

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106

**Route 305 Advisory Committee Meeting
Bloomfield Town Hall
Wednesday, May 28, 2008
7:00 PM**

**Final Endorsed by
Committee 10/22/08**

Committee Members

Jon Colman
Jonathan Thiesse
Thom Hooper
Al LeFebvre
John F. Sheehan
Barry Berson
Randy Lavigne
Gail O'Keefe

Organization

Bloomfield Town Council
Bloomfield Engineering
Bloomfield P&Z
Former Council Member
Bloomfield Town Council
TPZ Bloomfield
Business Owner
Economic Development Commission

Others

Melanie Zimyeski
Grayson Wright
Katie Driscoll
Tom Maziarz
Joe Merritt

ConnDOT
ConnDOT
ConnDOT
CRCOG
Bloomfield Town Council

Project Team

Jennifer Carrier
Emily Moos
Rod Bascom
Jeff Parker

CRCOG
CRCOG
CHA
CHA

Public Attendees

Fred Hesketh
Nick Lavieri
Chris Squires
Fannie Gabriel
Margaret Cunnane

Kamatics Corporation
Connecticut Bicycle Coalition
TPZ Bloomfield
Interested Citizen

Meeting Purpose: Route 305 Corridor Study – Local Advisory Committee meeting to present future traffic conditions to the committee and brainstorm future improvement alternatives.

1. Welcome and Progress Update

Jennifer Carrier of CRCOG led introductions and updated the committee on progress since the January 23rd, 2008 Advisory Committee meeting. The following summarizes Ms. Carrier's update:

- Steering committee meeting was held on March 7, 2008. Thom Hooper, Jon Colman and Al LeFebvre represented the Bloomfield Advisory Committee and there were four individuals from Windsor. This meeting was to discuss critical corridor issues, the overall build out analysis and corridor vision.
- Project Team began brainstorming alternative concepts.
- First public involvement meeting was held in early April. In addition to most of the committee members, approximately 15 individuals representing residential and business components along the corridor attended. Felt it went well and were able to educate individuals on the study process and findings as well as listen to their concerns and comments. One of the hands-on exercises identified that safety and an extension of Route

305 were key goals. The meeting allowed us insight on existing corridor concerns and some shorter-term improvements. And we also received some good questions related to advancing pieces of the study.

- The public meeting in Windsor was also held in early April. There were close to 30 residents in attendance and many of their concerns were related to traffic circulation and safety along the corridor.

Jennifer Carrier asked for public comments up front and mentioned that there would be another chance to comment after the brainstorming session. No public comments were offered at this time.

2. Adoption of Minutes (Meeting on January 23, 2008)

A motion was made by Al LeFebvre, seconded by Jon Colman, to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2008 meeting as written. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Future Baseline Conditions Year 2030 and Identification of Critical Areas

Jeff Parker briefly reviewed the existing corridor findings and presented the future baseline conditions for the year 2030. Critical areas where improvements will be needed were also identified.

A member of the committee asked for clarification on the anticipated growth percentages in the western end of Route 305. The project team explained that the traffic model uses a number of variables to determine future volumes including travel behavior and picking the shortest route. Volumes at the western end of the route are currently smaller, so any percentage increases will be larger than the rest of the corridor.

A committee member asked for clarification on whether these projections were based on twenty or thirty years out. The Project Team stated that this was a 20-year projection to the year 2030 using a baseline traffic that includes the newest present-day developments.

Another committee member stressed that Woodland Avenue is the only North-South connection and that without another alternative for that traffic, Woodland will continue to see problems. A member of the public added that there is no cross-town artery north of Mills Lane which becomes an emergency vehicle access issue.

4. BRAINSTORMING

Jeff Parker introduced the brainstorming section of the meeting. Jennifer Carrier noted that after the brainstorming exercise is complete, the consultants and project team will go through the costs and feasibility of improvements as well as maintain discussions with ConnDOT. Jeff Parker presented Route 305 Extension Alternatives and Traffic, Circulation and Safety improvements including pedestrian and bicycle improvements as well as traffic calming and gateways. The following summarizes the committee's comments on each of these improvement concepts and areas:

Route 305 Extension Alternatives:

Concept A: Extension via East Newberry Road, Route 187, West Newberry Road with new grade-separated railroad crossing. The project team mentioned that this is the only concept involving a grade-separated crossing.

Key Comment Summary and Discussion:

- The committee felt that this option was too far north and that there was not enough of a savings in travel time which would force people to use Blue Hills Avenue Extension.
- Other roads will move emergency vehicles just as quickly and a quicker option needs to be implemented.
- A new subdivision just west of the railroad has been approved for development.
- Suggestion that closure of the Day Hill railroad crossing should be considered. Day Hill Road could dead end at the Railroad tracks also eliminating a traffic light.
- If a new segment of roadway from East Newberry Road, northwesterly to Route 187, was constructed the western end of Old Windsor Road (Route 305) would likely see a reduction in traffic – effectively abandoning the existing roadway.
- The change in ownership of existing Navy Property may now permit a connection between East Newberry Road and Route 187. Kaman public attendee will provide us with appropriate contact information for project team to follow up on.

Concept B: Extension via Old Windsor Road, West Dudley Town Road, Peters Road with new at-grade railroad crossing.

Key Comment Summary and Discussion:

- This concept requires the least amount of new construction
- Has already been identified in the existing town plan
- Alignment would be relatively distant from other east-west routes
- May improve Woodland Avenue / Wintonbury Avenue / Jerome Avenue turning movements. The new route could place vehicles directly onto Route 189 which would go directly through Bloomfield Center.
- Should not present huge railroad safety issues as this is the end of the rail line. The existing rail operator observes 12-20 train movements per day which may stem from “jockeying” trains in and out of storage yard to the north (train operator also notes 6 customers on the line and 6-10 trains per day)
- Although limited by a reservoir west of 189, suggest possible grade-separated railroad crossing to cross both railroad and Route 189 and feed back into Route 189 from the west.
- Environmental implications will be the biggest challenge to this concept
- Alternative may see a heavy westbound left turning volume at Route 189 and new roadway which may warrant a traffic signal.
- Historically the length of rail from Park Avenue to Wintonbury Avenue was a good design tool for understanding maximum railroad length. Further review indicates this length is approximately 2500 feet.
- The project team will meet with other stakeholders such as ConnDOT and the rail operator to become more familiar with rail operation in the general area.

Concept C1&C2: C1: Extension via Old Windsor Road, Off-line segments, Woodland Avenue, Mills Lane using existing at-grade railroad crossing.
C2: Extension via Old Windsor Road, Off-line segments, Mills Lane using existing at-grade railroad crossing – this concept avoids Woodland Avenue, but is limited by residential impacts.

Key Comment Summary and Discussion:

- This concept goes directly through flood retention areas.
- Concerns expressed regarding roadway alignment opposite Ashley Court, which currently sees safety issues.
- Concerns related to the residential impacts of crossing through the Pinney Road and Mills Lane subdivisions.
- May not end up being used as an alternative to Route 189 for vehicles destined for the Bloomfield Center.
- Utilizes the existing at-grade rail crossing at Mills Lane
- May be too far south of a concept

Route 305 Traffic, Circulation & Safety Issues:

Gold’s Gym Area: Concept to provide a westbound left turn lane on Route 305 where narrow roadway conditions tends to produce queues

Key Comment Summary and Discussion:

- The current culvert in the immediate area is undersized and floods on occasion
- It is desirable to accommodate bicycles on this section of narrow roadway for cycling commuters along this route. Concepts could include accommodating a 4’ wide shoulder for cyclists.
- Manhole covers on this stretch of roadway (traveling eastbound on Route 305) are extremely deep (nearly 3” drop) and should be addressed for safety

East Newberry Road Curve: Mid- to long-term improvements at this section of roadway are to standardize this curve for safety purposes and correct the skewed intersection of East Newberry Road and Route 305.

Key Comment Summary and Discussion:

- Measures should be taken to fix this curve
- Trees or other planting would be desirable to block the setting sun for westbound traffic as well as for traffic calming to provide a sense of visual enclosure
- Concepts for improvement here may open up economic development opportunities on freed-up parcels of land with new state roadway exposure
- A roundabout may not work well at this location because of the volumes and higher percentage of truck traffic. Roundabouts are good for higher volumes of left turning traffic and, although mountable aprons can be installed, can be difficult for truck movements.

Old Iron Ore Road: Realign both legs of the intersection with Route 305 to eliminate slight offset and check on signal warrant for this intersection

Key Comment Summary and Discussion:

- The issues at this intersection do come up at Kaman public safety meetings. Issues is more with volume of cars leaving and limited opportunities to turn left onto Route 305 making for compromised decisions which lead to accidents.
- The ownership of Old Iron Ore Road (north of Route 305) was not known.
- A traffic signal that runs just during peak hours may be useful in this location.

Other Comments and Questions:

- A committee member asked whether at Route 189 and Route 305 are there any plans to provide double left turn lanes to keep traffic queues down. The Project Team explained that level of services showed this intersection moving well and that the model is not seeing any pressing issues for the future. Specifics will however be identified when future 2030 traffic volumes – with development – is modeled.
- The Windsor Advisory Committee will be meeting next week and we'll know more at that time about their thoughts improvement options. It was not been determined whether a four-lane roadway will be warranted or is an option on Route 305.

Windsor General Thoughts on Improvements:

Jennifer Carrier reviewed the CRCOG 2005 study findings related to the Day Hill Road Interchange (Interchange 38). The preferred interchange improvement provides a direct connection from Day Hill Road to I-91 northbound by the construction of spans over Route 75 and I91. She also reviewed one brainstorming concept that will be discussed with the Windsor Advisory Committee – providing a direct off-ramp from I-91 northbound to Day Hill Road.

5. Public Comments

As many members of the public commented during the brainstorming session, no public comments were brought forth at this time.

6. Next Steps

Jennifer Carrier informed the Committee that the Project Team will now work on the concepts a bit more by identifying measurable impacts (wetlands, ROW, etc.), potential costs and understanding railroad crossing implications. The team will also take the summer to also analyze the future development traffic and model what impacts future improvements may have on Route 305.

A second Steering Committee meeting to discuss concepts along the entire corridor will also be held, prior to meeting with the Bloomfield Advisory Committee meeting. The next Advisory Committee meeting will likely be in the early Fall.

7. Other Business - No other business was brought to the attention of the Committee.

8. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.