersection is classified as a High Crash location. It is clarified that the percentages of pedestrians and bicycles on the slide reflect the percent space allocated for the intersection user.

Public meeting:



- Greg discusses the unsafe pedestrian crossings in the area, highlighting the location and turning movement that resulted in the pedestrian fatality. The community stresses the very unsafe conditions at the #9 crossing on Riverside Avenue.
- Colchester Avenue Southbound is discussed



- Sharon Bushor (City Council, PAC) brings up the recent proposal to relocate Taft School's On Top Program to the Chace Mill. This school will accommodate approximately 30 students from 6th to 12th grade. It is currently moving through DRB. This project should be factored into the study and put an additional focus on safety.

Jason follows up by sharing with the group that Stantec and the CCRPC are aware of this development and other developments in the community and anticipate a volume increase that will be incorporated into the study. Jason specifically mentions the Handy's Housing Project on Riverside Avenue and the Grove Street Housing Project as some of

Public meeting:

these developments.

5. Greg describes Winooski Approach
6. Greg highlights the problematic and variable parking in front of Dominos. He displays a picture of both a parallel parked car and an angled parked car. He adds that cars tend to make unpredictable moves out of the parked spot (U-turns, reversals onto Barrett Street etc.).



7. Colchester Avenue and Barrett Street experience the longest delays and queues.
8. Bicycle facilities and safety are limited throughout the intersection. Greg shares that he read a comment today on the BTV Walk Bike Plan Interactive map on Bicycle Safety. Many bicyclists use the sidewalk crossing over the Winooski Bridge.
9. Greg discusses the involvement of CCTA and the facilities provided for bus users.

Public meeting:

Public Input

Public Input and Solutions

What are the most important conditions, concerns, issues or solutions?

- Safety
- Pedestrian operations
- Bicycle travel
- Congestion
- Transit operations
- Economic development



Greg transitions from the presentation into the break out groups. He explains that there will be five groups each with a facilitator to keep the conversation focused on the outlined topics. He emphasizes that any ideas are good ideas at this phase of the project.

At this point a community member asks for clarification on the referenced outreach during the Colchester Corridor Study in 2011. She is concerned that those affected by the intersection are not present because they are unaware of these public meetings.

Eleni Churchill from the CCRPC introduces herself as the project manager from the 2011 study. She explains that they performed a pilot project and organized 3-4 public meetings in hopes to outreach to the community. They advertised these events through fliers, front porch forum and website surveys.

Diane Meyerhoff also adds that they used email to contact those that were interested or affected by the corridor. They posted notices in the Winooski City Hall and outreached to media outlets. Diane asks the group for feedback and suggestions and to include them on the evaluation forms.

Jason Charest follows up with asking the community members to additionally spread the word when they hear about these projects.

The groups break off into focus groups to collect ideas. They reconvene and summarize the group's discussion to everyone.

Red Group Discussion

Eleni Churchill introduces herself as the facilitator of the group. She emphasizes that she is here to hear everyone's concerns, issues and ideas for the intersection. She asks for peoples input about safety through the intersection.

Design with community in mind

Public meeting:

Discussion begins about the safety of the intersection. The group highlights various concerns:

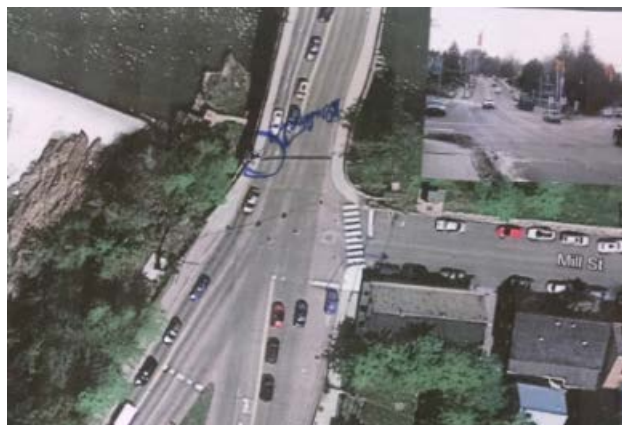
- lack of bike lanes
- Difficulty crossing at Riverside Avenue; Need to cross over to Winooski to cross safely.
- Safety at Barrett Street crossing due to Colchester Avenue's left turn onto Barrett Street
- High traffic flow
- Complexity of the intersection - confusing to new users.
- Intersection's complexity and lack of safety is limiting people's access to businesses which is limiting business development. Current conditions yield a long wait for access to Mill Street.
- Difficulty anticipating traffic movements due to poor visibility of traffic lights at pedestrian crossings
- Unsafe pedestrian facilities for children

Eleni steers the conversation to learn about people's concerns about biking in the area. She states that we have the Riverside Avenue's Shared Use Path but other than that, bicycle facilities are limited. Discussion begins with people sharing their personal experience with traveling through the intersection.

Greg Hostetler introduces himself as a Winooski resident that bikes into Burlington. He shares that he will take the sidewalk over the bridge during the Winter, but prefers to use the right lane into Burlington during the summer with higher pedestrian traffic. He has experienced traffic getting aggressive between bridge and start of path. On Riverside he will take the road if path is congested. On his way back into Winooski he will typically stay on the sidewalk because it is dangerous crossing over to the lane from Riverside Avenue.

Tony Redington shares that he will always take sidewalk. A five foot bike area is too narrow. He will walk his bike on the sidewalk until he crosses over to Winooski.

Carol Jen Suitor points out the transition on Colchester Avenues Bridge Sidewalk to the Riverside Shared Use Path as a blind spot. (Eleni circles area on the map)



Public meeting:

Jennifer Koch inquiries about the pocket park idea that was presented in the Colchester Corridor Study. Eleni explains that the pocket parking was looked at as an option and will continue to be look at as an option through the alternative development stage. This option would include closing off Riverside Avenue left of the median and using the area as a pocket park. Initial analysis of this alternative predicted various engineering issues and environmental impacts. This alternative would improve pedestrian and bicycle safety but cause bridge traffic problems. Looking forward, the CCRPC is going to start a scoping project for the bridge because it will need to be replaced in the next 7-10 years resulting in improvements for the whole area and improving bicycle traffic flow. The Pocket Park will continue to be a possibility.

Discussion begins about the Mill Street area. Tony shares that last March/ April reconfiguration of Mill Street as a one-way utilizing its back entrance as an exit was discussed as a possibility to minimize traffic. Eleni adds that the back entrance is a private drive which would cause ROW issues.

The idea of converting the Chace Mill parking in front of the river into a scenic picnic area is brought up. Many are concerned due to current conditions of the area and its increase in crime. It is brought up that there have been a lot of problems with parking in that lot. People have been parking there and walking into Winooski since parking is now metered in the Winooski downtown. They have been finding a lot of abandoned cars.

Discussion transitions to congestion and traffic operations through the area. It is observed that vehicles cut through Chase Street and Mill Street when the intersection gets congested. It is added that congestion will only intensify with the anticipated developments in the surrounding area. One resident expresses that when traffic is congested and she cannot take a left onto Barrett Street, she drives up to Chase and takes a left to gain access into the back neighborhoods. A roundabout is recommended as a possible solution to difficult left turns.

Tony further addresses the idea of a roundabout. He states the project area is right on the border of being a one to two lane roundabout. Two lanes would require signalized crossings or at least the pedestrian flashing lights. The pedestrian flashing lights are a great option because most of the day pedestrians would feel comfortable crossing without them but they could be used through high traffic periods. It's been shown that two lane roundabouts with flashing pedestrian lights have a lower pedestrian injury rate then a set of signaled crossings. The Middlebury roundabout is brought up as a successful roundabout. Education on how to successfully use the roundabout is a necessity especially when first implemented.

Speed is highlighted as an issue through the intersection. Burlington lowered the speed limit to 25 but it appears people interpret it as a suggestion. Some have experienced an increase of getting passed especially by traffic coming from Winooski.

Tony shares that he is on the Walk Bike Plan Committee so he is also concerned about East Avenue safety. On the committee they have discussion the installation of a single lane roundabout at East Avenue and Colchester Avenue. Studies show that the knowledge of a roundabout at the next intersection limits the car's need to speed to catch the red light.

Public meeting:

This area sees a high volume of ambulance traffic due to the hospital location. The emergency department will be made aware of the project and be invited to the next public meeting.

Discussion transitions to availability of public transit in the area. It is shared that Sharon Bushor (Burlington City Council) is pushing to have public transit access Grove Street. The new development will be large enough that kid's safety should be considered in the development. Group believed that the whole area is underserved by public transit.

Discussion begins on the entrance and exit to the Grove street development. Eleni clarifies that CCTA will be doing some route planning for areas seeing more development. Things are changing and there is a need to reevaluate possible express/ loops with high volume attractions.

It is asked and clarified that the general trend of traffic over the years in this area is relatively flat.

Eleni explains that they are designing the project with a 20 year design plan but cannot speak at all about when implementation of future plans will happen. Eleni says that we should also be focusing on short term solutions.

Diane calls for groups to refocus and share their ideas.

Summary of Break out Groups

Red Group: Selene Colburn summarizes the points discussed in the Red group.

Public meeting:

RED - Eleni

SAFETY

- Pedestrian crossings + travel
- Left and right turns happening at the same time in car lane
- NO SAFE WAY TO CROSS
- Left hand turn on Mill Street doesn't work
- need safe pedestrian travel options to businesses in the area
- Hard to see vehicles ~~mini~~ signals no walk signals

Bike safety

- Drivers get aggressive w/cyclists
- Some cyclists take the sidewalk
- Sidewalk on bridge is too narrow for bikes
- dangerous blind spot approaching bridge from Riverside

possibilities

Mill Street becomes one way

park area — Chase Mill parking area gets full

Congestion

- When traffic is backed up hill
→ people use Chase/Barrett as a cut through, at high speeds

Chase St neighbors interested in traffic calming

ROUNDAABOUT?

w/roundabout at East/Colchester to complement

- needs single lane
- needs better pedestrian traffic than Winoski roundabout
- needs education / learning curve

VEHICLE SPEEDS

are too high
whatever happens has to work for ambulances / emergency vehicles

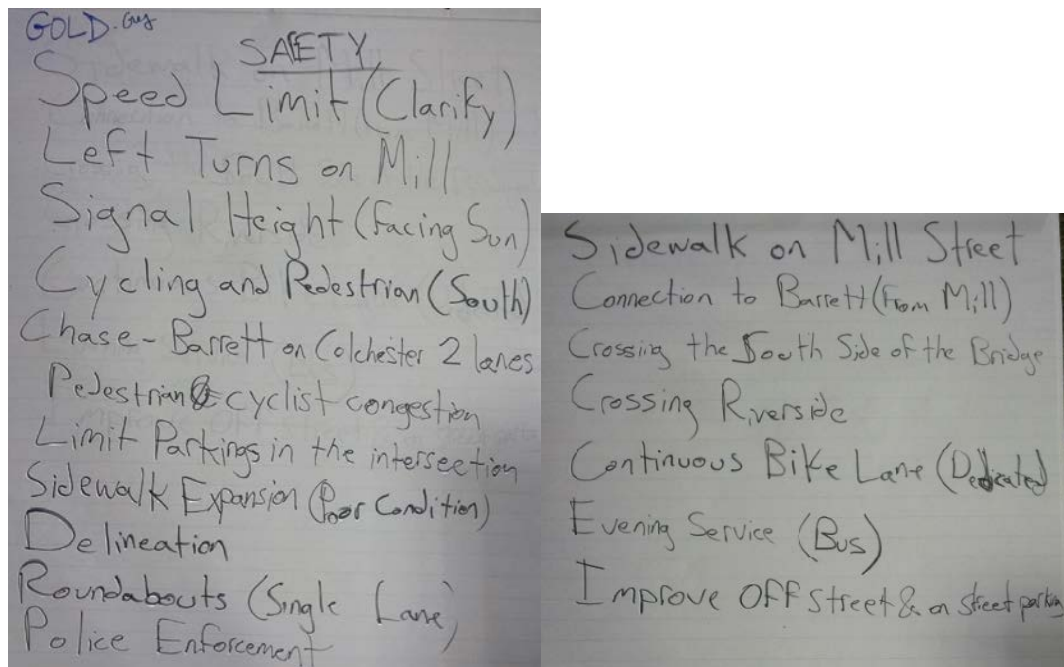
public transit/bus routes may be needed in association w/ Grove St + other developments

SHORT TERM - pedestrian



Gold Group: Facilitated by Greg Goyette and Summarized by Aidan Farnum Rendino.

Public meeting:



Aidan summarizes the group's conversation explaining that some points of concern were speeding, congestion and pedestrian safety. They highlighted Mill Street as a problematic area and noted visibility issues of the traffic signal due to the proximity to the stop bar and sunlight.

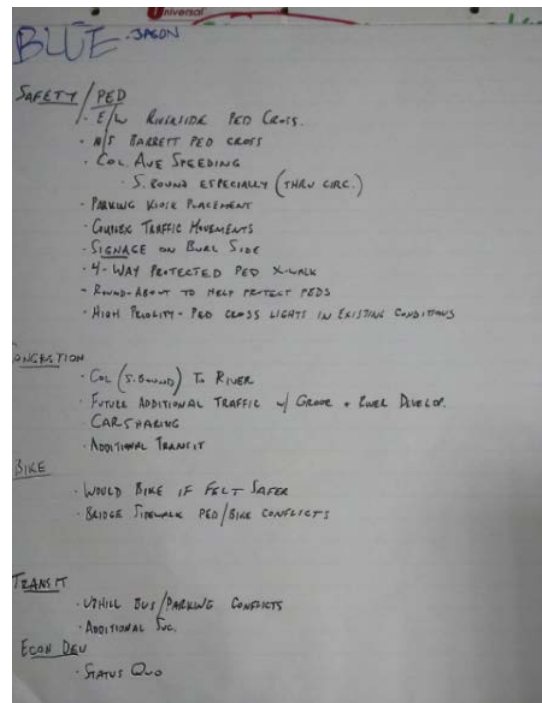
He explained that the group transitioned to a brainstorming session on different ideas for the project area. Some ideas included:

- Safety: Need to slow traffic coming down the hill on Colchester Avenue and coming from the circulator. Would be great to see roundabouts here.
- Bicycles: providing dedicated bike lanes along Colchester Avenue; providing a connection between Chase Street and Barrett Street
- Parking: Limit parking through the intersection and better mark spaces provided. Provide more off street parking. Some in the group felt that on-street parking was important between Barrett and Mill Streets along Colchester Avenue.
- Pedestrian: Expand Sidewalk; provide sidewalk on Mill Street especially with the anticipation of the Taft's School. Develop safer crossings on Burlington side of Winooski Bridge. Existing sidewalk is in poor condition.
- Transit: Provide Evening service to the area.
- Congestion: Removing the signal at Mill Street will be problematic. Gaps in the Colchester Avenue traffic stream will be reduced. There is also a left-turn trap on Colchester Avenue SB causing vehicles to move into the right lane, go down Riverside

Public meeting:

Avenue and then turn left at the island and then right onto Colchester Avenue/Barrett Street.

Blue Group: Facilitated and Summarized by Jason Charest. Note taking by David Armstrong (CCTA, PAC)



Jason emphasizes that safety was a main concern in their group. They discussed the existing crossings, speed through the intersection and the need for dedicated signals. They discussed the general complexity of the intersection and the necessity for signage to explain the lane configurations on both sides of the bridge. The idea of a roundabout was brought up.

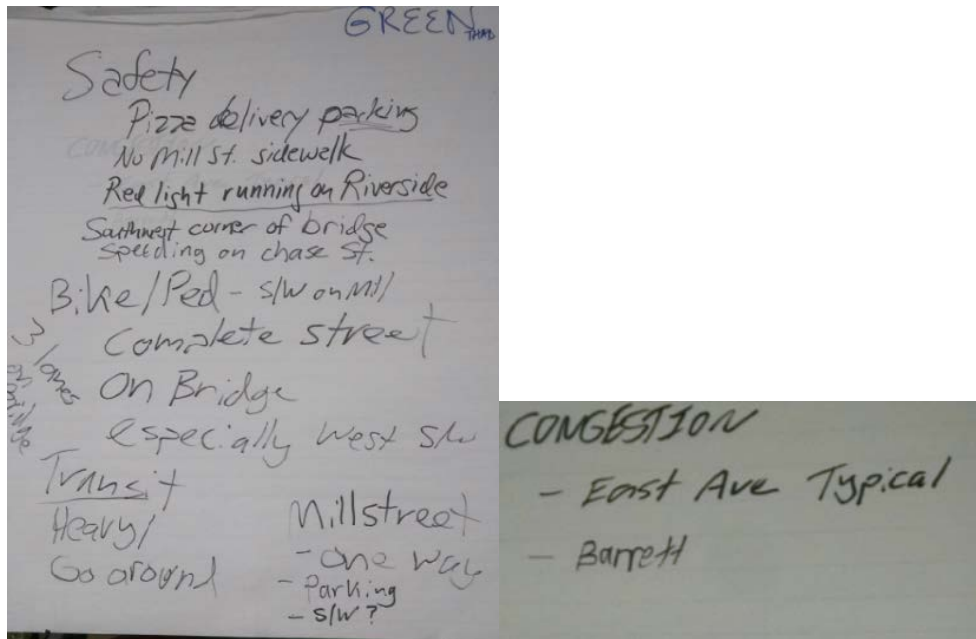
Their group talked about the congestion through the intersection. They believe it is manageable now but future developments will increase the congestion. They brought up the thought about increasing public transit through the intersection or expanding the College Street Shuttle to the Chace Mill. This improvement would require funds but could reduce traffic. The idea of increasing carshare's accessibility in this area was mentioned.

Nobody in this group bikes in this area due to safety concerns but it was observed that bicyclists typically use the sidewalk.

The problems due to transit stops was discussed. Buses do not have provided turnoffs causing back ups and will not stop on hill dependent on weather.

Green Team: This group was facilitated and summarized by Thad Luther.

Public meeting:



The Green team addressed the issues with dominos deliveries and parking through the intersection.

The group highlighted the Winooski developments in the area and addressed the need for a sidewalk on Mill Street. The wearing down of the curb on the southwest corner of the bridge is resulting in less and less sidewalk and provides unsafe conditions for pedestrians. The group discussed the importance of complete streets and the need to incorporate all users into the design of the intersection.

Some ideas that came up were modifying lanes on the bridge to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians or reconfiguring Mill Street and its back entrance to be one way to redirect traffic.

Transit stops were categorized as dangerous because cars have to pull around them when stopped. The group addressed that bus stops should have new sign explaining that they will stop weather dependent.

Congestion through the area causing backups to East Avenue was discussed.

Closing Thoughts

Greg asks to go around the room and give everyone the chance to list their main concerns/ or thoughts on what the focus of the intersection project should be:

- Pedestrian safety
- Slowing speeds down
- Bike lanes
- Pedestrian safety

Public meeting:

- Safety for pedestrian crossings- clear signaling
- Economic development opportunities- should be considered
- Safety issues- bikes and pedestrians; resolve both issues separately
- Complete street concept- multimodal friendly
- Safety for pedestrians; Make the space for multimodal transportation
- More signage for motorists. Very unclear on both sides for lane changes.
- Complete streets
- Bike and pedestrian facilities continuous through the area
- Improve access for bike pedestrian and increase buses; fewer cars
- Slowing down traffic
- Traffic speed. People run lights. Causes safety issues for cars and pedestrians
- Slow down traffic- still a neighborhood with kids
- Ped/bike safety
- Traffic calming
- Pedestrian safety; need to improve efficiency. Cannot be less efficient than it is now.
- Pedestrian safety. But addressed now while we wait for the long term project
- Remember Bruce Lapointe. One of the "dirty 17" intersections in Burlington. Believes the roundabout is the right way and needs to be concerned. We need to focus on efficiency and car and pedestrian safety.
- All types of safety and traffic flow.
- Safety and efficiency
- Overall safety and designated bike lanes. Sidewalk on Mill Street.
- Remember Mr. Lapointe who passed away when struck by a car while crossing Barrett St.
- Include Chase street in the scope of the project
- Bike/ pedestrian safety
- Importance of connectivity to Winooski

Summary Table of Final Thoughts

Public meeting:

Concern/Focus		Freq	Additional Comments:
Safety	General	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear cues at pedestrian Crossings - Continuous facilities for pedestrians and bikes - pedestrian/bike safety issues should be solved separately - Mr. Lapointe was brought up twice. Important that his fatality be remembered and that safety can be improved to stop preventable fatalities - Issues need to be addressed and solved now (short term solutions)
	Pedestrian	11	
	Bicycle	3	
Speed		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cars are running red light
Multimodal Design		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete Streets - Make space for everyone - Improve bike/ pedestrian/bus access; decrease cars
Efficiency		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve traffic flow - Roundabout could improve efficacy
Economic opportunities		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connectivity to Winooski
Scope		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include Chase Street in project Scope
Signage		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional signs and markings are needed for motorists to successfully navigate the intersection
Facilities	Bike lanes	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sidewalk on Mill Street - Provide continuous facilities
	Pedestrian	2	
	Bike	1	

Next Steps

Design with community in mind

Public meeting:

Next steps and Public Workshop

- Develop ideas/solutions to address concerns
- Review with PAC members
- Conduct public workshop to seek input on alternatives – **May/June.**



Greg restates that the next step for the project will include developing alternatives for the intersection. These alternatives will then be brought to the PAC within the May/June timeframe.

Thank you!

Contact information

Jason Charest, CCPRC:
jcharest@ccrpcvt.org

Greg Edwards, Stantec:
greg.edwards@stantec.com

Project Website:
<http://bit.ly/colchester-riverside>



In closing Jason assures that more immediate/short term solutions are being looked at to improve the intersection now. The City of Burlington is working on installing pedestrian signals allowing for easier access from the shared use path over Riverside Avenue, Colchester Avenue and Barrett Street.

A community member raises concern about presence of Winooski City Council representative and they are reassured that a greater effort to have them present at the

Public meeting:

next meeting will be made.

Feel free to contact the CCRPC through their website or through Jason directly. Their website went live today so with any issue also contact Jason.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.



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Attachment: Attachment 1: Attendance List
Attachment 2: Evaluation Form Summary