

Colchester Avenue Bike Improvements & East Ave. Intersection Study
Public Meeting #1 Notes - Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
McClure Lobby Conference Room, UVM Medical Center, 111 Colchester Avenue
The presentation is available online at: <http://bit.ly/colchester-ave>

1) Welcome, Introductions, and Study Overview

Jason Charest of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) welcomed everyone and introduced the study team. He introduced Jenn Conley of VHB. She discussed the draft purpose of the project: “to **identify and prioritize improvements** along Colchester Avenue from South Prospect Street to Barrett Street which will **enhance bicycle mobility** and **improve parking management** while supporting local businesses; and at the intersection of Colchester Avenue and East Avenue which will **improve safety** for all modes of transportation.”

Jenn provided a Study Schedule:

Public Meeting #1 (Listening Session)	<i>Today</i>
Existing Conditions	In Progress
Design Alternatives Assessment	Dec 2019 – Feb 2020
Public Meeting #2 (Alternatives Presentation)	Feb 2020
Development of Preferred Design Alternative	March 2020
Draft Report	April 2020
City Council Presentation	April 2020
Final Report	May 2020

Karen Sentoff of VHB reviewed past studies (see the study website) and the improvements made to Colchester Avenue in the past few years. The study area includes Colchester Avenue from the Prospect/Pearl intersection to Barrett Street (almost to the Winooski Bridge). She reviewed safety data (three High Crash Location intersections and one High Crash Location segment), traffic volumes, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, parking, and transit availability.

2) Community Input

Jenn offered comments from recent projects along this roadway corridor: there are opportunities for biking improvements, off-street parking is very restricted in some sections, and local businesses are important to the neighborhood.

The group discussed the roadway corridor in segments. Comments from participants follow.

Segment 1: South Prospect Street to UVM Medical Center

- There should be no left turn out of University Place – right turn only
- UVM loop bus has to make a left out of University Place unless the route is changed (there is a study of University Place currently underway)
- The pedestrian crossing signal at Mansfield Avenue is dangerous because pedestrians are encouraged to enter the intersection at the same time cars begin to move. Perhaps the signal can be retimed. (There is a Mansfield Ave. eastern side path study underway)
- In the long-term, we need 10' wide, separated bike paths rather than merely a striped lane.
- We need infrastructure for left-turning cyclists. I'm a bike commuter and left turns are very dangerous, especially at East Ave.
- At N/S Prospect, there is an opportunity to install an all-pedestrian signal because so many paths intersect there.

- There needs to be an advance bicycle turn signal at the Prospect St. intersection
- There should be no right-on-red signal coming out of the UVM Medical Center. Vehicles roll through the right turn. It's an issue for pedestrians and cyclists.
- UVM has an active transportation plan that discusses north-south bicycle access.
- There has been at least one bike crash at the UVM Medical Center entrance. We need a bike lane on the south side of the street that allows for a left onto Mansfield Ave. Perhaps a two-stage left turn signal for bikes to turn. Bike boxes should be considered – they were recommended in earlier studies.
- We have a poorly funded public transit system whose consequence is more congestion. The study should recommend more funding for transit.
- Sewer grates at the entrance to UVM Medical Center are very dangerous, especially because they are in a very narrow portion of the road. The study should consider drainage issues.

Segment 2: UVM Medical Center to East Avenue

- I walk this section often and the lighting is perfect. It's a shared use path, but no one sees the signs. Bikes have to go on and off the path throughout this section.
- Cars often pull into the bike lane, especially heading west at East Ave. There needs to be education for all users.
- Some bike lanes are sharrows and cyclists need to decide where to go because lanes are ambiguous especially at UVM Medical Center entrance.
- East Ave – There is a flow improvement but the sidewalk is in disrepair and there is no sidewalk on the west side of East Ave. University Road is in bad shape. What's happening with the lab building at the corner? (UVM owns this building and it is likely to be redeveloped at some point. It will be hospital parking; but there are existing parking agreements in place that may need to be honored).
- East Ave. and University Road has a pedestrian crossing that leads to a grass strip rather than a sidewalk. This is a safety issue.
- Could Colchester Ave/East Ave intersection have a roundabout? Would it be safer for bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles? Are there examples of successful roundabouts in this type of situation? (some in the group were not supportive of roundabouts)
- When a vehicle is headed west on Colchester Ave. and turns left to East Ave., it is difficult to see pedestrians crossing at the south side heading east. It's difficult to see the left-turn signal too.
- This is a "death alley" for cyclists – a race track with everyone jockeying for position. There needs to be a long-term plan
- Pedestrians love the Fletcher Place crossing but Transportation & Parking Services staff don't like making left turns out of Fletcher Place.
- The School District office and preschool parking lot adds traffic to Colchester Ave in an already congested/busy area.

Segment 3: East Avenue Intersection

- There should be a traffic calming study for East Ave.
- The signal layout at this location is poor and presents a safety issue

Segment 4: East Avenue to Greenmount Cemetery

- The single parking space at Kathy's Flowers makes left turns difficult.
- When buses exit left from the Trinity Campus, they come over the center lane in a wide turn. Cyclists get pinched due to the parking spaces
- Congestion has improved since the north side parking was eliminated

- A 10' wide separated bike path is needed on the south side
- The parking spaces for Kampus Kitchen are working well; vehicles don't park on the sidewalk anymore

Segment 5: Greenmount Cemetery to Barrett Street

- I live in Colchester and I'm concerned about bicycle safety. I like the improvements on the hill, but bike lanes are important. It's not only a neighborhood issue; it's a regional bike thoroughfare. More improvements are welcome
- The bus stop at the cemetery is difficult. The parking precludes the bus from pulling to the curb and makes it difficult for riders to board the westbound bus. There is no place for people to wait
- Could there be residential zone parking rather than resident street-only parking?
- Parking Management Plans should be done alongside these studies
- How many parking permits are out there and how many spaces are available? What's the usage rate? It's better on Fletcher Place with the new parking system
- Move the curbs to make a separated bike lane
- I'm a cyclist and I'm concerned about being pinched by the bus. Buses need pull-offs
- Buses move fast through here
- Chase St. is blocked during the PM peak; a don't-block-the-box is needed
- How does the Barrett/Riverside Study fit in to this study? (There is a preferred alternative and it will align with this study's recommendations)
- Can the Riverside Ave and East Ave intersections be evaluated together? Traffic operations at one intersection impact the other

3) Next Steps

- Existing conditions report
- Bring community input to the Advisory Committee
- Identify and evaluate design improvements
- Alternative design options presentation (public meeting)
- Selection of preferred improvements (by the City Council)

The meeting was adjourned at 8PM.

Attendance:

Jim Barr*	Tom Kingston
Ashley Bond*	Peggy O'Neill
Dave Cawley	Sophie Quest
Chris Damiani*	Lani Ravin
Eliana Fox	Rick Sharp
Richard Hillyard	Jason Stuffle*

*Members of the Study Advisory Committee

Study Team: Jason Charest (CCRPC), Eleni Churchill (CCRPC), Jenn Conley (VHB), Marshall Distel (CCRPC), Drew Gingras (VHB), Nicole Losch (Burlington DPW), Diane Meyerhoff (TSA), Karen Sentoff (VHB).

Study Contact:

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Meeting Evaluation & Comment Form

Colchester Ave: Bikeways, Parking, and Intersection Safety Public Meeting: 12/4/19, 6:30-8:30PM
UVM Medical Center McClure Conference Room, 111 Colchester Avenue

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

a) Email from Friend/Colleague	6
b) Email from Sponsors	5
c) Email from Other	2
d) Flyer/Poster	2
e) CEDO Buzz	0
f) Front Porch Forum	5
g) Burlington Free Press	0
h) Seven Days Advertisement	1
i) Website(s)	1
j) Social Media (Facebook, etc.)	7
k) Other (please describe)	0

2. Please rate the following aspects of the meeting:

Aspect	Fantastic	Very Good	Good	OK	Poor	Terrible
Welcome & Presentation	3	6	1			
Open House (if attended)	1	1				
Quality of the Overall Discussion	5	5	1			
Physical facilities for this event	3	6	1			
Amount of time allowed for input	6	4	1			
Overall value of this event to you	5	6				

3. Comments

- Well facilitated forum, great slides/materials
- Whole society needs to change to understand that bikes need to be safe!! Not just pedestrians & cars
- Small group attended – should have had everyone introduce themselves
- Very good
- Will this presentation come to the Ward 1 NPA?
- It was good to hear others' perspectives as well as my own
- Very nice presentation, Great Job!
- On Advisory Committee, so I will share then!
- Liked the time allocated for input and how the conversation went. Would like this study to focus on transit, bikes, peds, etc. more than vehicles.
- If the only parking on Colchester Ave. is on the south side, why not just remove it too? For the sake of continuity, connectivity, and consistency
- Very well organized and coordinated – thank you
- Looking forward to committee meetings
- Very attentive meeting presenters. Thank you!
- Have to plan to deal with drainage/grates/snow removal in bike lanes. Integrate bus stops/pull offs into infrastructure
- Increasing the cost of residential parking permits could help with perceived parking issues