

Meeting Minutes

WECA Planning & Zoning Committee



Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 6:00p

Virtual Meeting

Subject: Traffic Calming on Beacon Street and North Beacon Street

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05p. There were at least 15 attendees, including the Committee Chair, and many residents who live along the Beacon and North Beacon corridor.

2. Introduction

The Committee Chair welcomed the group and turned the meeting over to Sandy Fry, who is a Senior Project Manager with the City of Hartford's Department of Development Services and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator.

The City's official page for the "Made to Move – Bike Boulevards" project has a brief summary.

<https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/DDS/DDS-Divisions/Planning-Zoning/Made-to-Move-Bike-Boulevards>

Documents related to this meeting are available on the Meeting Info page:

<https://www.meetinginfo.org/meetings/1282>

3. Overview of the Project

Sandy gave a brief overview of the project. It is funded by a \$100,000 grant, and looks to test traffic calming measures on four corridor in the City. In addition to Beacon and North Beacon, the City is also working on Ashley, Babcock/Affleck, and Hampton.

Because of the limited budget, the goal is to use paint and pole-style barriers to test the impact on traffic flow. If the results are positive, then the City would likely apply for additional grant money to fund permanent changes to the roadway.

The City would like to see traffic calming features spaced about 300 feet apart over the whole length of the corridor. There are already a number of speed humps along the corridor, with another one scheduled to be installed this spring between West Boulevard and Capitol. New features the City proposed include median islands mid-block and sidewalk bump-outs at intersections.

4. Questions, Answers, and Discussion

Most of the session was an open discussion in which Sandy discussed the proposed measures to be tested beginning at Elizabeth Street and heading southward. The renderings used as the basis for the conversation are available on the MeetingInfo page showing the location of new features. These include:

- Median Islands at approximately 199 North Beacon, 159 North Beacon, 114 North Beacon, 54 North Beacon, and 210 Beacon.
- Intersection sidewalk bump-outs at Fern, Cone, Farmington, West Boulevard, and Capitol.
- Mini traffic circle at Warrenton
- Contra-flow bike lane on the already one-way section of Beacon south of Capitol.

Attendees has numerous questions, comments, and suggestions. Some of the notes provided to the City included the following points:

- There is high parking demand in the vicinity of Farmington Avenue because of the apartment buildings and the mortuary. Different traffic calming measures may be appropriate in that location.
- If there is not space outside of the Elizabeth intersection for traffic calming, would it be possible to do something within the intersection to slow vehicles making the turn?
- The block of Beacon between Farmington and Warrenton already has 2 speed humps. Would it make more sense to add a 3rd in the same location as the proposed median island?
- The grant does not provide much money for any individual corridor. Might it be better to install one permanent median island so that the community can see what the final product will actually look like rather than numerous temporary features?
- How long could the proposed test features last before they need to be removed?
- What is the expected timeline for funding to make the successful features permanent?
- It might be interesting to change the speed limit on this street. Sandy noted that speed limits are currently set by state legislation, though there were bills under consideration in the current session that would allow municipalities to set their own speed limits.
- Has the 4-way stop at the West Boulevard intersection been successful at reducing the number of accidents?
- What will be the address of the new speed hump that is scheduled to be installed between Warrenton and West Boulevard?
- Tree planting can also be an effective way to slow down traffic – consider adding street trees.

The meeting concluded with the action items:

- Sandy: Work on getting answers to the attendees' questions.
- Sandy: Refine the design to take into consideration the suggestions that attendees made.
- Reconvene to have a follow up discussion.

5. Other Business

No other planning or zoning business was raised.

6. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at about 7:20p.