

Department of Transportation

State Project No. 42-315

Federal Aid Project No. 1042(121)

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements on U.S. Route 44
(Burnside Avenue) from U.S. Route 5 (Main Street) to Mary Street**

Town of East Hartford

Public Informational Meeting Held at East Hartford Town Hall

740 Main Street, East Hartford, Connecticut

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

Minutes

Presentation:

- ⇒ There were approximately twenty-two (22) attendees, including Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc, Senator Gary LeBeau, and the Director of Public Works Tim Bockus, among the East Hartford residents.
- ⇒ A color plan of the proposed improvements along with a typical proposed cross section was displayed. Additionally, there was a slide presentation, which explained specific locations throughout the length of the project.
- ⇒ The project begins at the intersection of Route 5 with Burnside Avenue (Route 44) and ends at Mary Street, for a total length of approximately 2.76 miles.
- ⇒ The Rights of Way (ROW) representative gave a presentation regarding the acquisition process.

The purpose of this project is to enhance the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on a section of U.S. Route 44 (Burnside Avenue) from U.S. Route 5 (Main Street) to Mary Street by converting the existing four-lane road into a two-lane road (road diet), and creating dedicated bicycle lanes, shoulders with adequate width for parking, and dedicated turn lanes where required. The proposed typical cross sections will consist of two travel lanes, two bike lanes, and two shoulders. Other proposed project features include:

- Realignment of Larrabee Street to provide a normal tee-type intersection
- Improvement of the existing wearing surface by milling and overlaying sections of deteriorated pavement and micro-milling areas of newer pavement to remove existing pavement markings and establish new markings for bike lanes
- Relocation or consolidation of six bus stops
- Implementation of bus turnouts where required due to inadequate roadway width to accommodate bus stops without blocking bike lanes
- Full depth reconstruction of six badly deteriorated intersecting side street aprons, including curbs and sidewalk ramps
- Necessary modification of existing traffic signals
- Driver and cyclist education through community outreach

- ⇒ It is anticipated that there will be rights-of-way involvement on 16 properties, including three owned by the Town of East Hartford. The rights-of-way impacts will include sliver acquisitions on eight properties, to accommodate widened shoulders for bus stops. The rights of way impacts on the remaining eight properties will involve limited acquisitions to accommodate the installation of new sidewalk ramps.
- ⇒ Estimated Cost of the project is approximately \$2.8 million, funded by 90% Federal and 10% State funds.
- ⇒ Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2015 based on the availability of Federal/State funding.

Public Comments and Questions:

There was concern expressed regarding bus stop relocations and associated possible property damage and trash. Efforts were made to relocate the bus stops in front of commercial properties rather than residential houses. Town officials are aware of these trash issues.

Several members of the audience proposed that street furniture such as benches and trash cans should be provided. They also suggested that bike racks at proposed bus turnouts and in front of the business would be beneficial. The possibility of adding benches, trash cans, and bicycle racks will be discussed further with the town. These items would be the maintenance responsibility of the town.

A member of the public questioned if a 7-foot shoulder is wide enough for parking and raised concerns about “dooring” (the conflict between a cyclist and the open door of a parked vehicle). It was explained that this lane configuration provided is a minimum standard. Wherever possible, additional width is given to parked vehicles allowing for a larger buffer between parked vehicles and bicycles.

One member of the public expressed the opinion that the side street green cycle at Scotland Street is too short, which is especially inconvenient when school buses are queued to make right-turn into Burnside Avenue. The traffic signal timing at this intersection will be reviewed.

All present appeared to support the realignment of Larrabee Street. There were suggestions of further aligning it to be across from the East Hartford Middle School driveway. Realigning Larrabee Street farther east to oppose the entrance to the school will be investigated.

Several members of the public emphasized the importance of the public outreach component of the project, especially the education of drivers about bicycles and bike lane. The educational aspect of this project is considered a key element, especially due to the limited number of bicycle facilities of this type in the State.

One resident, who lives between Larrabee Street and Long Hill Road where on-street parking would be restricted, expressed concerns regarding the lack of on-street parking, as well as vehicle speeds within that section of Burnside Avenue. The removal of on street parking, which has been coordinated with the town, will be revisited.

Adjournment

In general, the project was well-received by those in attendance. The formal portion of the meeting was completed by 8:00 p.m.