



Spear Street Bike/Ped Improvements

Local Concerns Meeting Notes

Hoyle Tanner Project No. 21.107880.00

December 8, 2021

5:30pm-6:30pm

Location:

South Burlington City Hall (180 Market Street)

Attendees:

Ashley Parker (South Burlington)
Audrey Beaulac (Hoyle Tanner)
Nicole Centerbar (Hoyle Tanner)
Monica Ostby
Tim Riley (triley@techforwardgroup.com)
Juli Bonanno (for All Saints Church)
Terry Brennan
Doug Goodman (dougphoto@gmail.com)
Ravi Venkataraman
Dorothy Pumo
Kris Steppennuck (kstepenu@vum.edu)
Lani Ravin (Lani.Ravin@uvm.com)

Ariel Jensen-Vargas
Laurie Smith (wlbsmithvt@gmail.com)
Robert McDonald
Shawn Burke
(sburke@southburlingtonpolice.org)
Avalon Style – Ashley (The Other Paper)
(avalon@otherpapersbvt.com)
Shawn Goddard
Betsy Bahrenburg
Linda Norris
Jim Keosian
Linda Bradley

Bike & Pedestrian Committee Attendees:

Havaleh Gagne (Chair)
Nic Anderson (Clerk)
Amanda Holland
Bob Britt (Vice-Chair)
Donna Leban
Dana Farr
Cathy Frank
Matty Larkspur

Purpose:

The purpose of the meeting was to hear what concerns the abutters and project stakeholders had regarding construction of a shared use path along Spear Street.

1. Introductions

- A. Parker introduced herself and the project team.

2. Overview

- A. Parker presented an overview of the history and basics of the project location, goals, schedule, and funding.
 - A. Beaulac provided an overview of the project and the project schedule process.
 - This meeting is the local concerns meeting.
-

-
- Once conceptual plans are developed for a preferred alternative, a Public Information Meeting will be held to review.
 - A. Beaulac discussed potential locations of the path on the west side or the east side of Spear Street, noting the reason for the path on the east side was due to limited space between the existing western pavement edge and the I-189 bridge abutments. A. Beaulac also noted, the potential to shift the centerline of Spear Street to the east to allow construction of the path on the west with less impacts to the adjacent hill side and bridge abutments.
 - A. Beaulac opened discussion up to public comment.

3. Public Comment

Public Comment received during the meeting was received in an open discussion format and has been summarized into categories below.

- **Extending Project Limits/Scope**
 - L. Bradley inquired about extending limits further south along Spear Street. A. Parker explained that this would be outside the scope of this project and that this project is focused on making the connection between existing paths on Swift Street and at the UVM Forestry Building.
 - B. Bahrenburg stated there is high bicycle traffic that would benefit from other improvement projects along Spear Street. A Bicycle/Pedestrian committee member explained that this is “Phase 1” and they are hoping to do more projects in the future.
- **Crossings**
 - L. Bradley (shared use path user) inquired about additional crossings needed if path was on the East side. A. Beaulac noted additional crossing would be needed.
 - K. Steppennuck inquired about a crossing light at Songbird. A. Beaulac stated a RRFB would be proposed at this crossing and not a traditional stop light.
 - K. Steppennuck asked about the need for a crossing at the UVM Forestry building if the path was on the east side. B. Britt noted there was a planned development just north of the Forest Service at 600 Spear Street and a RRFB crossing was already planned for that location and if the path were on the east side, it would likely tie into that crossing. B. Bahrenburg inquired about new developments going in at northern project limits on east side of Spear St. A committee member noted they believed it was single family or town house style houses proposed there and that construction has begun.
 - R. McDonald inquired about motion activated crossings versus push button crossings. The crossing type and style will match others around town and be designed during future design phases.
 - K. Steppennuck commented about lights going into your eyes so maybe paths on both sides would be good.
- **Swift/Spear Intersection**
 - B. Bahrenburg stated a path along the east side of Spear Street could connect directly to the path along Swift Street with no road crossings.

- B. Bahrenburg stated a roundabout may be proposed at the Spear/Swift intersection. A. Beaulac noted this is a separate project and that this project would coordinate with that project as needed. A. Parker noted the study for the intersection project was about complete.
- M. Ostby stated the path design should consider a future connection to the potential roundabout and mentioned additional parking to be added near the intersection during the roundabout project. A. Holland noted roundabouts typically include several pedestrian crossing locations allowing for connectivity to the path.
- **Safety**
 - M. Ostby stated safety should be the number one priority of the design. A. Beaulac agreed and noted safety would be considered during design of the preferred concept.
 - M. Ostby inquired about which side of the road is safer for users at the blind curve on the west side of Spear Street across from Songbird and recommended considering permanent barriers between users and traffic. A. Beaulac stated this will be evaluated based on vehicle paths and cutting into hillside.
 - D. Pumo commented the dangerous part will be trying to cross Spear Street at Songbird Road and that the curve along Spear Street is nothing to worry about.
 - L. Bradley agreed safety should be a top priority.
 - L. Ravin stated there are increased vehicle/bike speeds on Spear Street at Songbird Road due to the steep downward slope in the road, heading northerly.
 - L. Ravin commented about the crossing at Songbird Road and making sure there is a safe stopping area.
 - L. Bradley stated crossing at Songbird Road is a dangerous spot due to high traffic and bicycle speeds.
 - K. Steppennuck mentioned that people don't stop for flashing lights.
 - L. Ravin noted the white travel lane line is gone on the curve on the west side of Spear Street, showing that people don't stay in the lane and cut the corner.
- **Road Alignment Shift through Forested Area/Curve on Spear Street**
 - B. Bahrenburg asked how shifting the road would impact abutter properties. A. Beaulac noted the intent is to keep the project within the Spear Street right-of-way.
 - L. Ravin inquired about staying within ROW. A. Beaulac stated staying within ROW is the goal but will be determined as plans are developed.
 - B. Britt asked about terrain on the west side due to the embankment and old growth trees. A. Beaulac noted a roadway shift would reduce impacts in that area if the path were on the west side of the roadway.
- **Shared Use Path Design**
 - L. Ravin (UVM/resident/cyclist) Spear Street was a commute route for years for her. She noted the presentation maps could be oriented north/south for better clarity and would also like photos to be notated. L. Ravin asked if the path was on the west, would it be a two-way path? Would there need to be a road realignment at the underpass? She was concerned about conflict points at Songbird Road. She noted it could be a pinch point and wouldn't want bike crashes to occur. She also inquired about considering bike paths

on both sides of the road. A. Beaulac noted the centerline of Spear Street would need to be shifted to accommodate a path on the west side. She also noted the crossing at Songbird Road would be further evaluated during the design phase.

- K. Steppennuck agreed paths on both sides would allow users to see oncoming traffic.
 - A. Beaulac clarified that a shared use path is proposed and not bicycle lanes. The typical section for shared use paths in South Burlington is a 10' wide, paved path, at the same elevation as the roadway. A green space would be proposed between the path and the roadway shoulder. A. Beaulac clarified that the intent of the project is to provide an off-roadway path for use by pedestrians and all cycling abilities. A. Beaulac noted there will still be cyclists that are comfortable with using the shoulders along Spear Street and prefer to ride there, however the off-road path allows the younger riders, the families, and those less comfortable with traffic a safe place to ride.
 - L. Ravin asked if the path would be grade separated, A. Beaulac stated it would not be.
 - L. Bradley inquired about delineating the path for different user types/speeds. A. Beaulac noted the path would be designed to meet state and city shared use path standards and requirements and be consistent with other paths in town.
 - D. Pumo (commuter/regular shared use path user) stated physical dividers on already narrow paths make them difficult to navigate for some users and occasionally needing to pass slower users is easier than having to navigate barriers/dividers regularly.
- **Path Connectivity**
 - S. Goddard stated the connection to the existing path at the UVM Forestry building should consider the worn path location across the UVM grass and adjacent to the interstate that is currently used. A. Beaulac noted, that would be taken into consideration with the preferred concept.
 - D. Goodman stated the proposed path should connect to existing lanes along Songbird Road. A. Beaulac noted the proposed Spear Street path would provide connectivity to the shared use path along Songbird Road.
 - D. Goodman noted there are good videos on roundabouts from the Netherlands. Section proposed is really beautiful. He noted some sections of existing path are disconnected and wanting to help connect these neighborhoods near Farrell Street. One of the most direct paths to connect between the two. Queen City Park Road project is important to this. Doing good jobs with striping lately. If trying to get to Burlington, is the goal to go down to Queen City Park road or to use the 189 Path? D. Goodman commented the need to consider connectivity and stated the following connections are important: existing paths north of Interstate 189, connecting South Burlington to Burlington Proper, and Queen City Park Road.
 - D. Goodman commented that the west side would connect well with the existing paths.
- **Winter Maintenance**
 - K. Steppennuck stated bollard posts along existing paths are removed for winter plowing operations.
 - L. Bradley stated plowing and snow storage should be a consideration in design. A. Beaulac noted coordination with the City would occur during the design phase.

- **Miscellaneous**

- D. Leban stated there are areas of shared use path along Dorset St. where cars will sometimes use the shared use path to maneuver around left turning traffic. One location of this is at the left turn to Songbird Road. Additionally, sometimes vehicles park on or near the paths preventing free movement along the path for bicyclists and pedestrians. It was noted that flexible bollards and a chain-link fence were installed to prevent in locations to help prevent this activity from motorists.
- L. Ravin stated wildlife crossings between the interstate bridges could be considered.
- N. Anderson confirmed with A. Beaulac that estimates would be included with conceptual plans and one preferred alternative will be presented at the Public Information Meeting. A. Beaulac confirmed. N. Anderson noted it could be much more expensive to do the “road shift.”

If the contents of these meeting notes are incomplete or not to your understanding of the meeting, please contact the preparer at Hoyle Tanner as soon as possible.

Prepared by:

Nicole L. Centerbar, EIT

Audrey G. Beaulac, PE

Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Inc.