

Client: SCCOG Date: Tuesday, November 1, 2022
Meeting Date: Thursday, October 27, 2022 Prepared By: Katey Curran
Meeting Location: East Lyme High School Auditorium Job Number: 10369
Meeting Topic: Route 161 Corridor Study

ATTENDEES:

See attached sign in sheet.

RECORD OF MEETING MINUTES:

- I. Introduction from the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Government's (SCCOG's) Senior Advisor, Jim Butler
 - A. SCCOG received a grant from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) last year. This grant was used to hire BETA Group Inc. (BETA) to perform the Route 161 Corridor Study.
- II. Introduction from East Lyme's First Selectman, Kevin Seery
 - A. For the past several months the Town, SCCOG, CTDOT, transit providers, and BETA have had bimonthly virtual meetings to discuss the corridor study.
- III. PowerPoint presentation
 - A. Joe Rimiller, BETA's Project Manager, gave a presentation that included a project introduction, discussion of previous studies and upcoming projects, existing and future corridor conditions, and next steps. A recording of the presentation has been posted on the project website (www.route161corridorstudy.com).
- IV. Break Out Sessions
 - A. Following the presentation attendees were asked to a series of stations and discuss three topics with BETA's engineers and planners. These topics, spin-off questions from BETA, and responses provided by the community are summarized below.
 - B. What is working well on the Route 161 corridor?
 1. What destinations do you like to visit?
 - a. Downtown
 - b. Village Café (190 Flanders Road)
 2. What streetscape or landscape features do you like?
 - a. Streetlights
 3. What is your overall vision for the corridor?
 - a. A roundabout at the Oswegatchie Hills Road intersection.
 - b. A roundabout at the East Pattagansett Road intersection.
 - C. What challenges or opportunities would you like to see addressed from the perspective of a pedestrian, bicyclist, or transit user?
 1. Are there areas where sidewalks are needed?
 - a. East Pattagansett Road needs a sidewalk.

- b. Extend sidewalk on the east side of Route 161 between Penncove Road and Route 156 to better serve the residents of these streets.
 - c. Sidewalks are needed near Gorton Pond
 - d. Sidewalks are needed on the east side of the corridor in Niantic
 - e. Better walkability is needed
2. Are there areas where you have difficulty crossing the roadway?
- a. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) are needed in the Downtown Niantic section.
 - b. The Industrial Park Road/Chapman Woods Road intersection needs a pedestrian signal head.
3. Are there areas where bicycle facilities are needed?
- a. Realign/restripe Boston Post Road for better bike access.
 - b. Bike lanes are needed throughout the corridor.
 - c. Bike lanes should be considered in the four-lane section of the corridor between the high school and the Ford dealership.
4. Are there any improvements you would like to see made to transit services?
- a. Improvements are needed at the bus stop at Stop & Shop (248 Flanders Road)
- D. What challenges or opportunities would you like to see addressed from the perspective of a driver?
1. Are there areas where safety is a concern?
- a. Drivers exiting the driveway for the liquor store at the Industrial Park Road/Chapman Woods Road intersection don't have a traffic signal and drivers aren't sure when to go.
 - b. Consider jughandles to eliminate challenging left turn.
 - c. Drivers turning right out of Citgo at 200 Flanders Road don't look for oncoming traffic. Consider eliminating or improving a driveway.
 - d. Drivers exiting the Stop and Shop driveway onto Route 161 ignore the right turn only designation. Consider installing bollards to prevent unsafe left turns.
 - e. The southbound left turn lane from Route 161 onto Chapman Woods Road does not provide sufficient storage for queued vehicles.
 - f. There are two traffic signals on the Society Road approach to Rt 161. Are they both needed?
 - g. An exclusive left turn lane with protected traffic signal phasing is needed at the northbound left turn from Route 161 onto the Frontage Road to the I-95 ramps. Drivers currently make unexpected left turns. There is also too much delay for this movement.
2. Are there areas where vehicular congestion frustrates you?
- a. The number of lanes on I-395/I-95 SB heading towards U.S. Route 1 drops from three to one. It is confusing for motorists and congested.
 - b. When there is congestion or an issue on I-95 drivers use U.S. Route 1. They tend to be more aggressive due to frustration and more prone to cause crashes. More police enforcement would help. The upcoming improvements at the I-95 Exit 74 Interchange may also help.

- c. During the summer I-95 is more congested so drivers use U.S. Route 1 instead and there is excessive backup near the Route 161 intersection. Left turn storage lanes fill up and left turning traffic obstructs through lanes.
 - d. The traffic signals at the East Pattagansett Road and Roxbury Road intersections aren't always responsive to drivers.
 - e. It is difficult to turn out of Oak Hill Drive due to congestion and speeding.
 - f. Better traffic signal coordination is needed along the corridor.
3. Are there areas where you have difficulty parking?
 - a. Parking is challenging at Sift Bake Shop on Route 156 (185 Main Street).
 4. Are there any destinations that you have difficulty accessing?
 - a. It is a challenge making left turns out of businesses on the west side of the corridor between Industrial Park Road and Society Road.
 - b. It is difficult to make a left turn out of the Citgo Station at 200 Flanders Road.
 - c. A traffic signal needed is needed at the Laurel Hill Drive/Gateway Plaza intersection.
 - d. It is difficult to make an eastbound left turn from Hope Street onto Route 161 due to heavy volumes and limited gaps in traffic.
 - e. Trying to get in or out of driveways at Flanders Commons is difficult, especially when making a left turn. It is hard to find a gap in traffic on Route 161 or Route 1.
 - f. There are long delays for drivers trying to make a left turn from Clarks Lane onto Route 161. There is a 55+ community on Clarks Lane.
 - g. The signals on the Frontage Road near Costco are closely spaced but this will be addressed by the I-95 Interchange 74 project.
- E. General comments
- Better stormwater management is needed to prevent salt used to treat roads from getting into aquifers and ground water. This includes storm drains and tree filtration systems.
 - Native plants are needed to help pollinators.
 - More open space is needed for large trees to help with carbon reduction.