

Tom Maziarz reported on the findings of the December 2nd public open house by summarizing the goals for the Village Center Improvements which are to improve traffic flow and safety by preserving the character of the Green and enhancing its ability to serve community events. Another key goal for improvements in this area is to slow traffic. Mr. Maziarz summarized the concepts in the draft plan for Village Center Improvements. These concepts were to reconfigure the approaches to RT 195 at RT 74 and Tolland Green (North Green) and at Old Stafford Road. Mr. Maziarz described the unsignalized T-Intersection at the center of the green at RT 74 and RT 195 and two options at the RT 74 and Old Stafford Road, a signalized T-Intersection and a Roundabout. Mr. Maziarz also described the various traffic calming elements in the plan at entry points and throughout the Green area which include keeping road widths narrow and reducing road width in some areas along the green, establishing on-street parking and calming in advance of entering the green, particularly on RT 74 where ornamental lights, shoulder treatments and sidewalk extensions can be implemented.

Mr. Maziarz summarized consensus around the two main intersection configurations after the December 2nd public meeting as follows:

- General support overall for goals and many of the recommendations
- No consensus on two options for RT 74 and Old Stafford Road:
 - Two options: roundabout vs traffic circle
 - 3rd option suggested: stop sign controls
 - Agreed to investigate

Mr. Maziarz reported on progress made since the December 2nd Meeting which includes:

- Meeting with ConnDOT to assess draft proposals
- Additional analysis & refined plans

3. Intersection at Route 74 & Route 195

a. Review of proposal and minor revisions to proposed intersection realignment:

Tom Maziarz presented a review, proposal and minor revisions to the proposed intersection realignment which included analyzing the number of heavy vehicles such as trucks and school busses utilizing the intersection. This analysis dictated a slight adjustment of the intersection to accommodate bus turning movements.

b. Public Comment

A member of the public questioned whether a stop sign at the proposed T-Intersection in the Central Green would cause vehicles to use the carriage roads instead of turning onto RT 195 from the intersection of RT 74 and RT 195.

Tom Maziarz stated that if there were a back up, motorists might use the carriage road as an alternative, but that speed humps (designed for 15-20 mph traffic) will be recommended on carriage roads which will deter most vehicles from utilizing the carriage roads as a bypass.

A member of the public asked whether the term traffic calming means bringing drivers down below the speed limit and whether enforcement such as speed cameras is as effective or more effective

Tom Maziarz stated that traffic calming doesn't necessarily correspond to speed limits, but aims for speed appropriateness for a particular environment. He stated that enforcement has limited resources and in most communities cannot have a presence at all times. Mr. Maziarz also stated that speed cameras are not legal in Connecticut and therefore cannot be used.

A member of the public who identified himself as Dave Barnas, a resident of 31 Tolland Green wanted clarification on the meaning of the different levels of service and also whether rumble strips might prevent speeding and provide for a safer atmosphere.

Tom Maziarz stated that level of service is measured in average seconds of delay. He further stated that no stop sign will produce a level A, there will always be some delay and traffic will create further delays. Mr. Maziarz addressed rumble strips saying that they create far more noise than some of the other traffic calming devices such as speed humps which are recommended in this study. Mr. Maziarz cited two examples of towns where rumble strips were implemented and then consequently torn out due to noise disturbance – one of these projects is in West Hartford and the second was the plan for Avon Mountain. Mr. Maziarz also stated that plowing is not an issue with speed humps.

A resident of Tolland Green identified herself as Rebecca and wanted clarification on how textured crosswalks would slow traffic and how these crosswalks would work at night.

Tom Maziarz stated that the textured road shoulders and crosswalks have some psychological effect as the driver enters the area and sees the pavement narrowed as a result of different colorations on the shoulder of the road. Mr. Maziarz stated that this alternative will lose some of its effectiveness at night.

A resident of Tolland Green identified himself as Mark Barzio commented that it would be a shame to lose the uniqueness and elegance of the road structure as it is now in the center of the Green. Mr. Barzio also commented that losing the identity of the Green means losing the identity of the town. He further stated that the entire green must be considered as a unit as it is hard to make a decision on one section without considering the other sections – the central intersection impacts the northern intersection. Mr. Barzio also voiced concerns over eliminating a stop sign near the center of the Green which could impact safety and speeds on the Green.

Tom Maziarz stated that a goal of this study was to create a design that would make the green more pedestrian friendly and more usable for community events. He further stated that speed is another legitimate concern and although the plan has eliminated a stop sign in the center of the Green, the other design features in the plan are meant to slow traffic in this area.

A resident of Tolland Green identified himself as Bill Soucey and stated that he agreed with Mr. Barzio that the center of the Green must be considered in conjunction with the north end of the Green. Mr. Soucey queried the acceptability of three different options: 1) Whether Route 74 could be terminated and traffic directed to Old Post Road where there is already a traffic light. He stated that his option might be more cost effective. 2) Whether traffic could be directed one way, eastbound on RT 74 and westbound up Old Post Road; and 3) Whether a 3-way stop could be placed at RT 74 and RT 195. Mr.

Soucey asked if his second option to re-route traffic had been checked with regard to level of service.

Tom Maziarz commented on each of Mr. Soucey's options as follows: 1) The planning team did look at this option early on in the study and determined that the cost would be too high and that there were topography and safety issues associated with it 2) The state may not allow this option, but it is something that the planning team could take a brief look at; and 3) This option would need to process the same number of vehicles, so there is no net benefit

A resident of Tolland Green identified herself as Hollie Barnas. Ms. Barnas stated that the Tolland Green residents are not only looking for safety and the slowing of traffic, but are also concerned with the historic nature of the Green and the historic pathways of the Green. She stated that the periphery items in the plan must be consistent with character or else they have the potential to ruin the look of the Town Green. She stated that concrete sidewalks do not match the historic character (originally there would have been granite or garnet walkways). She stated that the colored treatments are not historically consistent and look like a high school track. Ms. Barnas further stated that the proposal looks commercial and unnatural and that she is concerned that when costs are considered, concrete and other materials that are not historical in nature may be chosen. Ms. Barnas stated that speed humps will also create noise from acceleration and wanted clarification as to whether the roads were being expanded and properties encroached upon to accommodate the proposed street parking.

Tom Maziarz stated that the study team has not yet looked at detailed materials of construction as this is a planning study. He also stated that the team had used town standards, but can note all of these concerns.

Kevin Bouley, Chair of the Advisory Committee reiterated that we are in a planning phase, not a design phase.

A member of the public stated that she felt that CRCOG and DOT's efforts were at odds with what the residents of Tolland Green want to see accomplished. She stated that the neighborhood concerns about the Green started as concerns about safety for school busses and safety for children. She stated that many residents of the Town Green are not concerned about level of service. She also stated that she has concerns with removing the stop sign from the center of RT 195.

Tom Maziarz stated that the objectives of the study team and the public were not at odds, but that the methods for achieving the end result of safety is different. Tom stated that the study team feels this proposal is safer than the configuration that currently exists on the Green.

Bob Soucey commented that the tubes placed on the roads do not necessarily account for how many people might be lost on the Green. He also commented that in comparison with other areas and other state roads, Tolland has little traffic. He questioned whether anyone considered making Tolland Green contiguous with St. Matthews Church to Old Stafford Road and thereby directing RT 74 completely to Old Post Road.

Tom Maziarz stated that the study team looked at an option like this early on, but there were many obstacles to accomplishing it.

Kevin Bouley stated that several years ago there was a proposal to restore the green in the way that Mr. Soucey mentions, but that the DOT turned this down.

A member of the public expressed concerns that the proposed changes at the center of Tolland Green will result in a traffic light and questioned whether all major road configurations could be left off the table while traffic calming suggestions be placed into motion.

4. Intersection at Route 74 at Old Stafford Road (Tolland Green Road)

a. Review of previous proposals (roundabout & traffic signal)

Tom Maziarz reviewed the previous proposals for the northern end of the Green at RT 74 and Old Stafford Road which included two options: a roundabout or a signalized T-Intersection

b. Review of options for using stop sign controls

Tom Maziarz stated that the option to place a stop sign at a T-Intersection on this portion of the Green was reviewed, but ultimately not recommended due to issues with increased speeds from Old Stafford through the Green and an increased potential for accidents

c. Public comment

A member of the public stated that there be an option four placed on the table which would end Old Stafford Road at Torrey Road.

Linda Calabrese identified herself as a resident of Tolland Green and stated that possibly the Green is an unsolvable problem because it seems that nothing proposed will both solve the issues and address the concerns of the residents. She questioned whether the roundabout could make use of the grassy triangle that already exists at the north end of the Green.

Tom Maziarz stated that using this triangle and accounting for a 120 foot radius may not work well.

Sue Errickson identified herself as a Tolland resident, but not a resident of Tolland Green. She stated that she is supportive of the RT 74 traffic calming improvements and of adding a buffer for the two homes at the north end of the Green, but would like to see some accommodations for bicycles if possible.

A member of the public identified herself as Heather Rickard-Gilbert and stated that a 3-way stop at the north end of the green is a good alternative because it seems that it would slow traffic. She mentioned that the residents of the Green are not concerned about level of service.

Bill Soucey questioned whether keeping the Old Stafford stop sign would work if you could place a stop sign at the T-intersection at the north end of the Green. This would be similar to existing conditions.

Dave Smith, Tolland Town Engineer, stated that this option would still bring vehicles into the green area.

Steve O'Neill, of VHB also noted that this would mean that modifications would need to be made at the south green intersection due to capacity issues as this intersection is already at capacity.

Heather Rickard-Gilbert commended that she had concern for the two historic buildings on Old Post Road that needed protecting.

Hollie Barnas questioned whether level of service must be improved and whether level of service is of concern for the rest of the population in Tolland. She stated that more public input must be gathered and that she wanted to be sure everything from the meeting this evening would be documented.

Tom Maziarz stated that the study team did review speed, safety and walkability in addition to level of service and that level of service was not the main focus of the study.

A member of the public questioned why the crosswalk signs that were present at one time on the roadway near the green were no longer there. She commented that these signs were effective and perhaps they could be implemented again.

Tom Maziarz stated that these can be installed on Old Stafford, but not on a State Road as the DOT does not allow these signs on a state Road.

d. Action on what to include in recommendations to Town council

Fred Daniels commented that level of service must be considered and not dismissed. He further stated that when level of service decreases, motorists make more inappropriate decisions; the mission of the advisory committee is to approve the functionality, aesthetics and safety of the improvements proposed. He stated that all of the elements of the plan as a whole are important. To address the question of how historic is the Green currently, he further stated that we must consider the fact that we are in a modern era with cars and trucks and that the pavement of the green currently cuts across what was the historic green. He pointed out that part of the plan is to narrow the roadways surrounding the Green which is the opposite of creating a speedway or a racetrack. He said that routing all traffic to Dunn Hill Road would be impractical.

Members of the public presented a proposal for the north end of the Green which involved a modified T-Intersection. They also presented a petition against a signal at the north end of the Green and wanted to see what the thresholds are for level of service.

Tom Maziarz presented a slide that showed level of service thresholds and said that we would post this information on the RT 195 website.

Barbara Cook stated that she grew up in Tolland when there was a population of 1,400 people and now there is a population of 14,000. She said that everyone now has a car and that the community and committee need to be practical keeping in mind that all of the 14,000 residents of Tolland are not present in the room, but that most are interested in level of service and therefore it must be considered.

With regard to level of service and delay, Kathleen Bach questioned for comparison how long on average does a person sit at a red light. Tom Maziarz answered that a cycle length is about 90 seconds long.

Kathleen Bach also stated that eight years ago another committee came up with traffic calming at the Green and wanted to keep that study in mind which proposed a roundabout at the center of the Green. Ms. Bach stated that the presentation was a good one, but that she will not endorse it because there are too many questions still circulating amongst members of the public. She stated that endorsing this plan would not make sense without the neighbors backing. She stated that stop signs are certainly better than signals and that the T-intersections seem to make sense, but the roundabout is not fitting. She stated that instead of painting shoulders that possibly bringing curbs in to physically narrow the roads would work. She stated that she wants the committee's decision to err on the side of the historic. Ms. Bach asked the following questions: Are 3-way stops acceptable to DOT? Can trucks be banned from the Green area? Can speed humps be placed outside of home window views and can the study consider speed dips?

Tom Maziarz answered Ms. Bach's questions stating that a three way stop would not be acceptable given the level of service produced by that arrangement. He stated that speed humps could be placed at the specification of the town and that considering speed dips was getting into too much detail for the current discussion.

Harvey Gilbert stated that he would like to recommend to the Town Council to do as little as possible. Mr. Gilbert stated that he is in favor of calming traffic on the roads leading into the Green and of narrowing roads to slow vehicles before they enter the Green. He stated slowing vehicles will make the Green more friendly to pedestrians.

Fred Daniels stated that he is in favor of the T-Intersection in the center of the Green. He stated that this option makes shorter pedestrian crossings and creates a nice visual of the Green driving up to the historic church. He stated that he, too did not want to see another signal on the Green. Mr. Daniels stated that he is in favor of the roundabout at the northern end of the Green as it slows traffic and adds more to the center of the Green.

Harvey Gilbert stated that he would be in favor of doing this least amount of improvements first, such as taking steps to narrow the roadways to see whether they will be effective and then taking on larger changes further down the line if small changes are ineffective.

Harvey Gilbert made a motion to move forward with traffic calming and road narrowing improvements as a first phase to be reassessed for effectiveness at a later time.

Kathleen Bach seconded the Motion

The Motion failed with only two votes in favor.

Stephen Beeching questioned who will do the road narrowing and stated that if ConnDOT is aware of level of service problems in the future, they may make the changes without as much town input as has been sought in this study.

Tom Maziarz stated that without the intersection reconfigurations, there are still safety and pedestrian issues and ConnDOT will not support these changes.

Fred Daniels made a Motion to approve the roundabout at the north end of the Green and the T-Intersection at the center of the Green. Kevin Bouley seconded the motion.

The Motion failed as there were three in favor and four opposed.

Kevin Bouley stated that it appears that the Advisory Committee is unable to make a recommendation

Fred Daniels stated that the Advisory Committee needs to move on to revisit the rest of the corridor

Steve Werbner questioned whether it is possible to break the corridor up into an area where there are recommendations and an area where there are no recommendations.

Tom Maziarz stated that while he is concerned that there is no recommendation for this portion of the corridor, the corridor can be broken down into an area with a recommendation and an area without a recommendation

Kathleen Bach stated that the committee always anticipated this to be the more difficult piece of the study, but that we need to move to the commercial section of the corridor

Fred Daniels questioned whether Tom Maziarz had any suggestions for compromising on the Green section of the study

Tom Maziarz stated that many of the ideas placed on the table at this meeting had already been reviewed and had been determined to be unworkable. He agreed to give reassess some of the ideas and also consider what compromises or other options might be possible.

5. Next Steps

Tom Maziarz stated that we needed to restart work on the rest of the corridor, and but we would also do some reassessment of options for the Green before concluding work on the Green.

6. Other Business

There being no other business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 pm