CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together

Colchester Ave: Bikeways, Parking & Intersection Safety

Advisory Committee Meeting #1 - January 29, 2020, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
CCRPC, 110 W. Canal Street, Suite 202, Winooski
The presentation is posted at: http://bit.ly/colchester-ave

Meeting Notes

1. Introductions & Agenda Review

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Jason Charest of CCRPC and introductions were made. Jenn Conley of VHB provided an overview of the study and reviewed the agenda.

Councilor Sharon Bushor is concerned that pedestrians are not mentioned in the study title. Jenn and Nicole Losch (of Burlington DPW) explained that a number of pedestrian studies have been completed and bike design recommendations have changed significantly since the last bicycle study (and these accommodations are lacking in the corridor). Sharon wants to be sure that the study is multimodal and pedestrians are not left behind.

2. Advisory Committee Roles & Responsibilities

Jason Charest of the CCRPC noted that the Committee will meet three times and there will be two more public meetings. Participation in the public meetings is encouraged but not required. The Committee members are asked to provide guidance, insight, and respectful feedback throughout the process, update representing entities on study progress (by bringing views and opinions back to the Committee), and indicate preferences for design improvements (while striving to achieve consensus). The Committee's recommendations will be presented to the DPW Commission, City Council TEUC, and finally, the full City Council.

3. Project Overview

3a) Scope and Schedule

Local Concerns Meeting	December 2019
Existing Conditions Assessment	December – January 2019
Advisory Committee Meeting #1	***Today***
Alternatives Assessment	December 2019 – February 2020
Advisory Committee Meeting #2	February 2020
Alternatives Presentation Public Meeting	February 2020
Alternatives Refinement	March 2020
Advisory Committee Meeting #3	March 2020
Draft Scoping Report	March 2020
City Council Presentation	April 2020
Final Scoping Report	May 2020

3b) Past Projects – Planning Studies & Construction

Karen Sentoff of VHB reviewed previously completed studies. Direct links to these studies will be posted on the project website.

There was discussion of the Riverside/Colchester/Barrett Street Intersection study. Jason Charest explained that the City Council approved a preferred alternative and now DPW is trying to secure funding to move the project through design, permitting, and construction. Nicole noted that some small improvements were completed. The project team will work to align the alternatives for this study with both the preferred intersection improvements at Riverside/Colchester/Barrett and the Burlington-Winooski bridge.

4. Local Concerns Meeting Summary

Karen gave a brief overview of the first public meeting in December 2019.

5. Advisory Committee Input on Project Progress to Date

5a) Draft Purpose & Need (see last page)

The group discussed the purpose and need statement. There was interest in a residential and business parking study for the corridor. Some parking has been eliminated in this area; Sharon has worked with a number of residents who have lost parking spaces. There is anecdotal information available about parking need and supply; Karen will research if there is better data available. The committee is also interested in what transportation modes people use to access the businesses.

The group also discussed the bike and pedestrian crashes that occur along the corridor; there is no concentration at a particular intersection or road segment. Councilor Jack Hanson asked if green features would be included in the plan. Although welcome, these will likely be added in the final design. The committee should feel free to offer suggestions.

Karen asked that the committee provide feedback to her on the purpose and need statement by Friday, February 14th.

5b) Opportunities & Constraints

The committee reviewed the five segments of the corridor (see presentation for detail).

Segment 1: South Prospect Street to UVM Medical Center

The intersection of Colchester Avenue and University Place is difficult; Jason Stuffle suggested restricting left turns from the side street. The campus bus route makes a left at this intersection. Although there is a sidewalk and curb cut, there is no pedestrian crossing of Colchester Ave available. Karen noted that University Place is next Great Streets project; improvements will be forthcoming. The Committee discussed the Mansfield Avenue Improvement Pathway which received positive feedback at meetings. This will be a combined side path for peds/bikes along Mansfield Avenue.

Segment 2: UVM Medical Center to East Avenue

Jason Stuffle noted that the Burlington school property entrance is a problem, especially for cyclists. The two adjacent properties are owned by the School Department and UVM. Perhaps closing the non-signalized entrance and centralizing the entrance at the East Avenue signal would help. The team will determine if increasing traffic at the signal would be feasible.

Segment 3: East Avenue Intersection

There was discussion of moving the bus stop slightly down the street to make it safer for bus users. Chris Damiani from Green Mountain Transit is open to the idea. Jason Stuffle noted that the parking spot in front of Kathy & Company Flowers can be dangerous, as are the buses exiting UVM's Trinity Campus.

Segment 4: East Avenue to Greenmount Cemetery

The group is concerned about the speed of the shuttle buses from the Medical Center to remote parking areas, as well as the speeds of other vehicles.

Segment 5: Greenmount Cemetery to Barrett Street

According to Jason Stuffle, the traffic signals begin blinking at 9:30PM and the pedestrian push buttons and signals are shut off. This is very dangerous for pedestrians trying to cross Colchester Avenue.

6. Discussion of Alternatives Development

Drew Gingras of VHB reviewed possible alternative street designs in each segment (see presentation for detail).

Overall comments included support for protected bike lanes and shared paths. The Committee is concerned that different designs work for different segments, but an overall safe and consistent trip is desired. There is concern for removing mature trees along the route. There is support for improved lighting for pedestrians. The advent of new E-bikes to the City's bikeshare program will likely increase the number and speed of cyclists. This needs to be considered in the design, especially when combining slow pedestrians with higher speed E-cyclists on one path. The group agreed that protected bike lanes in each direction is a requirement for long-term safety. If not possible, for safety reasons, the multiuse path should be on the uphill side and the buffered bike lane on the downhill side at the east end of the corridor. Parking for Kampus Kitchen needs to be preserved.

The group discussed the alternatives assessment and how to factor cost and economic benefit into the decision about the various designs. Nicole noted that although there are benefits, they don't help the City find funds for construction.

7. Next Steps

The project team will continue with Alternatives Development based on the input from the Advisory Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8PM.

Participants

AC Members: Jim Barr, Ashley Bond, Sharon Bushor, Dave Cawley, Will Clavelle, Chris Damiani, Mario Dupigny-Giroux, Jack Hanson*, Richard Hillyard*, Jason Stuffle. (*Alternates)

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

Colchester Avenue: Bikeways, Parking, and Intersection Safety Study

DRAFT Purpose & Need Statement

For consideration by the Advisory Committee

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Colchester Avenue: Bikeways, Parking, & Intersection Safety Study is to identify and prioritize improvements:

- along Colchester Avenue in its entirety which will enhance bicycle mobility and improve parking management while supporting local businesses;
- at the intersection of Colchester Avenue and East Avenue which will improve safety for all modes of transportation.

Needs for the Project

The needs for this project are driven by deficiencies in the current transportation infrastructure. These needs are further articulated below:

Improve Intersection Safety: There are four designated High Crash Locations (HCL) along the Colchester Avenue corridor, including three intersections and one section. The HCL intersections of Colchester Avenue / Prospect Street / Pearl Street and Colchester Avenue / Barrett Street / Riverside Avenue have been studied separately with recommendations to improve the safety at those intersections. However, the Colchester Avenue / East Avenue intersection, where 44 crashes occurred between 2012 and 2016, remains an HCL requiring further investigation and improvement. A Highway Safety Improvement Program Location Review identified the visibility and alignment of signal heads with each lane they serve as problematic.

Improve Corridor Safety for all Users: The section of Colchester Avenue between Mansfield Avenue and East Avenue is the most heavily utilized segment of the corridor and an HCL with 88 crashes over the period from 2012 to 2016. Access to the region's only Level I Trauma Center and one of the largest employers in the state is facilitated by the segment, as well as the movement of people by foot, bike, transit, and vehicle. This makes the corridor a critical link in the region's infrastructure as well as a complex, multimodal corridor in terms of operation. Of the 347 crashes identified for the length of Colchester Avenue from 2014 through 2018, 14 crashes involved bikes and 9 crashes involved pedestrians.

Enhance Mobility for Bicyclists: The BTV Walk Bike Master Plan calls for a "more robust treatment in the long-term" to provide protected bicycling infrastructure on Colchester Avenue and the 2017 CCRPC Active Transportation Plan identified Colchester Avenue as a high priority, high feasibility corridor for improvement in the active transportation network. The existing bicycle facilities are inconsistent, changing multiple times along the one-mile corridor, and not well connected, both from segment to segment along the corridor and to other adjacent or intersecting facilities.

Manage Parking while Supporting Local Businesses, Employers, and Residents: The right-of-way available to facilitate this heavily utilized multimodal corridor with vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit-users has limited the on-street parking supply along the roadway. There is a need to coordinate the parking supply located on or near the corridor for residents, employees, and businesses.