

MEETING NOTES
Virtual Workshop #2 – Introduction
Waterbury West Main Street Corridor Study
Wednesday, April 14, 2021 via Zoom, 5-7 pm

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

This meeting was held to update the public on the findings of the existing conditions analysis and public involvement process completed as part of the study thus far. In addition, an interactive workshop session was held during the second half of the meeting to brainstorm possible improvements and solutions along each segment of the corridor. The following is a summary of comments as they relate to the study corridor:

Route 8 to Railroad Overpass

- The new Jackson Street extension has begun to cause additional congestion during both the morning and afternoon peak hours. It was mentioned that many people traveling northbound ignore the left turn restriction and it led to a crash recently.
 - Geometric changes to the intersection to prohibit the left turn out were noted as a possible solution and it was also noted that any changes would need to be coordinated through CTDOT.
- The westbound right turn at Riverside Street was reported to have extensive queuing that can extend as far back at Jackson Street, causing further congestion at the new intersection.
 - Coordination with CTDOT and potential signal timing changes were noted as possible solutions.
- The bus stop at the fish market sees a lot of ridership. People do not have a space to queue and cross the street, nor do buses have a place to pull out of traffic to pick up and drop riders off.
 - A curb recession here could provide a bus pull off and a bus shelter would provide space for riders to queue. Crosswalks and ADA compliant curb ramps would make this stop more accessible.
- Drivers traveling westbound under the railroad bridge towards Thomaston Avenue often create two lanes of travel/queueing. The expansive pavement width and lack of pavement markings causes driver confusion.
 - Better lane definition, using pavement markings, curbing, and other vertical elements, were noted as a possible solution in this area.
- This area was noted to be too heavily traveled to be suitable for a road diet. All intersection approach lanes at the Thomaston Avenue intersection are needed.
- It was noted by residents, as well as a Google maps image, that a crosswalk should be considered west of the railroad bridge, in the vicinity of Commercial Street. There are currently no crosswalks available for pedestrians in a long stretch between Thomaston Avenue and the Apple Motel.

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- A crosswalk, potentially an actuated crosswalk to increase visibility for eastbound vehicles, was noted as a possible solution.
- It was noted that drivers have difficulty making a right turn out of the eastern access driveway of the Walgreens plaza. Landscaping and parked cars along the property frontage were reported to obstruct driver's sight distance.
 - A potential solution to this issue would be having the City reach out to the owner of the plaza to alter landscape and potentially restrict parking along the property frontage.

Railroad Overpass to Meadow Street/Willow Street

- It was noted that the railroad bridge is an eye sore and trucks have gotten stuck under it a few times over the years.
 - It was noted by Jonathan Dean of CTDOT that in the rehabilitation of the bridge, the height will remain the same due to the impact of the rail line and aesthetic improvements can potentially be incorporated, if recommended.
- It was noted that the westbound travel lane that traverses under the railroad bridge is confusing as it “goes from two lanes to one lane”. In actuality, West Main Street from Willow Street/Meadow Street to the railroad bridge provides one westbound travel lane.
 - A potential solution to this confusion would be more/refreshed pavement markings to delineate the space between the travel lane, parking lane, and potential bicycle lanes.
- Eastbound left turns are not permitted, except for buses, at the Willow Street/Meadow Street intersection; however it was noted that drivers often make this left turn illegally.
 - A potential solution to this was noted to be increased police enforcement
 - A capacity/safety analysis should also be conducted to determine if this left turn can be allowed in the future.
- With regard to the recently closed 7-Eleven at Willow/Meadow Street, the central business district does not support their new store model so it is unlikely that they will reopen. A new occupant will need to be permitted through the City of Waterbury who can then coordinate the closure of the parcel's southern driveway on West Main Street. Combining the 7-11 property with the adjacent property to the east would be helpful for the future developer of this parcel as it would enable the construction of a driveway on West Main Street further east of the intersection.
- It was noted that improvements should be considered for the vehicles that travel this area currently, before multi-modal considerations are brought to West Main Street. A “wider space” is needed at the intersection of West Main Street/Willow Street/Meadow Street.

Meadow Street/Willow Street to the Green

- This section of the corridor has been nicknamed “the runway” due to its expansive width and long straight section.
 - It is anticipated that three travel lanes in each direction will not be warranted based on the capacity analysis and this section could be reallocated to incorporate dedicated bus lanes, bike lanes, street trees, and/or wider sidewalks.
- It was noted that crossing so many lanes makes it difficult to turn left out of the properties and the Central Avenue left turn restriction restricts movement to the east, inadvertently promoting the Sperry Street “cut through”.

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- A potential solution to this was noted to be to create safer turns onto West Main Street for pedestrians and motorists from Central Avenue as well as St. John's Church. This will be something to note in the analysis.
- It was noted that on street parking in this six lane section of roadway would be a better use of the space than bus lanes.

The Green

- It was noted that parking is limited around The Green.
 - A solution in this area will be the public surface lot currently planned by the City between Prospect Street and North Main Street.
 - Angled parking spaces along The Green were also discussed as a potential solution.
 - Support for bicycle lanes was expressed but it was noted that they should not be implemented at the expense of on-street parking around The Green.
- It was noted that turn restrictions at the intersections and buses traversing The Green increases confusion and congestion. It was also noted that the turn restrictions are often violated at both the northeast and southeast intersections along The Green.
 - Turn restrictions throughout this section will be evaluated as part of the analysis and recommendations will be made regarding their rationality.
 - Wide sections of roadway were identified as placed where bus pull off locations could be implemented.
 - One-way circulation around The Green was also offered as a potential solution to provide order, as well as the potential to allocate existing space to bicycle lanes, bus lanes, bus shelters, parking, etc.
- It was noted that the circulation around the west side of The Green, in the vicinity of the monument, is less confusing with the amount of signalization and curb islands to direct traffic. Turning radii were noted to be tight for buses in this area and it was also noted to be unfriendly to a pedestrians due to the lack of crossing locations in this area.
 - A potential reconfiguration of this space was discussed including extending The Green west to provide access to the monument as was once proposed in the past. Vehicle traffic would then be routed around the west side of the monument. A wider Green would also provide more space for community events.