



Route 32 Corridor Study

Overview:

Connecticut State Route 32, locally known as Mohegan Avenue Parkway, is a vital regional connector in southeastern Connecticut. It links two major interstate highways, Interstate 95 and Interstate 395, and serves as a primary route for commuters, students, and visitors traveling through New London. The corridor passes through a unique and densely institutional area, including Connecticut College, the United States Coast Guard Academy, the Williams School, and the Lyman Allen Museum. Despite its strategic importance, Route 32 has long been characterized by automobile centric infrastructure, including high speed roadway design and limited pedestrian accommodations, which prioritize vehicular flow over safety and accessibility for nonmotorized users.

pedestrians and cyclists, particularly for students and faculty who must cross the corridor daily to access campus facilities.

A tragic pedestrian fatality in 2015 near the Connecticut College Main Entrance underscored the urgent need for safety improvements and catalyzed a series of audits and studies that culminated in this comprehensive corridor study.

The Route 32 Corridor Study, commissioned by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECOG), aims to reimagine the corridor as a safer, more inclusive, and visually appealing community street. The study’s guiding vision is to “reduce barriers, create safe connections, and visually enhance the community through which it travels.” This vision reflects a shift in transportation planning priorities. Through extensive data collection, traffic analysis, and public engagement, the study lays the groundwork for a transformative redesign of Route 32 that aligns with both local needs and broader state and federal transportation goals.



1934 Aerial View of Rte 32 With Landscaped Median

The Route 32 roadway currently features wide travel lanes and shoulders, a concrete median, and limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Sidewalks are discontinuous; crosswalks are long and poorly marked, and the corridor lacks bicycle accommodation. These design shortcomings have created an unsafe and unwelcoming environment for



Rte 32 Facing East at Abbey House

Preferred Alternative

The project team reviewed several design options and gathered input from the community. From this analysis, the team recommends a hybrid approach that combines the most effective features from earlier concepts. This design focuses on improving safety, accessibility, and the overall experience for everyone using Route 32. Key features include the inclusion of 10-ft wide shared use paths separated from traffic by landscaped buffers, traffic calming measures such as narrower lanes and adjusted ramps to reduce vehicle speeds. The design also features upgraded traffic signal equipment to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety as well as accessibility improvements like ADA compliant curb ramps, enhanced crosswalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and better connections to existing bike routes.



Proposed Design

Public Engagement

Public input played a vital role in the Route 32 Corridor Study, ensuring that the proposed improvements reflected community needs. The study team held 4 public meetings, solicited input via survey and interactive mapping, and spoke with community members at pop-up events to gather individual impressions of roadway conditions and desires for a reimagined corridor. Efforts engaged a broad range of stakeholders including students, residents, and institutional representatives.

Initial feedback revealed concerns about speeding, unsafe crossings, and poor pedestrian infrastructure. Suggestions include pedestrian bridges, extended signal timing, and improved lighting.

In later phases, draft alternatives were presented, with 77% of respondents supporting the project vision and 56% preferring the alternative which featured a landscaped median and shared use path. Final feedback showed 76% support for the proposed concept, with calls for additional traffic calming and enforcement. Overall, the public engagement process validated the study's direction and enriched it with local insight, ensuring the final recommendations are grounded in lived experience.



Online Comment Map

Study Recommendations Cost and Funding

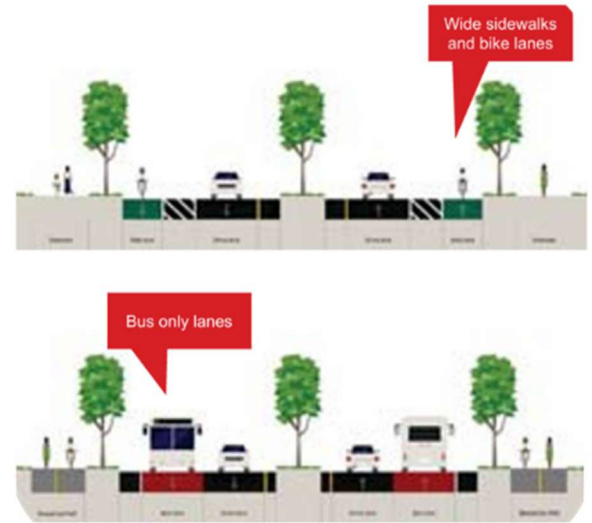
The Route 32 Corridor Study report estimated the total cost of implementing the preferred alternative at \$32-\$33 million, divided into three phases. Phase 1 focused on improvements north of the Williams Street Bridge, including removal of the concrete median, installation of landscaped median, shared use paths, and updated crosswalks, with an estimated cost of \$22-\$23 million. Phase 1A addressed signal upgrades, replacing span wires with mast arms, adding video detection, and improving pedestrian signals, at a cost of \$4-\$5 million. Phase 2, covering the southern end near the US Coast Guard Academy, included ramp realignments and lane reductions, estimated at \$5-\$6 million.

To support implementation, the study identified several funding sources. These included federal programs like the Surface Transportation Program (STP), RAISE, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), and the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, which offered grants from \$5 million to \$100 million. State programs such as LOTCIP and the Community Connectivity Grant Program were also viable, though some were limited to construction costs or require local design funding. Additionally, Congressionally Directed Spending may have been pursued with strong stakeholder and political support. These options aligned with the project's goals of improving safety, multimodal access, and reconnecting divided communities.

Long-Term Vision

A possibility exists to reroute some traffic off the corridor if/when improvements are made to the I95/I395 interchange in Waterford, allowing through traffic to bypass Route 32 more efficiently. In such a scenario, Route 32 could be reconfigured to include one lane in each direction, with additional space allocated for bus lanes or on-street bike lanes. The corridor could also

incorporate roundabouts and further pedestrian enhancements, creating a truly multimodal and community-oriented street. This long-term vision aligns with broader goals of sustainability, accessibility, and urban livability.



Rendering of Possible Future Bike or Bus Lanes



Perspective View of Realigned USCGA On-Ramp (Northbound)

Current Project Status

The Route 32 Corridor Study has completed its conceptual planning phase, led by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECOG) in collaboration with the City of New London and CTDOT. The final report outlines a vision for a safer, more accessible, and visually appealing corridor through the Connecticut College district. Study documents are available on our website.

Since the study's completion:

- SECOG staff presented the study recommendations to CTDOT in 2024; the project was strongly supported by CTDOT management and subsequently scoped for design.
- CTDOT initiated the first steps of project 0094-270. This project will include Route 32 corridor improvements from the vicinity of I-95 in New London to Benham Ave in Waterford to improve pedestrian/bicycle facilities, reduce roadway width, and remove concrete median barriers. This project includes traffic signal replacement and other ancillary work. The current project is anticipated to cost over \$32 Million dollars.
 - \$3,700,000 has been obligated by CTDOT and SECOG for the design portion of project 0094-0270. The project design phase began in 2025 and is anticipated to be completed in 2027.
 - Funding for the construction phase has not yet been secured but is in the queue for eventual funding.
 - CTDOT's design phase will include opportunities for public input in late 2026 or early 2027.
- Project 0094-0267 will restripe the i-95 off ramp to Route 32 northbound as an early action item, ahead of 0094-0270.
- Project 0172-0524 will update illumination of the I-95 corridor, including a portion of the project area.