

MEETING MINUTES
Public Meeting #1
Route 32 Corridor Study – New London, CT
Wednesday, November 2, 2022, 7:00 PM, Lyman Allyn Art Museum

This meeting was held to present the findings of the existing conditions analysis, and present two preliminary concepts for a portion of the corridor. Approximately ten members of the public were present, along with members of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG), officials from the City of New London, and representatives of the Lyman Allyn Museum.

The project team presented the following information on community input and an existing conditions summary:

- The project team hosted two pop-up sessions in New London to obtain community feedback on the project. Additionally, the team launched a project website that included a survey and interactive map tool to provide comments on the corridor. Primary concerns included high vehicle speeds, walkability, and pedestrian crossings in the project area.
- Field observations indicated that the current built environment prioritizes vehicle throughput and is inaccessible to those not driving. A review of the most five recent years of available crash data indicated a high number of rear-end crashes throughout the project area. Approximately 26 percent of all collisions resulted in injury.
- The future conditions analysis considers two scenarios: an interim 2032 condition, and a long-term 2042 condition that assumes future changes to the larger roadway network that will result in a volume reduction on Route 32 through the study area.

A variety of options for the corridor that would be possible if other regional network connections were constructed, and Route 32 was downgraded from its regional arterial status were also presented. Examples were cited of similar projects in Rochester, New York, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Providence, Rhode Island.

Two alternatives for the corridor were presented that would be feasible in the near term.

Option A included:

- Landscaped median
- Shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists on the west side of Route 32
- Additional crosswalks
- Pedestrian refuge islands
- Elimination of right turn lanes

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Option B included:

- Shortened pedestrian crossings
- Protected bike lanes on both sides of the roadway
- Chicanes to slow vehicles approaching intersections

Following the presentation, members of the public had the ability to offer comments on the two concepts and ask questions. Comments were largely consistent with public feedback received at the pop-up kiosks and via the project website. The following points of discussion were raised:

- Some members of the public expressed preference for an off-street multiuse path, like the one represented in Option A.
- Some members of the public noted that a landscaped median with trees would be visually appealing.
- One member of the public noted that the Mohegan Avenue Parkway/Route 32 merge feels dangerous as a driver.
- Members of the public expressed a desire for a design that will slow vehicle traffic. One member of the public speculated that Option B may lead to more significant reductions in vehicle speed because of the chicanes and changing roadway width.
- One member of the public indicated the lack of a pedestrian refuge island to be a drawback of Option B.
- Noise along the corridor was discussed as a point of concern. Representatives of the Lyman Allyn Museum noted that sound barriers could be an opportunity to enhance the community visually and acoustically. One member of the public noted that sound barriers address a symptom of the problem instead of the problem itself.
- Members of the public expressed a desire for improved connectivity to downtown New London and noted that the college campuses in the project area are removed from the rest of the city.
- One member of the public expressed a desire for wayfinding signage for nearby trails.
- One member of the public asked if our project team has the authority to reduce capacity. The project team noted that reduced capacity is not proposed at this time, and that the design will ultimately be reviewed by CTDOT because this is a state highway.
- Some discussion took place surrounding the previous condition of Route 32 and the CTDOT redesign that represents the existing condition. One longtime New London resident recalled that CTDOT designed the existing signalized crossings to maintain emergency access.