



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

Project Advisory Committee Meeting #7 Meeting Notes

Tuesday, January 28, 2020, 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 & Schedule

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 approve a preferred alternative for consideration by the City's Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee (TEUC) on February 4 and ultimately by the City Council.

3) Public Meeting Summary

Jonathan summarized themes from the November 13 public meeting which have been considered in development of the preferred alternative and draft implementation plan being presented tonight:

- Loss of Parking. Critical as it will affect businesses and residents.
- Parking Management Plan will be prioritized and should guide the next steps in the Northern Segment
- Bike lanes are needed – preferably protected
- Vehicle parking should be maintained over two-way vehicle travel
- Downtown Segment has general agreement that changes are necessary

4) Public Comment Period

- Jane Knodell – there have been lots of changes on North Winooski over the years, and now it is thriving. The project team listened to public comments, but the plan should say that the parking management plan will be complete, and any language about removing parking should be removed to ensure no adverse harm is done to the neighborhood.
- Jason Van Driesche – I would like to share a concept for the downtown section developed with partners such as Local Motion, Burlington Walk Bike Council and others. This concept maximizes the benefits of the current downtown alternative, and we are bringing this to the PAC as a suggestion. Our group continues to seek support from city leaders and others.
- Laura Jacoby – Old Spokes Home is a retail shop and non-profit serving 1,500 clients.

There is concern in the downtown area to access services and civic spaces. There are a lot of crashes so please consider protected bike lanes downtown, as well as the proposal brought forward by Jason and others.

- Matthew Vaughan – I want to express my support of protected continuous bike lanes, which is a recommendation in plan BTV Walk Bike. My concern is that the recommendation to wait to remove parking until after the parking management plan is complete is a safety issue and by removing parking now could immediately create a bike facility.
- Rabbi Salzman – I'm from the synagogue on Archibald Street. Don't remove parking between Archibald and Decatur, we have trouble finding parking for events. Why not make one bike lane that goes both directions so no parking is lost. On-street parking is one of the few resources of free parking in the neighborhood. It would be disaster to lose parking.
- Allegra Williams – Local Motion is supportive of bike infrastructure throughout the corridor. I would like to reiterate comments about the new proposal for the downtown section which enhances what's already being proposed, makes better use of the center lane, and is possible to do in near term as a quick build.
- Jack Hansen, City Councilor for East District – I want to emphasize continuous bike lanes throughout corridor, it's critical to shift our transportation system and address the climate crisis, and I support the new plan for downtown with safer infrastructure.
- Lee Anderson – representing his businesses (Radio Bean, *Duino!* (*Duende*), Lamp Shop) as well as the East West Café and Shalimar; removing parking would be detrimental, parking is already hard, residents don't have places to park, losing the loading zone would be extremely detrimental, it's a nearly 24 hour need since we have so many musicians performing. I love bikes and ride bikes.
- Jason Stuffle – representative for the Burlington Walk Bike Council, I was part of the effort that removed parking and added bike lanes on Colchester Avenue, use has increased, it made it a little more difficult for resident parking but created a safer road for everyone. Make Winooski Avenue equitable for everyone.
- Kirsten Merriman Shapiro – there's been a lot of investment from Champlain Housing Trust along the corridor that houses businesses and affordable housing, we're concerned with loss of parking north of Pearl Street, we're supportive of downtown changes and agree with Jane's comment about doing the parking management plan first and waiting to remove parking. Concern for residents and businesses, concerned for the future and support biking.
- Drew Pollak-Bruce – this corridor has been studied four times starting in 1990s, I have a 7-year-old and use Winooski Avenue to commute every day, if we wait to make changes we won't live here anymore. I think the parking management plan will find those places to park, there is lack of resident permit parking in Old North End, there is an opportunity to manage parking as a district like other cities do, we can have the loading zones and other parking that we need, you might have to walk 1-2 blocks further but that's an inconvenience that we've stated for years, let's not study this forever and never stop.

5) PAC Actions:

a) PAC Role in the Project

b) Review the Recommended Project Alternative

c) Select a Preferred Alternative

Jonathan reiterated that tonight the team is presenting the preferred alternative which is implementable and actionable and includes interim (year 2020), short term (2020-2021), and long term (beyond 2021) recommendations, and the PAC is being asked to approve the preferred alternative for advancement to the TEUC, noting that no changes to parking will be made until the Parking Management Plan (PMP) is complete.

Summary of interim actions:

1. A comprehensive Parking Management Plan (PMP) is recommended to identify strategies for managing parking in the Pearl Street to Riverside Avenue study area. No changes to on-street parking will be made until agreement on the outcomes of the PMP.
2. Improve bicycle wayfinding between the southbound Winooski Avenue bike lane and the northbound Union Street bike lane.
3. Advance pilot projects or demonstrations to test mini-roundabouts on North Winooski Avenue.
4. Address commercial loading and driveway queueing on Winooski Avenue in the downtown.
5. Evaluate public safety impacts, traffic operations, driveway access, Marketplace garage circulation, roadway dimensions, and Vermont Agency of Transportation approvals for a potential median in the downtown.

Alissa noted that since we don't know how complicated the PMP will be, could there be a chain reaction of events that delays other aspects of the current project? Jonathan responded that we need more data in the Old North End, which the PMP will provide, and we'll go from there. In the shorter term, without incurring significant cost, we can change roadway striping, but that has a big impact on parking, so the PMP comes first. The downtown and southern section of the corridor could be changed prior to completing the PMP.

A citizen asked if the project team looked at stormwater, permeable pavement, etc.? In the short term we wouldn't be changing the roadway surface but in long-term there could be other changes considered and made.

There are two mini-roundabouts proposed to be piloted in summer 2020 at the North Street and Union Street intersections.

Following is a general summary of the preferred alternative, more details are included in the [PAC presentation](#) and [draft implementation plan](#).

Northern segment alternative – Riverside to Union:

In the interim term, complete the PMP.

In the short term, keep parking on west side, remove east side parking (39 spaces), provide bike lanes on both sides, improve transit stops.

Citizen asked about why east side rather than west side for parking removal, Jonathan responded that there are fewer spaces on the east side.

Jacob commented that it seems like some elements could be pursued without PMP? Yes, the transit improvements and bike detection opportunities could be pursued.

In the long term, widen the roadway for protected bike lanes and/or parking, and/or other amenities.

Northern segment alternative – North St to Union St:

The project team changed this recommendation based on comments and now reflects keeping parking on both sides and providing two buffered bike lanes without any curb changes.

Citizen question about combining bike lanes into a two-way bike lane instead, but Jonathan noted there are intersection issues with using different bike facility types in adjacent sections. Another citizen suggested bike signals as a solution, but the project team noted that there are sight distance challenges with a two-way bike facility due to parking and curb cuts. This section could potentially move forward without the PMP.

Citizen asked if the study considered what to do with snow – in Montreal they use pickup truck plows on their two-way bike lanes. Jonathan noted that in this schematic there is no bike lane protection so City plowing would be same as usual.

Northern segment alternative, short term – North St to Pearl St:

Keep one-way southbound traffic, keep west side parking, remove east side parking (45 spaces), include bike lanes on both sides.

Northern segment alternative, long term – Union St to Pearl St:

Widen the roadway to create space for two-way vehicle traffic, bike lanes in each direction, opportunities for new transit service, remove east side parking (26 spaces) between North St and Union St.

Downtown segment – Pearl St to Main St.

A community group provided a revised downtown segment which is similar to the previous option 2C, which ranked well in the evaluation process and had desirable features but there were some issues, which is why it didn't advance. There are some elements in the community proposal that warrant further analysis. The fire department provided comments on the community proposal and noted some access and movement issues, Bank Street restriction issues, and shifting travel on alternative routes, so the project team didn't believe this was the right option to advance to PAC tonight.

Citizen comment that the parking garage machine broke tonight and people had to go find other parking.

Max commented that PAC heard concerns about community proposal, but what advantages did the project team see in proposed alternative? Jonathan noted it's a safer facility for some users because of the protection, and there are mobility improvements, but there are some new operational and safety concerns created by those same elements.

A citizen asked if there is a way to make changes downtown with paint rather than using barriers to align with fire department comments. Jonathan responded yes, but there are other issues to address such as suggested changes to driveways and access, and turning radii. Note that the team's recommendation could quickly and easily be changed after further analysis of the community proposal since it's really just paint. Nicole noted that just roadway paint may not deter drivers. The team will need more time to analyze and test before making this a recommendation.

Karen said that reading the fire department memo, if barriers are used they should be low profile and mountable, what does that mean? Jonathan said those would be 3 inches or less, with no vertical elements like bollards, something similar to a speed hump. Nicole pointed out that those features would still be a short-term cost.

Jacob pointed out that the fire department noted some things they liked, are those included in the preferred alternative from the project team? Jonathan said yes such as including bike boxes.

Alex asked how the community's design would handle traffic volumes. Jonathan commented that in this design there would have to be some changes for turns onto College and Main streets. The preferred alternative has three travel lanes between College and Main with a shifting yellow center line to create dedicated left turn lanes at each intersection. Alex asked if adding more enhancements would change the roadway capacity? The design could limit access to Bank Street but those vehicles would go somewhere else. The community design shows a two-way center turn lane in front of City Market, which could operate better if there were no left turns onto Bank Street, but there are other issues. Driveway access suggestions would be an issue with landowners, as well as the types of vehicles allowed access.

Jason Van Driesche clarified that the community option being presented is one possible way to implement changes downtown and to use the center turn lane to add safety to bike lanes. The community group would like the PAC to find opportunities to implement the elements presented. Jonathan noted that if the project team's preferred recommendation moves forward, then those elements could be considered and incorporated during the preliminary design stage; the preferred alternative doesn't preclude elements of the community option.

Alex noted that it's hard to evaluate the new option at this point given that the current option is so complex, as is the community proposal. Jonathan reiterated that there is an opportunity to enhance the preferred alternative with elements of the community proposal.

Max wanted to recognize that these are some of the most dangerous intersections in the city and state, and the PAC needs to refine the preferred concept to improve safety in advance of VTrans's Winooski Avenue repaving project in 2022. If we just put in bike lanes, we won't get more people to ride, we need to look for ways to add protection to get more riders.

Jacob asked to clarify the travel lane configuration between College and Main and that there are left turn lanes at College and Main intersections.

Downtown Segment alternative, Main to Pearl:

Short term option is to restripe to create two travel lanes with center turn lane and bike lanes on both side, with transit and streetscape improvements, and to evaluate the operations and safety of a median and other amenities in the right of way.

Southern Segment alternative, Main to King:

In the short term keep west side parking, remove east side parking (12 spaces), keep two way traffic, incorporate bike lanes in both directions.

In the long term restrict travel to southbound only and add bike lane protection.

Jacob – with bike lane protection in this block, did the team get fire department feedback? No, the team didn't bring long term options to them for comment.

Southern Segment alternative, King to Maple:

In the short term – keep west side parking, restrict travel to southbound only travel, incorporate bike lanes in both directions.

In the long term the city could explore widening to add parking.

The implementation timeline includes recommendations for the interim (year 2020), short term (2020-2021), and long term (beyond 2021) timeframes.

Alex asked if there was consideration of reconnecting Pine and St Paul streets downtown? Yes but it really only impacts the downtown area.

Summary of short-term implementation costs:

Northern Segment (Riverside Avenue to Pearl Street)

- Union Street mini-roundabout: \$115,000
- North Street mini-roundabout: \$150,000
- Striping Only (remove & restripe): \$45,000

Downtown Segment (Pearl Street to Main Street)

- Striping Only (remove & restripe): \$53,000
- (not including costs associated with signal retiming and detection)

Southern Segment (Main Street to Maple Street)

- Striping Only (remove & restripe): \$10,500

Note that these costs don't include enhancements like benches, street trees, etc. but there are opportunities to include those in preliminary design.

Kelly asked that if bike lane protection is on the ground when VTrans repaves Winooski Avenue, would they (VTrans) replace those as part of the project? That would have to be a discussion as part of developing the paving project.

Jacob asked where in the preliminary design process could things like protection, raised bike lanes, stamped medians, etc. be part of the process? Note that something like raised bike lanes downtown would add to the project cost, but please let us know of ideas and changes to help inform the timeline and cost.

Alex wanted to go on the record to say that if it's not a big leap from the preferred recommendation to add other improvements in incremental change, then stay that course.

Jonathan noted that if he heard Alex correctly, then the shorter term option is preferred to continue through process, and to consider other elements in further design process.

Members of the PAC agreed to approve the preferred alternative and to consider other elements in the design process as discussed tonight.

The PAC was asked if there are other comments or adjustments to the recommended implementation process outlined tonight:

Northern segment – Erik commented that the recommendation is good, but he doesn't like the "widening roadway in long term," so is there a way to soften that language? Nicole said there is interest in protected lanes so widening would allow that, but team hears his comment and can adjust that language.

Jacob said it feels like there is a lot of paint striping, and it seems like there are more permanent things we want, like protection, so he would like the design team to consider those elements. Jonathan noted that there will be improvements at intersections, which will be designed using the latest standards.

Alissa commented that at every meeting we've heard from businesses about parking, does it always have to be retained on the same side of the street? Could it change block to block, or at least looked into as an option? The PMP can inform that as part of the process so we'll capture that request as part of the PMP scope.

What does "successful" mean for the mini-roundabout pilots? Success means improvements to safety, congestions, mobility, etc.

Nicole noted the earlier reference to east side parking, and we can change draft language to be less specific since the PMP can address that issue. We can also modify the "widening" language to something such as "find funding to modify roadway" rather than say "widening."

Erik suggested that we also add streetscaping like trees and benches, and art as Kelly pointed out.

Include transit stop improvements in the recommendations, as well as benches, street trees, etc.

Karen suggests clarifying more detail in cost estimates for presentation to City Council.

Kelly asked if we can put a deadline and specific dates for the PMP. Team will add "by 2021" for PMP work completed. Karen reminded the group of the short window to get construction done.

6) Public Comment Period

The floor was opened again for comments from the public:

- Greg Hostetler – I appreciate the fire department's comments on the new downtown proposal, but we need to ask our public responders to broaden perspective of safety.
- Jason Van Driesche – I'd like to thank the PAC for incorporating our new ideas on the fly and echo what Greg said, it's troubling that because of the fire chief's comments the planters are removed from the concept, there are other places where these types of features are included so it can be done. Something raised does make a difference for safety so please don't remove preemptively.
- Stu McGowan – this isn't a biker vs driver vs walker issue, this is a climate change issue. It's perfectly fine to care about climate change, there needs to be a compromise and we need to work together, we're all Burlingtonians.
- Drew Pollak-Bruce – I want to follow up on Jason's comment about things in the median, these projects beautify our city, so how can we help these projects have many benefits like safety, stormwater, art and more, medians have a benefit for everyone.
- Kimberly Anderson, Community Health Centers of Burlington – I love bikes, love the environment, I've said this before and I really urge more thought about the patients who come to the health center, they're the same folks who go to LM and OSH, safety is also about accessibility, sick people need to get to health center, they need to park, some bring families, so there a lot of factors to consider, it's not just about curbs but about keeping access for those who need it. I think of this as separate sections, and doing something is not always better than doing nothing.
- Karen Yacos, Local Motion – it's great that the conversation is happening this way, I appreciate Stu's comment, I want to encourage using language that uses "people," rather than cars and bikes. There are people in cars, people walking, people biking, so let's use people. It's not a car, it's modes of transportation, and balance is important. Parking management plan can help with that.
- Jason Stuffle – I wore this "Safe Colchester Ave for All" shirt because we're all for people, consider how much it costs to build a lane, the return on investment, keeping people safe allows them to be productive in our community. It's not about dollars and cents but helping people.
- Jonathan Weber – I agree with balancing needs. As population grows, they're not making more land for parking, so how do we make the most of it, protected bike lanes

are the way to go.

- North Winooski resident – I’ve had three parking spaces taken by the City, and have a crosswalk from my driveway to Sangha, it’s unsafe. I like this concept but I’m concerned about the liability. Some people don’t understand the green lanes, they go through dangerous intersections, I appreciate what you’re doing but I’m concerned about my liability as a driver if I hit someone walking or biking.
- Public comment – this isn’t about people getting parking taken away and making it easier for people to bike, but it’s an opportunity to transform transportation sector which contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Big change is hard but can happen, parking issues won’t go away as more people move to Burlington, so put in bike infrastructure so people who move here don’t need a car. We won’t remember parking that was taken away but will appreciate how great our city is.
- Public comment – climate change was barely mentioned which is disheartening since it’s a major city issue. Getting people out of cars is extremely important.
- Caitlin Pascucci, Sangha Studio – I want to echo Jackie from Butch and Babe’s who previously brought up the safety issue for people walking at night, I would like more lights and other safety improvements if parking is changed and is further away.
- Public comment – I agree with the climate comment.

7) Next Steps

Jonathan summarized the process and reiterated the preferred alternative, to which the PAC agreed:

Present to City Council the recommended alternative and implementation timeline from tonight’s presentation with the following revisions: reword “widening,” add more detail about other improvements for pedestrians and amenities, add “in 2021” to the fist bullet of Northern Segment timeline, prioritize completion of Southern Segment in 2020, and for the Downtown Segment prioritize protection for pedestrians and bicyclists, implement or pilot as much as possible in 2020, and evaluate other elements in 2020 to install by 2021.

The project team will refine the draft implementation plan based on feedback from tonight and will present the updated draft implementation plan to the City’s Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee (TEUC) on February 4, and then present to the City Council later in February or as their schedule allows. Max Tracy, who chairs the TEUC, said that committee’s meeting is another opportunity for the public to comment, and there are no time limits on the public comment period. Jonathan said that tonight’s meeting materials are posted on the project webpage: www.tiny.cc/WinooskiAveStudy

The meeting concluded at 9:15PM.

Attendance

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Members

Alissa	Faber	Resident of Central District
Erik	Brown-Brotz	Walk Bike Council
Chris	Damiani	GMT
Sean	Melinn	ONE Arts & Bus. Network
Kelly	Stoddard-Poor	AARP VT
Karen	Paul	City Council
Kara	Alnasrawi	Church Street Mkt Place
Alex	Bunten	Burlington Business Assoc.
Max	Tracy	City Council

Alternates

Jacob	Flanigan	Resident of Central District
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Project Team

Bryan	Davis	CCRPC
Nicole	Losch	Burlington DPW
Jonathan	Slason	RSG
Norm	Baldwin	Burlington DPW
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