



*A Study by the City of Burlington Department of Public Works in conjunction with the
Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission*

Project Advisory Committee Meeting #6 Meeting Notes

Tuesday, October 22, 2019, 7:00-9:00 PM

Burlington City Arts @The BA Center, 135 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont

The presentation is available online at: www.tiny.cc/WinooskiAveStudy

1) Welcome, Introductions, Changes to the Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Jonathan Slason of RSG. He reviewed the agenda and introductions were made.

2) Study Purpose & Goals

The Winooski Avenue Study is a comprehensive transportation study of the entire Winooski Avenue corridor, developing multimodal improvement strategies that address safety, capacity, and connectivity. The goal for tonight's meeting is for the PAC to decide if the concept corridor is ready to present to the public in November.

3) Public Comment Period

- Jane Knodell of Ward 2 suggested that the public comment period should be held after the design options are presented. She asked for clarity about the PAC's decision-making process. There are new members of the PAC and she noted that earlier business owners have come before the committee to express their concern about the loss of many, many parking spaces. People aren't always available to attend all the meetings. Chris and Jane have been in touch with many of them - just because they are not here, it doesn't mean their concerns should be lost or discounted.
- Chris Adams of Dolan's Auto would like photocopies of the new proposal (*it will be available on the website*). He has been in touch with several of the business owners and he informed them of the proposed options. The Food Shelf is particularly concerned about the Thanksgiving season because they have very limited parking and people are picking up large amounts of food. A new grocery store is opening next door to them and they will no longer be able to use that parking lot.
- Matthew Vaughan strongly supports fully-protected bike lanes throughout the corridor. He served on the [PlanBTV Walk Bike](#) Committee and Winooski Avenue is the backbone of the bike network. For all users to have a safe and enjoyable experience, protected bike lanes are required. He appreciates that not everyone can attend this meeting; others have supported protected bike lanes throughout this process.

All agreed with Nicole Losch's suggestion that the committee have an additional public comment after the presentation is finished.

4) Public Meeting Summary

Jonathan reviewed the three primary design alternatives:

- Alternative 1: Conventional Bike Lanes
- Alternative 2: Protected bike Lanes with limited widening and limited parking
- Alternative 3: Two-way protected bike lanes along east side of the road

Bryan Davis of the CCRPC summarized the input he received from the NPAs, city committees, business owners, residents and stakeholders during an outreach effort in the spring.

- Continuous, dedicated bike lanes are critical, and protected lanes are preferred.
- Street trees and green strips are crucial for an inviting corridor.
- Main to Pearl is aggressive/stressful/dangerous/unattractive.
- There is a high demand for parking on North Winooski.

5) Alternatives Evaluation

The project team rated all 13 variations in an evaluation matrix, using the following criteria: Bicycle Level of Stress & Safety, Pedestrian Quality of Service, Change in Parking Spaces, Street Trees Impacted, Change in Green Strip Width, Cost, Transit Quality of Service, Neighborhood Access, and Vehicle Operations & Safety.

Applying the Corridor Vision for the Shorter-Term Options

- Improves safety and convenience for all users
 - Re-allocates road space between Main Street and Pearl Street
 - Shortens intersection crossings and calms traffic at intersections
- Creates connected, contiguous north-south bike facilities
- Retains existing parking along west side of the corridor
- Improves business/resident access for all modes by making it two-way north of North Street

The evaluation matrix gives equal weight to all criteria, resulting in a balanced option.

Intersections were also evaluated using a set of criteria. However, in the corridor there were some overriding factors affecting the choice that is included in the shorter-term option. Namely, the goal to not affect right-of-way and retain some degree of flexibility to accommodate other planning efforts guided the selection. The second key criterion was operational confidence. This additional filters to the evaluation criteria guided the suggestions for intersection controls in the shorter-term option.

6) The Concept Corridor by Segment

Riverside Avenue to North Street

Highlights: Retains west side parking (76 spaces)
Removes east side parking (64 spaces)
Stormwater opportunities
Pedestrian improvements at intersections

Connectivity: 2-way vehicle lanes, northbound and southbound bike lanes

A parking management plan will be conducted to identify strategies to manage Winooski Avenue parking

North Street to Pearl Street

Highlights: Retains west side parking (46 spaces)

- Removes east side parking (45 spaces)
- Retains southbound vehicle lane
- Creates northbound and southbound bike lanes
- Stormwater opportunities
- Pedestrian improvements at intersections

A parking management plan will be conducted to identify strategies to manage Winooski Avenue parking

Pearl Street to Main Street

Highlights: Improves utilization and safety of existing road capacity, enhances quality of service for pedestrians, and reduce stress for bicyclists

Connectivity: 2-way vehicle lanes, 2-way left-turn-lanes, northbound and southbound bike lanes

Main Street to King Street

- Highlights:**
- Retains west side parking (13 spaces)
 - Eliminates east side parking (12 spaces)
 - Maintains two-way vehicle traffic
 - Creates new northbound and southbound bike lanes

King Street to Howard Street

- Highlights:**
- Maintains existing layout south of Maple Street
 - Retains west side parking (87 spaces)
 - One-lane southbound vehicle lanes
 - Northbound and southbound bike lanes

In addition to these shorter-term options, there are longer-term option that allow a response to changes in land use, parking demand, management strategies, and other significant projects, such as Great Streets. The option to widen the road to increase vehicle parking supply, provide space for protected bike lanes, and/or improve pedestrian amenities remains open. From North Street to Pearl, the roadway can be widened for continuity of two-way vehicle lanes from Main to Riverside, northbound and southbound bike lanes, and west side parking. From Main Street to King Street, the roadway could be widened for protected bicycle facilities.

7) Next Steps

The project team would like PAC input on whether this concept is ready to be brought to the public.

Alyssa Faber: What is considered “shorter-term”? In addition to retaining the greenbelt and trees, we should also look to add trees and green space. Perhaps bumpouts would help. Nicole responded that some components of the shorter-term option could be within the next year or so. The downtown segment needs more time because traffic coordination and reassigning travel lanes is complicated. Long-term improvements depend on funding availability and the scale of work. Reconstruction of a whole block is many years away.

Greg Hostetler: This looks like a good plan, especially the low-stress bike facilities. Long and short-term we should reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian crossing between Main and Pearl. The traffic signals are encouraging fast traffic, perhaps four-way stop signs instead? I live on N. Winooski at the corner of North St. and there is a lot of parking demand there because the parking is free. I support a parking management plan. I’m also glad that we’re keeping the street trees. The number is important, but so is quality. The ginkos are lovely but

others aren't doing well. There is a problem with vehicle parking in bike lanes, whether the lanes are protected or not. If we have an ordinance, it's not enforced. We need engineering strategies or better enforcement. We also need drop-off and delivery parking spaces.

Sean Melinn: I'm a cyclist, but I'm representing the ONE Arts & Business Network. The feedback that I received is that the loss of parking is severe. Lots of customers are from outside the city and parking is currently insufficient. The loss of parking isn't going to go over well, but I agree that there are those who are uncomfortable traveling by bike. My other concern is there are delivery issues, like access for large trucks to the restaurants.

Max Tracy: It's great to see this coming together. I was involved in [PlanBTV Walk Bike](#). I'm encouraged to see north and southbound bike lanes; this is critical in the Walk Bike Plan to creating a real bike network. We need to reduce our VMT and meet our net zero goals. Constituents have been injured in this corridor so safety is a concern. The driveways are an issue for bikes – is there a way to enhance protections for bikes? Perhaps flex-posts if it cannot be a continuous physical barrier. How do roundabouts work for pedestrians? I like the idea of having lanes go in both directions. The 4-3 lane conversion makes sense to reduce crashes and injuries. Parking is a concern and I'd like to hear more about parking management strategies. How does residential parking work with businesses?

Allegra Williams: I appreciate all the work that's been done. Between Main and Pearl, a 4 to 2 lane conversion would be more of a buffer, especially without physical bike separation. Are there shared parking opportunities north of North Street? If so, we should offer those ideas to the public. We are excited about a demo project for next season to try out ideas and receive feedback. Perhaps we can come to the public with more than one option? Is there a way to remove parking from Pearl to North Street and not have a residential impact? Maybe two-way traffic?

Karen Paul: This is a balanced plan with room for more bike amenities in the future. I see this as a plan that is gradual in order to create two-way bike lanes; the road is only so wide. I'm glad the accommodation is being made. Regarding parking management and the concerns of businesses, perhaps 15-30-60-minute parking options would help increase vehicle turnover. I would like to see electric charging stations throughout the corridor. Near City Market, I hope that becomes three lanes and that City Market will be encouraged to change their traffic pattern - perhaps enter or exit only to N. Winooski.

Gillian Nanton: The 120-space parking loss is great. I would caution you to have a fallback or alternative when you go out to the public. Be prepared for the pushback. We don't want businesses to be hurt due to parking spaces being lost. Is there a facility nearby that people could use?

Jonathan offered responses to PAC members' questions:

- **Vehicle speeds:** We are reducing the lane width which will slow vehicles down. And, having no more than one lane in each direction will help keep speeds low. Traffic signal timing will be revisited for better flow for all.
- **City Market:** The project team engaged with them on this plan as well as understand their own efforts to revise their parking and access.
- **Roundabouts:** Pedestrian access is a mixed bag, especially with visibility limitations. For the mini-roundabouts, we would like to trial them first. They won't be used in the downtown segment due to the volume of pedestrian traffic, proximity to other major driveways, and potential interference with adjacent signals. The Riverside intersection could be a

roundabout in the long-term, but land would be required; especially affected would be the the corner where the vacant wood furniture shop would need to be used.

- **Parking management plan:** The parking plan needs to be done and this current study won't be able to study this sufficiently. A management plan will be done in advance of any parking being removed. Engagement with the business community in the northern part of the corridor will be undertaken to better identify a process to allow the study to move forward. This may include developing clear interim measures which would maintain the parking in the north, while pursuing parts of the project with less impact.

In sum, the PAC is generally comfortable with the material Jonathan presented and is supportive of bringing it to the public. Sean remains concerned about parking for the businesses from Pearl to Riverside.

8) Public Comments

Howard Dolan: Burlington is becoming a big city and bikes need to ride with traffic. We're going to need to learn to ride with traffic. Any of these plans are going to destroy me and Butch & Babe's. Just like the hole in town. I'd incinerate all these plans.

Chris Adams: I understand the need to make it safer for bikes; I agree with the trial like you did on Champlain Street last summer. I know the Mayor wants a zero-carbon footprint. People come from far outside of Burlington to work in the city. Let's do a trial during inclement weather (like now), take some of the parking out, set up the bike lanes, and count how many people use those lanes, especially during the week. This is a year-round impact that now will benefit 10 people compared to the many people who will be negatively impacted. Let's look at the bigger picture – how many people will be hurt versus how many will benefit and how long will both sides be impacted?

Jane Knodell: I'm disappointed that we are removing a large number of parking spaces. You need to listen to those who have come to you throughout this process and need free parking. The parking study must be done to know that there is a way to manage the elimination of these parking spaces and not force businesses out. Those businesses will not survive with only ONE residents – then need outside customers too. Let's listen to them when they tell us that their customers are from further away and come via car. We can't take away the parking without understanding the impacts and we can't bring the businesses back if they are sent away due to parking losses. Convince the community that you will have a solution before this moves forward. This must be a credible and sincere attempt. Many people believe that you are you going to do this regardless of what you learn from the parking study.

Matthew Vaughan: A good balance has been found for short-term recommendations. By removing parking, I'd feel much safer on a bike. I do not want to negatively impact businesses – but I also do not want anyone to be injured on this road. We're gaining a safe space in our public right-of-way.

Howard Dolan: I have nothing against bicyclists. Me and my grandson ride all the time. You don't have to destroy Winooski Avenue to bike – there are many other routes.

Josh Katz: I support this and it should go further. We need lofty goals and bold action. Make the street safe for bikers and other modes of transportation.

The formal meeting concluded at 8:37PM. The project team encouraged participants to markup maps and ask questions of the team.

Attendance

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Members

Alissa	Faber	Resident of Central District
Greg	Hostetler	Walk Bike Council
Devin	Mason	GMT
Sean	Melinn	ONE Arts & Bus. Network
Gillian	Nanton	CEDO
Karen	Paul	City Council
Max	Tracy	City Council

Others: Christopher Adams, Aiden Dolan, Howard Dolan, Nancy Dolan, Shawn Dolan, Zack Flaherty, Jess Hyman, Brianna Jasset, Josh Katz, Jane Knodell, Kirsten Merriman Shapiro, Matthew Vaughan, Allegra Williams

Stakeholder Group/Consultants/Staff

Bryan	Davis	CCRPC
Nicole	Losch	Burlington DPW
Diane	Meyerhoff	Third Sector Associates
Jonathan	Slason	RSG
Chapin	Spencer	Burlington DPW
Julia	Ursaki	D&K

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