

Route 305 Windsor Public Information Session Meeting Overview

*Windsor Town Hall – Council Chambers
275 Broad Street, Windsor, CT
June 10, 2009; 6:00 PM*

Public Attendees - Residents

Judith Austin
Philip Austin
Alma Beck
Marie Bendzano
Jim Bennett
Theresa Bennett
Paul Bordonaro
Richard Bradshaw
Beatrice Breen
Barbara Burns
Dean Clavet
Thuom Clavet
Fred Ebecle
Evan Faeman
Allan Ferry
Lisa Ferry
Mark Henson
Fred Hesketh
Marcia Hinckley
Regina Jachym
Karen James
Doug King
Margaret Laakso
Veikko Laakso
John Merrill
Aaron Rathbun
June Urbon
Elsie Wassell
Richard Wassell
John Zappulla

Others

Melanie Zimyeski – ConnDOT
Katherine Rattan – ConnDOT
Jim Burke – Economic Development



Committee Members

Eric Barz – Town Planner
Tom Lenehan – Town Engineer
Jim Martin – Economic Development
Mike O’Brien – Zoning Commission

Project Team

Rod Bascom – CHA
Jeff Parker – CHA
Jennifer Carrier - CRCOG
Lia Huang – CRCOG
Casey Hardin- CHA
Karen Stewartson - CRCOG

Meeting Purpose: Third Public Open House to present Route 305 draft recommendations.

Open House

Attendees had the opportunity to circulate around the room, reviewing boards and maps summarizing the study findings and recommended alternatives while talking with study team and advisory committee members prior to the meeting presentation at 6:30PM.

Jennifer Carrier welcomed attendees and gave an overview of the corridor study purpose, process, and scope of work.

Draft Recommendations Presentation

Rod Bascom presented the draft localized improvements and long-term alternatives while addressing comments from the public received during this and past open houses including safety, access, and impacts along the corridor.

Jennifer Carrier explained the next steps of the project: to incorporate comments from the final public meetings into the draft plan, meet once more with stakeholders (including ConnDOT), obtain endorsement from both Bloomfield and Windsor, obtain CROG Policy Board endorsement, and work to with town officials and project champions to secure monies and advance the localized improvements.

Public Comments

The following summarizes questions and comments heard during the public comment period.

- A resident questioned the timeline for implementation. Rod Bascom replied that with the support of the municipalities and champions, the localized improvements could be implemented in 5-10 years. The longer term improvements will need further discussion, design, and coordination and will take several more years to implement.
- One resident expressed concern over the property acquisition associated with the wide median option of the long term improvements and questioned the motivation behind shifting the property impacts to affect only the south side of Route 305. Rod Bascom emphasized that the concept is only one of several other options. Jennifer Carrier explained that many alternative solutions were reviewed in the study process including a potential new interchange on Interstate 91. The study was charged with evaluating safety and mobility of the corridor and the options presented in this draft plan are those that stakeholders, advisory committee members and project team member felt were the most feasible. One of these options includes a four lane section with no median; although this alternative is not expected to require any full property acquisitions, it will not preserve the neighborhood setting or address overall corridor safety to the extent that the options including a median are potentially able to. Ms. Carrier continued that implementation of these long term improvements will not by any means occur right away; these alternatives will serve as a starting point for a future analysis should traffic problems exacerbate. Jennifer Carrier added that the wide median option shifted impacts to the south side of Route 305 in order to minimize the total number of impacted properties. It was also noted that widening equally on both sides with a wide median was evaluated and is still a potential. This will be reflected in the final report.

Rod Bascom mentioned that comments and concern over the presented alternatives are important and will be noted. Feedback from the public is an important part of the study process.

- An attendee suggested discouraging traffic on Bloomfield Avenue by directing traffic to Day Hill Road. Rod Bascom mentioned that Interchange 38 on Interstate 91 is currently being reviewed by ConnDOT; changes to this interchange may alter driver behavior. Mr. Bascom continued that Route 305 is a minor arterial and preventing vehicles from using it may create traffic issues on Interstate 91, which would be unacceptable to ConnDOT.
- A resident commented that widening Route 305 and acquiring properties is not a given. Rod Bascom commented that the plan presents several options. He added that implementation of any long term alternative is many years in the future.
- One resident questioned if his property on the south side of Route 305 will be impacted by the extended merge near Brookview Road. Rod Bascom explained that a painted median is recommended for this roadway segment and that the property in question will not be affected.
- An attendee noted that area residents have a difficult time exiting their driveways and asked if signal timing could be coordinated or if a center lane could be added to the plan in lieu of center medians. The attendee also felt that improvements to help move traffic through the corridor will increase the difficulty in exiting driveways. Jeff Parker replied that the signal timing along the corridor was reviewed, but the existing signals are too far away from each other to coordinate gaps. The resident then asked whether a traffic signal could be added at Brewster Street. Rod Bascom explained that this intersection does not meet the necessary signal warrants and adding an unwarranted signal may cause additional safety issues.

Rod Bascom added that center lanes increase conflict potential which would also raise additional safety concerns.

- Another resident remarked that she needs to allow extra time to exit her driveway during peak traffic times. Jeff Parker noted that slowing vehicles down will help with driveway exit times since a smaller gap is needed with slower approaching vehicles. Additionally, if a four lane section is needed in the future, the median options provide a safer alternative since conflict points are reduced and drivers will only need to navigate one direction of traffic at a time.
- A resident described an accident that occurred in the corridor. Another resident felt that extending the merge lane near Brookview Road will reduce accidents in the corridor. She also thought that the four lane section may encourage vehicles to speed and mentioned that she does not care for additional trees in the neighborhood. She added that a truck has driven up on her lawn in the past. Jeff Parker remarked that the accident histories have been reviewed in order to identify issues along the corridor. The improvement plan has been designed to influence behaviors to address these issues. Mr. Parker added that restriping the road with narrower lanes will help slow vehicles down.
- One attendee questioned the current speed limits along Route 305. Rod Bascom explained that speed limits are set by ConnDOT and road classifications, access, and land use are a few factors which influence their decisions.
- A resident questioned how long the left turn lanes in the recommended localized improvements will be. Rod Bascom answered that the design is in the planning phase and detailed design will include calculations to determine the appropriate length. At this time, the left turn lanes are shown as 50 feet in length for planning purposes only.
- Another resident asked what action might happen on Route 305 in the next five years. Jennifer Carrier replied that CRCOG will work with the towns to advance short term improvement concepts. Ms. Carrier further explained that Federal funds are awarded through a competitive process and can be difficult to obtain. If funding is acquired, it could be applied to the localized improvements.

Jennifer Carrier wrapped up the open house by thanking everyone for attending and noted that more information may be found on the project website. Any further questions and/or comments may be addressed to Ms. Carrier via phone or email.

The meeting concluded at 7:45 PM however some members of the public continued to meet and talk with the Advisory Committee members and Project Team members.