

Local Concerns Meeting Notes

Thursday, February 14, 2019, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

In conjunction with the Winooski Planning Commission

Winooski City Hall, 27 W. Allen Street, Winooski, VT 05404

The presentation is available online at: <http://bit.ly/east-allen-scoping>

1) Call to Order, Changes to the Agenda, Public Comments

The meeting was called to order at 6:35PM by the Acting Chair of the Planning Commission. There were no changes to the agenda or public comments. Eric Vorwald of the City of Winooski and Jason Charest from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) welcomed everyone. The consultant, David Saladino of VHB, reviewed the agenda and described the project area as East Allen Street (VT 15) from the Circulator to the Exit 15 Interstate 89 Interchange.

The purpose of the East Allen Street Scoping Study is to **identify and prioritize improvements** along East Allen Street from the Circulator to Roland Court which will foster a **vibrant and welcoming gateway** to downtown Winooski by **enhancing mobility** and **improving safety** for all modes of transportation. These improvements are intended to **maximize gateway development and redevelopment opportunities** as prescribed by the Winooski Gateway Corridors Form Based Code, and enhance aesthetics, parking, and pedestrian scale accommodations along the corridor. Issues include: 1) limited pedestrian and bicycle accommodations; 2) poor balance of accommodations for all modes of travel; 3) safety issues; 4) limited transit accommodations; and 5) operational issues.

Dave reviewed the Study's Schedule:

Local Concerns Public Meeting	<i>Today</i>
Alternatives Assessment	February – April 2019
Advisory Committee Meeting #2	May 2019
Alternatives Presentation Public Meeting	June 2019
VTrans Presentation	June 2019
Advisory Committee Meeting #3	July 2019
Draft Scoping Report	August 2019
City Council Presentation	September 2019
Final Scoping Report	October 2019

Dave introduced Erica Quallen of VHB who reviewed the project area and existing conditions.

3) Existing Conditions

The project area encompasses five intersections and one Interstate interchange. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) varies from 14,000 to 19,000 vehicles per day. There are three VTrans High Crash Intersections on East Allen Street at East Street/Abenaki Way, East Spring Street, and at the Interstate Exit 15 northbound off-ramp. There have been 302 total crashes in the corridor including 10 bicycle or pedestrian crashes and one fatal crash. Fifty-four of those crashes resulted in injuries. Erica reviewed the bike and pedestrian facilities along the corridor and discussed previous studies ([Gateways District Form Based Code](#), [Winooski Transportation Master Plan](#)) and proposed/potential development along the corridor.

4) Issues & Opportunities

Erica discussed three themes: Mobility, Safety, and Placemaking for the corridor segments. All issues and opportunities fall into one of these categories. She talked briefly about the issues and opportunities along the entire corridor.

5) Breakout Groups

Participants broke into two groups to discuss the corridor in more detail.

Group 1 – Facilitator, Erica Quallen

Summary of top issues

- 1) High vehicle speeds create a need for traffic calming measures such as street trees, on street parking, bike facilities
- 2) East Spring Street is a concern for all users of the intersection
- 3) Increase signage and visibility for bicycles and pedestrians
- 4) The intersections of VT 15 with Manseau Street and Dion Street are difficult to navigate, and nearby pedestrian crossings don't feel safe (particularly the new Manseau Street crossing)
- 5) Robust support of road diet (4 lanes down to 3) at the eastern end of the corridor

Specific Comments

- Placement of crosswalk at Manseau Street feels dangerous at the crest of a hill
- Dion Street is used to connect to LaFountain Street to move east west by a lot of people in the adjacent neighborhoods
- Dion Street is difficult to turn left out of; a signal may help with this
- Fire Dept has seen a lot of crashes between Manseau St and Dion St
- "Protected" left turn with bollards often does not feel safe given high uphill speeds and downhill vehicles not signaling properly
- Speeding down the hill from the interchange is a huge issue
 - Likely exacerbated by the higher speed limit by St. Mike's and four lane section
- Crosswalk at Barlow St is difficult to navigate, and many drivers don't stop
- Bidirectional bike facilities would be ideal
- Barlow Street is an important piece of the bicycle network
- Protection for bicyclists should be more substantial than plastic bollards while taking into account snow storage needs
- On-Street parking provides great protection for cyclists
- New garage on Abenaki Way should help but on-street parking would still be needed to the east to support any retail development
 - Also improve signage to existing and new garage to increase usage
- Increased signage for bike facilities
- How would retail owners feel about a shared use path directly in front of their building?
- Any other special placemaking opportunities aside from Casavant?
- Identify areas for amenities such as bike racks, benches, etc.
- Improve transit stops with shelters, benches, trash cans
- Improve visibility of signals for eastbound vehicles at I-89 Interchange
- Optimize signal timing at I-89 Interchange
- Create narrower driveways and decrease width to a standard size (20-24') of existing drives
- Opportunities to complete the Interchange to include southbound ramps?

Group 2 - Facilitator: Karen Sentoff

Summary of top issues

- 1) The E. Spring Street intersection has safety concerns for all users
- 2) There are limited pedestrian crossings on E. Allen
- 3) There are limited bike facilities on E. Allen
- 4) Vehicular speeds are high
- 5) Need to coordinate pedestrian crossings and transit stops
- 6) More on-street parking is needed for retail success

Specific Comments

- Did the number of crashes change with the reconfiguration of East Allen and Spring Street? (This needs to be investigated further)
- There is a lot of sign clutter (and hence driver confusion) coming into Winooski from Colchester
- The right-turn lane onto E. Spring is not always obvious to vehicles (and last-minute lane change makes it difficult to judge when pulling off of E. Spring)
- Could we dead-end Hood Street?
- It is a very difficult for pedestrians to cross E. Allen (no dedicated ped signal between Abenaki and NB 89 exit)
- The Dion Street pedestrian beacon is regularly ignored by drivers (and apparently activates itself)
- Could we have a dedicated pedestrian signal to cross E. Allen?
- For pedestrians crossing and vehicles exiting E. Spring, the road needs to be wider in order to see vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians better. It's often not clear if vehicles will turn onto E. Spring.
- Could we have a traffic circle at E. Spring? Is the railroad crossing an issue?
- Could we close the E. Spring turn lane or change the configuration to a 90-degree angle with E. Allen?
- Traffic moves very fast onto E. Spring. Perhaps the side streets could be one-way.
- Could we narrow the lanes on E. Allen (east of E. Spring) for traffic calming? Or implement other traffic calming, visual narrowing, or other placemaking? Street trees, lighting, etc.
- Could there be one lane coming down the hill from the Interstate instead of two? Or, perhaps a divider between the two lanes starting at the Interstate? This would force drivers to choose a lane sooner
- Perhaps we could create a pinch point sooner on the gateway to slow traffic closer to interchange - like on Route 7 in Shelburne
- Could we have protected bike lanes on the whole route?
- Could we have a multiuse path on the south side of the street to connect to the future Essex path?
- Florida Ave may be able to connect any future E. Allen bike infrastructure to existing bike infrastructure through St. Mikes (potential existing ROW needs to be investigated further)
- LaFountain is a major connector noted in the Master Plan, but it's tricky to maneuver for bikes
- Does the City have control over the number of driveways? These can be dangerous for bicyclists especially with shared use path on south side of E. Allen
- It would be great to have nice lighting coming into Winooski – like Burlington did on Riverside Ave.
- Improved lighting could have multiple purposes – visual narrowing/traffic calming, safety for bike/ped, etc.
- On-street parking is needed for retail success. There is potential for a lot of new development on the corridor
- There are limited bus stops between Abenaki and Dion due to number of lanes (bus needs to be in left lane going towards Winooski center)
- There needs to be coordination of transit stops and pedestrian crossings, especially east of Abenaki

6) Next Steps

- Finish Existing Conditions Assessment
- Identify and Evaluate Improvement “Bundles” (March – May)
- Alternatives Public Presentation (June)
- Selection of Preferred Suite of Improvements (City Council, September)

The East Allen Street portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:00PM.

Participants

Baker	Jessie	City of Winooski
Bleything*	Abby	Planning Commission
Burns	Nathaniel	
Charest	Jason	CCRPC
Churchill	Eleni	CCRPC
Dagesse*	Nate	
DeLaBruere	Jonathan	
Dlugolecki	Laura	
Houghton	Amy	Planning Commission
Hulvey	Kasey	
Khada	Harka	Planning Commission
Lambert	Ryan	City of Winooski
Lott	Kristine	
Mack	Corey	DPW Commission
Malaspina	Rich	
Martek	Rita	
Meyerhoff	Diane	TSA
O'Brien	Mike	Planning Commission
Perron	Joseph	
Poquette	Matt	
Quallen	Erica	VHB
Rauscher	John	City of Winooski
Robin-Abbott	Molly	
Saladino	David	VHB
Sampson	Lauren	Planning Commission
Sentoff	Karen	VHB
Vorwald	Eric	City of Winooski
Williams*	Allegra	Local Motion
Zigmund	Terry	Planning Commission

*Members of the Study Advisory Committee

Study Contacts:

Jason Charest, CCRPC, 802.861.0127, jcharest@ccrpcvt.org

Erica Quallen, VHB (Consultant Team), 802.497.6188, equallen@vhb.com

5 Responses

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

a) Email from Friend/Colleague	
b) Email from City	
c) City Listserv	1
d) Email from Other	
e) Flyer/Poster	
f) Front Porch Forum	3
g) Website(s)	
h) Social Media (Facebook, etc.)	
i) Other (please describe) Friend	1

2. Please rate the following aspects of the meeting:

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

Comments:

- Thorough but with respect to timing and remaining concise.
- Thanks for your work and listening to/inviting public input.
- I really appreciated the thought and organization that went into the meeting, as well as the participation from a variety of stakeholders.
- Keep it up and keep it moving!
- The hard work of those involved really shows and is appreciated.
- No stores/shops between 2 gas stations thru the area of liquor store is a bummer and/or reasons to just keep going or speed up. Improving that with trees, etc. that would make it better.