

Public Meeting
Queen City Park Road/Austin Drive Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections Study – March 9, 2022
Meeting Notes

Christine Forde, the Project Manager from Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), introduced the meeting and noted that this project is being funded with federal transportation planning dollars provided through the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and is being undertaken at the request of, and in collaboration with, the cities of South Burlington and Burlington.

Lucy Gibson from Toole Design Group, a consulting firm hired to conduct this study, provided an overview of the existing conditions in the project area and the alternatives that are being considered. The study area begins at the US7/Lindenwood Drive intersection and extends along Queen City Park Road and Austin Drive to Oakledge Park. She noted that there are a lot of differing bicycle and pedestrian conditions through the project area.

The project team consists of staff level representatives of Burlington and South Burlington as well as the consultant team and CCRPC (Marla Keene – City of South Burlington, Nicole Losch – Burlington, Christine Forde – CCRPC, Lucy Gibson and Julie Shapiro – Toole Design Group). There is also an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of the city councils, adjacent neighborhoods and bicycle and pedestrian groups from South Burlington and Burlington (Tim Barrett – South Burlington City Council, Chip Mason - Burlington City Council, Bob Britt / Amanda Holland - South Burlington Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee, Peter Keating – Burlington Walk Bike Council, Gillian Bell / Doug Goodman – neighborhood representatives). We also consulted with local businesses Green Mountain Transit (Chris Damiani) and Burton Snowboards (Justin Worthley).

The overall goals of the project are to facilitate safe movement of people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving in the study area, and to fill the gap in the regional bicycle network. At this meeting we are looking for comments on whether we are missing any pertinent information or if there are additional considerations for weighing the alternatives.

Previous work on this project included collecting community feedback through an interactive map and a survey. The locations with most comments were the intersection of Home Avenue/Austin Drive/Queen City Park Road, the Shelburne Road intersections, and at the one-lane bridge.

The goal of this study is to develop a low stress bicycle facility that would be appropriate for most riders including kids and less experienced riders. Most of the existing corridor does not provide for separation between bicyclists and vehicles.

Lucy then defined three types of bike facilities that we will be discussing this evening.

- ▶ Shared use paths – pedestrians and bicyclists share the same facility which is separated from traffic.
- ▶ Separate bike lanes – the lanes are generally at street level and are separated from traffic by some means such as posts or cones.
- ▶ Conventional bike lanes – the lanes are separated from traffic by paint.
- ▶ Advisory lanes – a section of the road is marked with dashed lines for bicycles with cars yielding to oncoming traffic in one lane.

To facilitate this discussion the study area has been broken into 5 segments roughly reflecting differing conditions in the corridor.

Segment 1 – Shelburne Road to Hannaford entrance

One option was considered in this segment consisting of the following

- ▶ Widening the sidewalk between Lindenwood drive and the crosswalk to 10-feet. This is possible within the road right-of-way.
- ▶ Widen the and rehabilitate the existing shared use path from Shelburne Road to the Hannaford entrance to 10-feet.
- ▶ Estimated cost - \$138,200

Segment 2 – Hannaford entrance to Champlain Parkway Path

- ▶ Shared use path option – narrow the roadway pavement from 30-feet to 24-feet and widen the existing sidewalk from 6-feet to 10-feet. Drainage structure relocation would be required. Cost -- \$333,800
- ▶ Separated bike lanes – constructed a separate two-way bicycle facility on the north side of the road. This option would require about 5 feet of additional right-of-way. Drainage structure relocation would be required. Cost -- \$273,300
- ▶ Both options would include a crosswalk at the Champlain Parkway Path.

Question – What will happen at the driveway to the Humane Society?

Answer – The sidewalk widening will take place toward the road and not into the Humane Society property. The path would be constructed across the driveway to make it clear that the driveway is crossing a multiuse path.

Question – Why does the graphic show the path continuing past the Champlain Parkway Path at Pine Street?

Answer – The project is looking at bike connections throughout the corridor including accessing properties on Queen City Park Road and Red Rocks Park.

Question – Will there be a signal at Pine Street?

Answer – Current volumes on Queen City Park Road don't meet the thresholds for a signal. Adding a signal in the future could be a consideration if future traffic volumes are higher.

Question – Is there an option for separated bike lanes that doesn't require widening?

Answer – To maintain separation between traffic and bike lanes it is unlikely we could provide separated lanes within the existing right-of-way.

Question – Could we have one lane bike lane on either side of the road rather than a two-way facility.

Answer – There is enough room now in this section to stripe bike lanes. This study is looking to create a low stress option.

Section 3 – Champlain Parkway Path to Central Avenue.

- This segment includes the one-lane bridge which was subject of a separate study. It is acknowledged that improvements are needed in this location but this study does not reevaluate the recommendations of the previous study.
<https://studiesandreports.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Queen-City-Park.pdf>
- Shared Use Path Alternative – includes a crosswalk at Central Avenue and also crosses Queen City Park Road west of Central Avenue. Cost -- \$265,200
- Sidewalk and Bike Lanes Alternative – Sidewalk continues on the south side of Queen City Park Road to Central Avenue and then crosses Central Avenue and Queen City Park Road at two crosswalks to the north side of Queen City Park Road. Cost -- \$364,000.

Comments – the bridge is tough for bicycle and pedestrian access. Improving the sidewalk across the bridge and improving the approaches could be a short-term improvement.

Response – the bridge is addressed in a separate study. We could consider short term improvements to the approaches and the sidewalk.

Segment 4 – Queen City Park Road from Central Avenue to Home Avenue

- Shared use Path Alternative – construct an 8- to 10-foot-wide shared use path on the east side to avoid utility poles and drainage swale. Cost - \$476,000
- Sidewalk and Separated Bike Lanes – this alternative would require road widening. Cost – 866,000
- Sidewalk with Advisory Bike Lanes – retain the advisory bike lanes and construct a sidewalk on the east side of Queen City Park Road. Cost - \$568,000. Note that this cost is higher than the shared use path option because we assumed that the sidewalk would be concrete, and the path would be asphalt which is cheaper.

Comment – bicyclists should be encouraged to take the Champlain Parkway Path and should not be encouraged to travel towards the Red Rocks Park area because of the existing high traffic volumes.

Comment – the design for the advisory bike lanes is too timid because cars can ignore the dashed line. Before giving up on the advisory bike lane would like to see the city be more assertive and make them more than advisory. The design is not working as intended.

Segment 5 – Home Avenue/Austin Drive/Queen City Park Road to the Burlington Bike Path. The Champlain Parkway Path will extend along Home Avenue to Queen City Park Road.

- Shared Use Path Alternative – add a crosswalk of Queen City Park Road and widen the sidewalk on the south side of Austin Drive to 10 feet. Cost - \$943,900
- Separated Bicycle Lanes Alternatives – would require widening the road by about 5 feet either to the north or the south. Cost - \$894,400

Total Cost of all segments --

Shared Use Path -- \$2,157,000

Bicycle Lanes and Sidewalk - \$2,536,000

Comment – It is important to consider short term options that could be done at a lower cost.

Comment – Some other possible alignments were recommended in the chat. It was noted that this project is looking at this particular alignment, but we will note other recommendations in the report.

Suggested Alternative Routing -- As someone who bikes this, I've often longed for a cutoff from Austin Drive through the start of Redstone Condos, and along the edge of the field toward Queen City Park Road. I know that Burlington wants to also continue the path straight north from Home Avenue along the tracks to the main part of the existing bike path, and that's understandable for those trying to commute who are less concerned about the quality of their bike ride. But for those of us looking to be along parkland and waterfront, we want to be away from the road as much as possible. I would find it substantially more favorable if the bike path did not continue east along Austin Drive, past Oak Beach Drive, and instead cut through the edge of Redstone Condos.

Thank you

Suggested Alternative Routing -- Has any thought been given to using the Ledgewood entryway off Austin Drive that connects to Oak Beach Drive as a pathway to Flynn Avenue and the bike path in Oakledge Park? Oak Beach Drive has sidewalks on both sides. Both Austin and Oak Beach are city streets. Ledgewood owns the entryway but wants to transfer it to the city. A sidewalk would need to be built on the entryway (about 200 feet) to connect to the sidewalk on Oak Beach Drive. It would get bikers and walkers off Austin Drive.