

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106

**Route 305 Advisory Committee Meeting
Bloomfield Town Hall
Wednesday, April 15, 2009
7:00 PM**

**Draft until endorsed by
Advisory Committee**

Committee Members

Thom Hooper
Randy LaVigne
John F. Sheehan

Organization

Bloomfield P&Z
Business Owner
Bloomfield Town Council

Others

Melanie Zimyeski
Grayson Wright

ConnDOT
ConnDOT

Project Team

Jennifer Carrier
Lia Huang
Rod Bascom
Jeff Parker
Dave Sousa
Casey Hardin

CRCOG
CRCOG
CHA
CHA
CHA
CHA

Public Attendees

Mayor Sydney T. Schulman
Fred Hesketh
Margaret Cunnane

Town of Bloomfield
The Journal of Bloomfield
Resident

Meeting Purpose: Route 305 Corridor Study – Local Advisory Committee meeting to discuss feedback received at the public informational meetings, review refinements to the potential future improvement alternatives, and discuss potential land use and development strategies.

1. Welcome and Progress Update

Jennifer Carrier led introductions and updated the committee on progress since the December 16, 2008 Advisory Committee meeting. The following summarizes Ms. Carrier's update:

- Public informational meetings were held in Bloomfield and Windsor
- A meeting was held with ConnDOT to discuss alternatives in Windsor. It was decided that a new interchange on I-91 was not feasible and that modifications to Route 305 would be the best option from cost, wetland and property impact perspectives.
- Cost, wetland and property impacts for Bloomfield alternatives were reviewed.
- A meeting was held with Kaman to discuss the preliminary alternatives under consideration.

2. Adoption of Minutes (Meeting on December 16, 2008)

A motion was made by John Sheehan, seconded by Randy LaVigne, to accept the minutes of the December 16, 2008 meeting as written. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Open House Briefing

The planning process and potential alternatives were explained and presented at both the Bloomfield and Windsor public informational meetings. In Bloomfield, residents in the Brighton Meadows and Castlewood Drive areas were concerned with increased noise and pollution associated with a potential extension of Route 305. Bloomfield property owners also noted high vehicle speeds on Route 305 near Flyer Row. In Windsor, property owners expressed concern over potential future impacts a widened Route 305 may introduce, such as turning movements into and out of driveways if a center median was constructed.

John Sheehan inquired about where the resident who commented on the need of a Route 305 extension lived and whether that could be included in the meeting notes. The Project Team felt that resident was from the Castlewood Drive area and will modify the notes as such.

4. Route 305 Potential Alternatives: On-Going Discussion

Jeff Parker presented the refinements that have been made to the potential alternatives, incorporating public and stakeholder comments. The following summarizes the discussion that took place:

Thom Hooper inquired about ConnDOT's opinion related to textured pavements. Grayson Wright mentioned that there are other installations on State roads. Rod Bascom noted that the use is becoming more frequent. Dave Sousa described the option of using the new thermoplastic technology used in place of stamped asphalt. John Sheehan questioned the traction of textured pavement treatments. Rod Bascom and Dave Sousa agreed to include more detail on the treatments in the final report.

Improvements associated with a sheltered left turn in the westbound direction near Gold's Gym were reviewed and a raised center median was introduced. The center median is in keeping with corridor traffic calming, introduces a gateway into Bloomfield and is in line with improvement alternatives within the town of Windsor.

Randy LaVigne asked whether the driveways on the south side of Route 305 between Belden Road and East Newberry Road are proposed to be extended. Jeff confirmed that the alternative does include the extension of these three driveways. Jennifer Carrier mentioned the potential to improve access management by combining driveways in this area. Rod Bascom felt that there is a possibility that a shared drive could be within the existing right-of-way. One potential could include a Belden Road entry for the property in the southeast corner of Route 305 and Belden Road and a combined driveway for the remaining two properties on Route 305.

Randy LaVigne questioned whether additional lanes will be proposed for the intersection near Blue Hills Avenue and commented that access to the existing gasoline / convenience mart in the northeast corner is achieved by using the left existing Route 305 / Blue Hills Avenue southbound left turn lane. Jeff Parker stated that additional lanes were not necessary under future conditions. The final approved site plan will be forwarded to CHA for their review.

John Sheehan requested information on how the 2019 estimated cost numbers were developed. Jeff Parker explained that ConnDOT's 6% inflation factor was applied to the 2009 cost estimate. Rod Bascom mentioned that this methodology will be included in the final report.

5. Land Use / Development Strategies

Dave Sousa presented a potential land use and development strategy for the intersection of Blue Hills Avenue and Route 305. Thom Hooper agreed that multiuse development in this area makes sense and noted that a similar strategy is being considered in the town center.

6. Public Comments

A member of the public mentioned that it would be easier for public attendees to follow the meeting with a set of handouts.

7. Next Steps

Jennifer Carrier explained that the next steps include finalizing the study report, creating an executive summary, issuing a final newsletter, and holding one final public meeting in each town. Prior to finalizing the study report, feedback from stakeholders will be incorporated and one final Steering Committee meeting will be held.

Additionally, two visualizations will be created for each town. The Bloomfield Advisory Committee members agreed that the Bloomfield visualizations should be created for the proposed East Newberry Road intersection with Route 305 and the proposed at-grade rail crossing.

The Committee agreed that the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Commission should be present at the final public meeting. The final public meeting in Bloomfield was tentatively set for the scheduled Town Council meeting on Monday, June 8, 2009.

The final step for study completion is endorsement by the Town Council.

8. Other Business

Randy LaVigne inquired about the timeline for implementation of the suggested improvements to the section of Route 305 between East Newberry Road and Belden Road. Jennifer Carrier explained that right-of-way will need to be reviewed, detailed design plans would need to be prepared and funding secured which altogether could take approximately 7 years. Ms. Carrier continued that having a champion to further advance alternatives from the study in combination with the Town endorsed study will help secure funding.

Fred Hesketh asked about the timeline for implementation of the potential at-grade rail crossing. Jennifer Carrier remarked that introducing a new at-grade rail crossing is a lengthy process. A lot of preliminary groundwork has been completed in this study, but many more steps need to be completed to construct this type of crossing such as endorsement by the DOT Commissioner and approval by the CT Legislature.

John Sheehan questioned which rail crossing type would be easier to approve, at-grade or grade-separated. Rod Bascom commented that approval of the grade-separated option would be easier with ConnDOT, but more difficult with the DEP due to the increased wetlands impacts. Mr. Bascom continued that the next step is an Environmental Impact Study / Assessment comparing both crossing types. Grayson Wright mentioned that ConnDOT places higher value on environmental impacts than cost comparisons.

9. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.