



**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: Attached

Date/Time: June 9, 2009 2 PM - 4 PM

Project No.: 10640.00

Place: CMRPC
Union Station, Worcester

Re: Worcester Regional Mobility Study –
Technical Committee Meeting

Notes taken by: VHB

AGENDA

- PIM 2 Back Brief
- Non-Roadway Alternatives
- Roadway Alternatives
- Next Steps
 - Additional roadway modeling and screening of alternatives
 - Public Workshop
 - O & M Plan Development

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING #2 BACK BRIEF

D. Cooke (VHB) opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Feedback from Public Informational Meeting #2 was reviewed by J. Wanat (VHB), including specific enhancements mentioned in the meeting for each transportation mode. Notes from the meeting are posted on the website. Several specific recommendations included:

- Flagg Street, Pleasant Street, and Salisbury Street are three corridors that should be considered for sidewalks (specifically the segment of Flag Street between Pleasant Street and Salisbury Street).
- Provide improved transit service and connections to destinations such as Worcester Regional Airport (Bus and Commuter Rail), the UMASS Campus, Union Station, and Greendale Mall.
- Improve pedestrian/bicycle accommodations at the following locations:
 - Highland Street at Park Avenue;
 - Chandler Street at Park Avenue;
 - Pleasant Street at Park Avenue;
 - Webster Square - Park Avenue at Mill Street (Route 12);

- Tatnuck Square;
- Lincoln Square; and
- Kelley Square.
- Enhance connections to generators (vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit) including:
 - Saint Vincent's Hospital;
 - Lincoln Plaza Shopping Center;
 - UMASS Campus (Belmont Street); and
 - DCU Center.
- Consider the following improvements to Webster Square:
 - Add pedestrian crossings at Park Ave/Mill Street (current crossing is difficult) and a midblock crossing on Park Ave north of Mill Street;
 - Close Webster Street between Mill Street and Cambridge Street or one-way flow (away from Cambridge Street);
 - Realign Cambridge Street so it intersects with Mill Street/Webster Street;
 - Realign Mill Street so it intersects Park Ave at less of a skew;
 - An east-west connector road would divert traffic away from Webster Square; and
 - Eliminate Mill Street and extend Cambridge Street to intersect Park Avenue at a T intersection and Main Street at a four-way intersection.
- Consider the following improvements to Tatnuck Square:
 - Reduce the number of intersections on Pleasant Street with one-way streets and access management; and
 - Tighten the intersection at Mower Street.
- Consider the following improvements to Lincoln Square:
 - Depress Belmont Street under Main Street to connect to Highland Street; and
 - Make the intersection at the police HQ more traversable for pedestrians.
- Consider the following improvements to Kelley Square:
 - Consider depressing Harding Street under Kelley Square (issues with the canal location need to be identified);
 - The movement from Vernon Street northbound to Madison Street needs to be more direct, this currently requires a left-turn at Green Street and the right-of-way is confusing;
 - Consider a bypass road connecting Madison Street to Harding Street;
 - Make Harding Street and Water Street two-way (on-street parking would be lost); and
 - Combine Harding Street with Water Street north of the square or combine Harding Street with Green Street.

- At I-290/I-90/I-395:
 - I-395 to Route 12/Southbridge Street is a dangerous hairpin merge, consider a signal at Church Street; and
 - I-395 to I-90 does not appear to be a popular connection given the constraints and the costs required to provide this direct connection (what's there could work much better with minor improvements and not a major new and expensive connection).

D. Cooke mentioned that we will update our working list and begin to bundle alternatives. For example, it was suggested that Webster Square improvements be integrated with the other regional alternatives.

NON-ROADWAY ALTERNATIVES

D. Cooke reviewed the non-roadway alternatives. Since many of the pedestrian, bike, and transit alternatives involve roadway infrastructure, it was suggested that this category be called “non-vehicular” alternatives.

For these alternatives, a fatal flaw level of concept advancement was discussed to ensure that the non-vehicular alternatives are given adequate attention and vetting. Much of the analysis can be done using the travel demand model (e.g. testing commuter rail extensions which have been voiced). In addition, CMRPC has developed much more detailed transit demand evaluations including daily ridership by routes and bus stop usage in the City of Worcester. D. Cooke and S. Mohanakrishnan (CMRPC) reviewed the GIS-graphics that summarize CMRPC's recent efforts which show where there are mobility issues and opportunities for transit routes. Bus route utilization and bus stop utilization graphics were reviewed.

Transit signal priority is one of the very important non-vehicle recommendations currently being pursued by WRTA. The primary corridors that have been discussed include Shrewsbury Street, Main Street, and Route 9 (Leicester). One additional corridor that could be included is Park Avenue (Route 9).

With regard to enhanced signage, Massport is taking the lead on designing and implementing an improved area-wide directional signage program to/from the airport. The City has also developed a series of wayfinding and signage recommendations including the development of districts throughout the City.

The non-vehicle alternatives that have been emphasized the most throughout the study and are emerging as potential study recommendations include: transit signal priority; extending the Blackstone Bikeway; on-road bicycle lanes on select roads; pedestrian and bicycle intersection evaluations; and potential commuter rail extensions.

ROADWAY ALTERNATIVES

J. Wanat provided an update on the roadway alternatives. As mentioned earlier, additional modeling is underway by CMRPC for the regional alternatives (Alternatives 1 to 9) to specify origin-destination patterns and desire lines. The initial modeling results presented at the last Technical Committee meeting indicated sufficient demand for each alternative to warrant further consideration and

refinement. J. Wanat reviewed the general concept of each alternative and provided an update on the following more specific alternatives based on ideas from the public meeting:

- Recommendations for Kelley Square:
 - Consider prohibiting left-turn from Madison Street to Green Street;
 - Consider prohibiting turn from Harding Street to Madison Street and/or right turn from Green Street to Madison Street;
 - Reconfigure islands /add pavement striping to improve through movement (Vernon St to Madison St) and pedestrian/bicycle experience; and
 - Retain the skew transition from Madison Street to Vernon Street for traffic calming benefits.

- Recommendations for a full interchange at I-290/Hope Avenue:
 - Consider adding measures to discourage traffic from using Heard Street as a cut-through; and
 - Webster Square improvements are needed to compliment the full interchange.

- Recommendations for Webster Square, a very important location and one of the largest bottlenecks:
 - Consider one-way traffic flow or closure of Webster Street at Cambridge Street;
 - Restripe Main Street and Mill Street to add capacity; and
 - Widen Mill Street at Main Street (take advantage of underutilized properties on Mill Street).

- Recommendations for at I-290/I-90/I-395:
 - A direct grade-separated connection from I-395 to I-90 is not possible without significant impacts and costs; rather, safety improvements integrated with the Route 12 widening project would notably improve the transition and are a more cost effective recommendation; and
 - To address safety and improve the connection, realign the I-395 northbound off-ramp to intersect Route 12 at Church Street , under signal control; this could compliment the ongoing widening effort on Route 12 (2 lanes to 4 lanes).

For the freight component, VHB will work with CMRPC's freight expert and get an update from EOT on the status of the Massachusetts State Freight and Rail Plan.

NEXT STEPS

D. Cooke reviewed the next steps for the study including travel demand modeling to test alternatives, and planning for the Public Workshop.

- Desire lines for the travel demand modeling will be ready late June. This effort will include more detailed assessments of trip origin-destination patterns through the study area on particular roadways, which the Technical Committee would like to review. This information will be sent to the Technical Committee prior to the Public Workshop that that it can be

presented at the workshop. CMRPC is also working on completing the “select link” analysis for the roadways modeled.

- A Public Workshop is planned for July 15th, location to be determined (*after the meeting the location was confirmed to be the Mount Carmel Church - Italian-American Cultural Center at 24 Mulberry Street, Worcester*). Similar to the two Public Informational Meetings, the workshop will be from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM. The format will include a brief study update followed by an open Scenario Planning session which will give attendees an opportunity to review and develop alternatives. The intent of the workshop is to bring together a wide range of perspectives in a public forum to help develop solutions to identified mobility issues. CMRPC will initiate a concerted effort to reach out to target groups to keep attendance as high as the two public informational meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM. The next Technical Committee meeting will be scheduled after the Public Workshop, and will switch to a morning time (10:00 AM to noon).

