



**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: Attached

Date/Time: July 15, 2009 5:30 -8:30 PM

Project No.: 10640.00

Place: Mount Carmel Church,
Worcester

Re: Worcester Regional Mobility Study – Public
Workshop

Notes taken by: VHB

AGENDA

- Welcome & Open House
- Public Workshop
 - Study Overview/Progress/Meeting Purpose
 - Scenario Planning Workshop
 - Station 1 – Pedestrian/Bicycle/Environment
 - Station 2 – Transit/ Commuter Rail/ Freight
 - Station 3 – Roadway Reconstruction (New)
 - Station 4 – Roadway Enhancements (Existing)
 - Scenario Planning Workshop Back-brief
 - Comments & Closing Remarks

PUBLIC WORKSHOP – STUDY OVERVIEW/PROGRESS/MEETING PURPOSE

D. Cooke (VHB) opened the meeting, provided an overview and status of the study. The overview included a review of the meeting purpose, study area, goals/objectives, public participation, and the study website.

The 15-month study is being run by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and is expected to be completed in late 2009. The first public meeting was held in November, focusing on issues and framework. The second public meeting was held in May, focusing on existing and future conditions. Another public meeting is planned at the end of the study.

The study website is a resource that has all documents and meeting notes available online (www.vhb.com/worcesterregionalmobility). There are surveys at the front desk to fill out and an online comment form on the website. Surveys can be left at the front desk, or mailed to CMRPC. Slides from this meeting, along with notes and a copy of the survey form will be posted to the website as well.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP – SCENARIO PLANNING WORKSHOP

D. Cooke informed the group that for the next 2 hours the meeting participants would rotate around to four stations where focused discussions on key issues will occur. At each station, study team members will facilitate the discussion, take notes, and annotate new ideas on the maps provided. Stations included:

- Station 1 – Pedestrian/Bicycle/Environment
- Station 2 – Transit/ Commuter Rail/ Freight
- Station 3 – Roadway Reconstruction (New)
- Station 4 – Roadway Enhancements (Existing)

The following feedback was provided at the four stations during the Scenario Planning Workshop:

STATION 1 - Pedestrian/Bicycle/Environment

- Consider striped on-road bicycle lanes:
 - June Street – Between Newton Square and Chandler Street
 - Chandler Street – Newton Square to Tatnuck Square
 - Park Avenue
 - Providence Street (near Route 146)
 - Pleasant Street (shared-use)
 - Mill Street (all the way from Park Ave)- convert to dedicated bike lane or bike path
- Enforcement is a problem (Safe Biking)
- Education is key
- Off Road Bike Lanes to consider:
 - Lake Ave North (parallel to Lake Ave)
 - Off Galena St around the Reservoir (Tatnuck to Holden)
 - Park Avenue
 - Hamilton Street
- Locations for pedestrian safety audits:
 - Belmont Street
 - Webster Square
 - Around public housing
 - Canal District/downtown
 - Route 146 intersection
 - Providence Street
 - Walk to Transit
 - Belmont Street/Plantation Street – near UMASS pedestrian signal
 - Park Avenue at Chandler Street and Park Avenue at Mill Street

- Lincoln Square
 - Shrewsbury Street at Belmont Street
- Bicycle Lane Candidates:
 - Richmond Avenue to Salisbury Street / Flagg Street (Assumption College)
 - Southbridge Street
 - Chandler Street (Worcester State College/Chandler Magnet School)
 - West Boylston Street
- Off-Road Trail candidates:
 - Mower Street at Olean Street
 - Greenwood Street connection
- Sidewalks and Safety Audit locations:
 - Gold Star Boulevard
 - Chandler Street (Jesse Burkett Field to Tatnuck Square)
 - Salisbury Street (Park Avenue to Holden Street)
 - Tatnuck Square
 - Newton Square
 - Chandler Street/Madison Street/Main Street
 - Clark Street
- Pedestrian/bicycle amenities:
 - Crosswalks
 - Plantation Street at Belmont Street
 - Lake Avenue at Belmont Street
- District -wide Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) participation
 - Flagg Street
 - Crossing at school bus stops – Richmond Avenue
 - Snow removal on sidewalks
- Bicycle amenities:
 - Focus on college areas
 - Newton Square
 - Olean Street at Reservoir Road
 - Clark Street
- Bicycle paths:
 - Blackstone Valley to Providence
 - Connecting historic sites/architectural sites/nature sites (like Freedom Trail in Boston)
 - Bike path connecting colleges (imitating the college shuttle that currently exists)
- Bicycle lanes to consider:
 - McKeon Road
 - Hope Avenue (Seven Hills)
 - Cambridge Street
 - Pleasant Street (Park Avenue – Tatnuck Square)
- Pedestrian safety audit:
 - Lincoln Square
 - City Hall and central business district
 - Access to transit – pedestrian improvements

- Information access to different parks (entrances)
- Education for bicyclists

STATION 2 – Transit/ Commuter Rail/ Freight

- Access route to I-290 from the west side of the city
- Transit alternatives are necessary to relieve traffic congestion
- Transit signal priority (TSP) is an excellent idea
- Look at satellite parking areas with transit connections (e.g. at Worcester Airport)
- Marketing is required
- Trolley system on Park Avenue or bus rapid transit
- More service after 10:00 PM
- More shuttles
- Transit oriented development (TOD) between Route 146 and Wyman Gordon area, use stimulus funds
- Improved shuttle service in certain areas of the city
- Single car “bullet” train
- Statewide bus hubs

STATION 3 – Roadway Reconstruction (New)

- Given the current economic climate, anything that can spur development and jobs is desirable
- The Route 56 upgrade and interchange has been in the paper recently and has received some favorable opinions in Leicester
- The upgrade a Route 56 at Route 9 and north of Route 9 will be important, and challenging
- The Webster Square area needs immediate relief, especially if a full interchange happens at I-290/Hope Avenue
- Widening and upgrading Webster Street may not be possible between the cemeteries and north of Hope Avenue
- Hadwen Park is a special/sensitive area, avoid impacts to this area or Heard Street
- Hadwen Park should be considered for future airport access considerations, the environmental impacts can be overcome
- For any northerly connection, there are residential areas that need to be avoided, this will be a challenge, any new roadway alignment must be sensitive to the area
- The Airport rotary on Pleasant Street should be considered for improvements
- At Lincoln Square, grade separate Lincoln Street at Main Street

- The suburbs to the west of Worcester will continue to grow; an interchange at I-90/Route 56 has been discussed in the past and is needed, this is regardless of the airport's needs
- For Industrial Park development, there is demand for 5 to 10 acre sites of vacant land, which fits well with a Route 56/I-90 connection
- Expand the Airport Industrial Park
- How has the Route 146 connections and recent upgrades helped traffic in the area, has it relieved I-290
- There is a need for connection to the southwest of Worcester (a bypass of I-290)
- The I-290/I-90/I-395 interchange is congested now, there is probably no easy fix
- When discussion improvements at intersection of Hope Ave and Webster Street, include the full interchange at Hope Avenue and link improvements at Webster Square
- A new connection on I-90 must be sensitive to the commuter and recreational traffic mix and how congestion issues in the summer are worsened by this mix
- A full interchange at Hope Avenue has more utility for west side access if it is feasible
- For residents of the west side of Worcester, one of the biggest issues is how to get to I-90

STATION 4 – Roadway Enhancements (Existing)

- I-290 Eastbound to I-190 - look at improvements in the eastbound direction
- The right-of-way width on I-290 will be the constraining factor
- The south option route does not appear to be direct, it's a zig-zag east-west maneuver
- The central option needs to include signage
- Close the Vernon Street on-ramp to I-290 Eastbound
- Consider I-290 – Worcester by-pass lanes
- Do not add lanes to I-290, there are too many impacts
- Provide better advance signage for exits on I-290
- At Webster Square, consider a roundabout at Park Ave and Mill Street
- Along Chandler Street, are one-way pair system towards I-290 feasible
- At Webster Square, consider a fly-over between Webster Street and Park Avenue
- Consider a Cambridge Street to Mill Street connector
- Consider a roundabout at Kelly Square (Green Street at Harding Street)
- Eliminate parking at Tatnuck Square
- At Tatnuck Square, eliminate left-turns from Mill Street to Pleasant Street
- At Tatnuck Square, relocate bus stops
- Look closely at the problems caused by Cambridge Street entering Webster Square (from Canterbury Street)

- If a portion of Webster Street is eliminated, provide access to parcels including Webster House
- The East – West corridors are through heavy pedestrian areas (i.e. Tatnuck Square)
- Implement turning restrictions at Tatnuck Square
- At I-290 Eastbound to I-190, carry the Lincoln Street on-ramp further
- Adding a fourth lane to I-290 WB will cause issues with on-ramps (Belmont St and from exit 18 to Route 146)
- At Webster Square, divert traffic onto Southbridge Street
- Consider roundabout at all 4 intersections at Webster Square

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM. Slides and notes from the meeting will be posted to the project website.

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