

MEETING MEETINGS
PAC Meeting #2
Route 32 Corridor Study – New London, CT
Tuesday, September 27, 2022, 10:00-11:30 AM via Teams

ATTENDEES: Jim Butler (SCCOG); Anna Bergeron (CTDOT); Sam Quigley (Lyman Allyn Museum Director); Mike Carroll (SEAT); Brian Kent (Bike Groton); Brian Wright (Police Chief); Brian Sear (City of New London); Jennifer Pacacha (CTDOT); Frederick Kulakowski (CTDOT); Claudel Meronnis (CTDOT); William Champagne (CTDOT); Shraddha Joshi (CTDOT); Matthew Skelly (F&O); Katherine O'Shea (F&O); Rosie Jaswal (Toole)

This meeting was held to update the project advisory committee on the progress made assessing the existing conditions, and present preliminary concept alternatives. The meeting began with introductions, giving all attendees the opportunity to share their organization and relation to the project. Katherine O'Shea of Fuss & O'Neill 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.

Rosie Jaswal of Toole Design presented 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. She cited examples of similar projects in Rochester, New York, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Providence, Rhode Island.

Rosie then presented two alternatives for the corridor 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

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- Pedestrian refuge islands
- Elimination of right turn lanes

Option B included:

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

Jim Butler noted that the Connecticut College driveway on the west side of Route 32 at the intersection of Route 32 and Reservoir Street is often closed, therefore, the northbound left turn lane at that intersection may not be necessary.

Jim also noted that he likes the landscaped median featured in Option A, and noted the similarity of this option to the prior configuration of the corridor. He suggested use of historical aerial photos to demonstrate the prior corridor appearance.

Brian Kent asked if any consideration was given to reducing the speed limit. Matthew Skelly clarified that the speed limit has been set in accordance with the CTDOT Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) statewide policy on setting speed limits.

Brian Kent also noted that if bike infrastructure is implemented, the project team should consider viable origin and destination points for cyclists, and cited Williams Street as a possible bicycle corridor. He also noted that any bike lanes should include a physical barrier to separate cyclists from vehicle traffic.

Brian Sear of the City of New London noted the psychological impact that the existing highway infrastructure has on drivers, and mentioned how additional plantings and landscaping south of the Williams Street bridge would aid in strengthening the connection to downtown, and prevent drivers from transitioning into a highway mindset.

Frederick Kulakowski of CTDOT asked for the ADT and the truck percentages. The ADT is approximately 27,000 vehicles.

Rosie presented a number of gateway treatments that would help provide a visual transition into the College Hill District.

Jim informed the project team that Connecticut College recently installed new signage that functions as a gateway treatment.

Sam Quigley noted that arts and culture should be incorporated into the naming of the area, and Jim clarified that the "College Hill District" refers to an existing name for the area.

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Brian Kent noted that the Lyman Allyn Museum is interested in installing a sound barrier, which could become an example of public art that functions as a gateway treatment.

As the meeting concluded, Matthew Skelly asked CTDOT to provide any additional commentary on requirements moving forward to ensure that the corridor study leads to design and construction. Anna Bergeron indicated that CTDOT intends to move the project into the next phase by initiating a technical review during the study phase once more detailed plans are developed.

The group decided that the next PAC meeting will take place on January 10, 2023, at 1:00 pm.

Project next steps:

- Schedule a Public Meeting for the second or third week in October