

MEETING NOTES
Virtual Workshop #1 – Introduction
Waterbury West Main Street Corridor Study
Tuesday January 12, 2021 via GoToWebinar, 5-7 pm

PROJECT NAME: Waterbury West Main Street Corridor Study
PANELISTS: Mark Vertucci (F&O), Matthew Skelly (F&O), Katherine Patch (F&O) Lesley Barewin (NVCOG), Christian Meyer (NVCOG), Judy Mancini (City of Waterbury)
SUBMITTED BY: Mark G. Vertucci, PE, PTOE

This meeting was held to introduce the public to the project and obtain initial input to inform the study. The meeting began with Mark Vertucci and Matthew Skelly from Fuss and O'Neill, and Lesley Barewin of NVCOG introducing the project goals, objectives, scope and schedule. A moderated conversation followed between the project team and the public during the last half of the meeting. The following is a summary of strengths, weaknesses, and general comments as they relate to the study corridor:

Overall Comments about the Corridor

- General concerns about safety on the roadway and the need for enhanced police enforcement.
- Lighting was brought up as a concern. There are many dark areas along West Main Street. Appropriately scaled lighting should be included in the recommendations of this project as it pertains to traffic/bicycle/pedestrian safety.
- Parking availability (both on and off street) is a concern throughout the corridor.
- Accessibility/ADA requirements on sidewalks and ramps are a concern throughout the corridor.
- Study should recommend street trees where it's possible.
- Fewer driveway curb cuts to businesses are better for safety. Study will look into recommendations for better driveway access management.
- TIGER project has been completed on Freight and Meadow Streets. Recommendations of the West Main Street Study will build off the recent bicycle, pedestrian, roadway and streetscape improvements completed in the area.
- Storm event flooding happens regularly, especially between Route 8 and Thomaston Avenue, and under the railroad overpass.
- Store fronts and facades along the corridor could use an update and better continuity. While largely out of the scope of this study, it was stated that recommendations could be made to businesses from a planning perspective.

Route 8 to Railroad Overpass

Strengths

- A mural should be considered on the Samuel K. Beamon Bridge over the Naugatuck River.
- A mural and lighting should be considered on the Route 8 bridge structure over West Main Street.

Weaknesses

- Queuing related to the eastbound left turns before the traffic signal at Thomaston Avenue.
- Frequent and wide curb cuts.

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- Minimal shoulders and snow shelf.
- Sidewalks are in poor condition, not ADA compliant.
- Lacking traffic calming measures and bike lanes.
- Lacking green space/streetscape along the roadway.
- Lacking illumination under the railroad overpass, feels unsafe for pedestrians.
- Railroad overpass aesthetics are poor and should be coordinated with the DOT who are replacing the bridge.
- Storm flooding along the south side of West Main Street, causing drivers to avoid using the right travel lane.
- Homeless population present in the vicinity of Thomaston Avenue is of concern.
 - Response to this comment was given that this is out of the scope of this project. The focus of the study efforts will be on how to improve the design of the roadway within the public right of way.

Railroad Overpass to Meadow Street

Strengths

- Travel lanes are wide enough to potentially support the addition of bike lanes.

Weaknesses

- Parking is hard to find in this area.
 - It was noted that the City is in the process of adding a new municipal surface parking lot on North Main Street, just north of the Green.
- There is a long stretch of road between Thomaston Avenue and the Big Apple Motel that has no crosswalk. A new actuated pedestrian crosswalk with warning lights should be considered between Sperry Street and the motel.
- Queuing and sight distance at the intersection of West Main Street and Sperry Street, this intersection has a history of crashes.
- Railroad bridge has low clearance and the lighting and sight distance is poor.
 - Response to this comment was that the State is in the process of designing a new railroad bridge that will replace the existing structure.
- Drainage concerns under the bridge, ponding turns to ice and creates dangerous areas on the road and sidewalk.

General

- Allowing eastbound left turns onto Willow Street was suggested to eliminate the need for vehicles to turn left onto Sperry and travel up to Johnson Street to get to Willow Street.
- This section was stated to potentially benefit from traffic calming measures such as a decrease of travel lane widths.
- The sign at the former 7-Eleven has been taken down, it is anticipated that a new occupant could soon move into this building.
- There was a comment regarding upgrades to Judd Street between Freight Street and West Main Street. Response was given that improvements to Judd Street were addressed as part of the Freight Street project.

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Meadow Street to the Green

Strengths

- Median islands were identified as an opportunity for aesthetic enhancements to the corridor.

Weaknesses

- The Waterbury Baptist Ministries has a very popular food pantry that lines up on the sidewalk, and there's not enough sidewalk space for folks waiting.
- Speeding vehicles eastbound toward the Green.
- Abundance of concrete and striped median islands in the road along with excessive pavement width.
- Crosswalks are weathered and worn; stamped crosswalks would offer higher visibility and an effort towards place making.

General

- Opportunity to link improvements on Freight and Meadow Street.
 - Response to this comment was given that the streetscape and bike lane improvements on Freight and Meadow Streets was completed under the Tiger project. This project will provide an opportunity to extend those improvements onto West Main Street.

The Green

Strengths

- Turn restrictions do not apply to buses at the West Main/East Main/North Main/South Main intersection.

Weaknesses

- Regional bus accommodations are lacking - a shelter with ample seating and a public restroom would be beneficial.
 - Specifically, the bus to New Haven that picks up by St. John's / the old Mattatuck really needs better accommodations.
 - The bus is regularly late by over half an hour, so especially during the winter it can be tough there.
- Crosswalks are weathered and worn; stamped crosswalks would offer higher visibility and an effort towards place making.

Stakeholder/Interview Candidates

- Marc DePietro volunteered to be part of the stakeholder interviews as he is the owner of Boru's Bar and Grill at 357 West Main Street.