

3. Preliminary Findings Presentation

The project team gave a presentation of the preliminary findings along Route 305 related to transportation and land use. The following summarizes each of the areas discussed and the comments heard:

Existing Transportation Conditions:

Traffic Operations:

Rod Bascom gave the traffic operations portion of the presentation. The study team has determined that general operations on the Bloomfield section of Route 305 are good; however, road geometry and narrow widths in several areas may cause future concern.

While Route 305 is classified as an urban minor arterial, the committee raised the question of how the road actually operates. Rod Bascom stated that Route 305 currently operates as it is classified.

Concerns with truck traffic using Woodland Avenue were discussed. John Sheehan stressed that small cul-de-sac subdivisions which all empty onto Woodland Avenue currently share the roadway traffic generated by northern industrial and office park development such as Pepperidge Farms which has approximately 750 employees and Home Goods which has approximately 900 employees. This road is being used by trucks as an alternate to/from Route 178 and Route 189.

Support for the extension of Route 305 was voiced at the meeting. There were concerns regarding whether the extension would be too difficult to obtain if the railroad crossing were a part of the project. The committee advocates proposing an immediate extension connecting Peters Road and Tunxis Avenue if the full extension is not feasible. This segment is about 300' in length.

The committee expressed concern over emergency responders' need for more network and connectivity. The committee commented that emergency response may be improved if a Peters / Tunxis connection was provided.

It was pointed out that driving directions to Peters Road (from MapQuest) direct motorists to use Woodland Avenue. Sometimes trucking operations direct their drivers to these web-based directions.

Land Use:

David Sousa gave the land use portion of the Study Team's presentation. The study team has characterized Bloomfield's portion of the corridor as a combination of residential, general office and "flex buildings" which fall into the zoning categories of Single Family Residential (SFR), Commercial/Industrial (CI) and Rural/Undeveloped (RU).

The study team also identified the area of the sharp curve at Kaman Corporation as a gateway to Bloomfield along Route 305. As a gateway, this area needs improvement. This area is known to be difficult to navigate in the afternoon due to sun glare and in icy conditions.

Jennifer Carrier asked about future development on the Route 305 Corridor in Bloomfield. The committee noted that the town does not see much new development opportunity on Route 305 at this point, but that there are 3-4 areas adjacent to Bloomfield's Town Center being considered for mixed-use centers.

Open Discussion:

Regarding the extension of Route 305, the railroad crossing in particular, the committee questioned whether there were other, better locations to cross. Mucko Road was brought up as an alternative, but was determined not to be ideal.

The committee pointed out that the freight train using the existing rail line makes very few trips a day, approximately 1 train per day moving Northbound and then returning Southbound. It was noted that another rail user, in the Savin Road area, will be joining the system in the near future.

In general, it was determined that there are five existing at-grade rail crossings in town, one of which as gates (Park Avenue).

The committee wanted to hear about Windsor's thoughts regarding Bloomfield and their preliminary vision for Route 305. Jennifer Carrier stated that Windsor was concerned with poor Level of Service at some of the intersections, preserving a residential component of Route 305 and development within the interchange area. Jennifer also mentioned that Windsor was interested in hearing what Bloomfield development plans may be and potential traffic impacts to Route 305.

Related to the Griffin Line / Busway, the committee stressed the findings from the Griffin Busway Feasibility Study: The corridor will be preserved as a transit corridor and any busway planning be deferred due to a low rating on Federal Transit Administration cost-effectiveness calculations. CRCOG is currently managing the Northwest Corridor Transit Study which will look at service modifications to transit and land use decisions to ensure future development can be served by transit.

There was a discussion related to the mix of residential and industrial development on Woodland Avenue. One thought was that if a new connection between Peters and Tunxis was made, maybe Peters Road becomes the dividing mark between these two uses. There may also be an opportunity to screen Woodland Avenue at Peters Road, creating more of a residential feel.

The committee offered information on a bike corridor and greenway plan recently submitted to the State Department of Environmental Protection. The study team requested a copy of this study to be incorporated into the final report and recommendations.

3. Public Comments

One member of the public was present and voiced agreement with the notion that extending Route 305 would divert traffic from overcrowded roads and would help the system in general.

4. Establishment of Corridor Vision and Goals

The study team asked the AC to identify preliminary visions and goals for the Route 305 corridor. One preliminary vision for Route 305 corridor is a 4-lane boulevard from Blue Hills Ave. to Interstate 91. The committee feels a great sensitivity toward the concerns of Windsor residents along Route 305; however, Bloomfield is still seeking relief of the pressure on its arterials due to development in Windsor.

The committee pointed out that north of Bloomfield center there are no east/west roadway connections. Historically, an east-west connection from Route 305 at East Newberry Road to Route 187 was considered however the U.S. Navy owns a lot of this land and development options were not furthered at that time.

5. Next Steps

Jennifer Carrier informed the committee that a summary of the two meetings would be prepared for both committees to review. The next Bloomfield Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for January 23, 2008 at 7 PM.

John Colman moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.