

Place: Zoom

Date: September 15, 2020

Notes Elizabeth Chambers

Taken by:

Project #: 58169.02

Re: Birchcliff Pkwy Public Meeting

Panelists/Project Team:

- 1) Nicole Losch (BTV)
- 2) Philip Peterson (BTV)
- 3) Elizabeth Gohringer (BTV)
- 4) Chapin Spencer (BTV)
- 5) Jenn Conley (VHB)
- 6) Drew Gingras (VHB)
- 7) Elizabeth Chambers (VHB)
- 8) Matt Hogan (VHB)

Meeting:

Introductions of panelists

VHB presented agenda and explained how residents will be able to comment

VHB presented the Project Background, including the study area and the option for different alternatives at different locations.

VHB presented the previous public meeting concerns from 2017, such as:

- cut through traffic
- blind spots on the curve on Birchcliff
- losing on-street parking

VHB presented the Cherry Lane improvements

VHB presented the project goals, including:

- reducing cut through traffic (specifically by trucks)
- reduce speeding
- pedestrian safety
- future consideration of adding the Neighborhood Greenway

VHB presented the traffic data:

- 31 MPH speed is the 85th percentile
- 1100 vehicles in a day which is unlikely to be just local traffic

VHB presented the phrase 'traffic calming'

- Designed to slow/reduce vehicles
- Objectives of traffic calming include
 - o Reduced traffic
 - o Slower vehicles

VHB presented traffic calming tools in Burlington which residents may be familiar with, such as:

- Those on Main and St. Paul St.
- Speed cushion/tables/humps/bumps in the city

VHB presented Birchcliff's tool kit

- All alternatives presented were designed to reduce speed on the street



- Vertical elements (speed humps, etc.) to make drivers go reduce speed
- Street narrowing designed to make drivers go slower
- Gateway treatment at Shelburne Street to reduce cut through traffic
- Options presented were a multitude that may be 'mixed and matched'; one drawing is not the final concept.

Alternative 1 specifically investigated a crosswalk at Bittersweet

- A speed table with a striped crosswalk (an enhanced pedestrian crossing)
- Concern about sight lines was addressed
 - 2 VHB employees field verified that the crosswalk would meet the required sight distance
 - Adding a bumpout also improves visibility and shortens crossing distance
- New pedestrian crossing at Linden with bump outs for shorter crossing distance

Alternative 2

- One-sided gateway treatment at Shelburne Road intersection
 - Slow turn onto the parkway
 - Point is to make it evident that drivers are leaving route 7 and entering a neighborhood
 - Another enhanced pedestrian crossing

Alternative 3

- Double-sided gateway treatment at Shelburne Rd
- Another enhanced pedestrian crossing

VHB present the next steps for this community:

- Collecting input at this meeting and through other public comments
- Working with the city to
 - determine a recommended alternative and then;
 - move forward with preliminary plans



Public Comments:

Key: underlined paragraphs were copied and pasted from the zoom chat. Only the name of the resident was changed.

A resident asked where along the road was the speed data collected. A VHB representative answered that it was taken between Bittersweet and Alder Ln.

[resident] 06:21 PM

Is the "table" at Bittersweet and Cherry considered "raised? Are the impacts on residents considered? le: Difficulty turning? Limiting parking? Reduced entry/exit to street specific Cherry Ln where guest parking for new businesses is very common? On street parking not sides is also common on Bittersweet and Linden already limiting road width significantly.

A VHB representative verbally responded that the table is intended to be raised, and that different locations require different heights for the table. The representative then said that a bump out would be no wider than a typical car, which would not narrow the street past what the residents may currently do with their own vehicles.

[resident] 06:23 PM

the bump out at the intersection of Cherry Land and Birchcliff makes a right turn from Cherry to Birchcliff challenging - hard to see oncoming east bound traffic

A resident expressed concern about truck traffic rerouting. Philip responded that trucks would not be using residential streets as a cut through and that they would have to choose a different route. The resident then expressed concern about a crossing at Birchcliff and Bittersweet and the danger of inebriated drivers from breweries on Pine Street. Philip responded that implementing crosswalks would make the street safer as drivers would be given visual cues that a crossing was present, and that infrastructure cannot prevent a drunk driver. The resident also expressed concern for winter plowing. A VHB representative responded that the road is currently not plowed in its entirety due to the width of the road and that plow drivers currently pile snow where bump outs would be placed.

A resident expressed concern about the traffic, a blind spot on Birchcliff where a driver comes around a corner as they approach Bittersweet, and speeding. The resident also said they have not seen a change in driving behavior due to the speed table at Birchcliff and Cherry and expressed concern over a lack of bike and pedestrian safety measures at Pine Street and Birchcliff. The resident then asked about the timeline for the project, which a VHB representative reiterated.

A resident said they believe the pedestrian crossing issue is secondary to the traffic calming problem. The resident did not have a specific crossing site they would have preferred, but liked the concept of a gateway at Shelburne St. The resident also expressed that they feel the speed table at Cherry has exacerbated problems on Birchcliff. Both Burlington and VHB representatives responded to say that they are aware that the Cherry Street speed table did not achieve the desired result and will be evaluating the intersection in the future.



A resident expressed agreement with the comments made by the previous resident and pointed to increased speeds on Cherry lane and other streets off Birchcliff.

A resident expressed concern for children in the community with speeding vehicles and was concerned that a sidewalk might make a child feel safe to cross when it would not be.

A resident asked if the intersection of Cherry and Birchcliff was considered raised. Nicole answered that the intersection was raised between 3 and 3.5 inches, which was not to the full height of the curb. The resident said they feel the rise was too modest as they don't experience a change going over the speed table. They asked about speed bumps such as those on Laurel Hill Drive in South Burlington. A VHB representative said that the proposed concepts are not speed bumps but have the added feature of pedestrian safety. Nicole added that the height of bumps such as the example given would cause a loud noise if a truck were to go over them. Philip then added that the Cherry lane speed table might become more effective as other traffic calming measures are implemented.

A resident expressed concern over using the past winter as a typical winter as for where plows pile snow etc. due to lack of snow. The resident then expressed concern about a gateway treatment, citing the signs placed through the city during the pandemic which read 'Local traffic only' as being ineffective and dangerous for turning vehicles and then said they believe trucks will use the street regardless of traffic calming implementation. The resident believes a crossing at Alder is the only safe option but believes from their memory of the 2017 public meeting that there is no safe option for a crosswalk without stop signs and RRFBs.

A resident expressed support for any traffic calming measure that could be implemented and concern that a crosswalk placed at Alder Lane would not be used as pedestrians would not back track to use it from Bittersweet.

A resident expressed support of the gateway treatment at Shelburne, explaining that they no longer noticed the city's sign at the intersection as they drive. The resident expressed disappointment for the Cherry St speed table and supported a crosswalk on Birchcliff.

A resident expressed strong support for bumpouts along Birchcliff and a gateway treatment to 'set the tone' for the neighborhood. The resident mentioned purposefully parking in the street to narrow the road themselves.

A resident said they are most concerned about the speed of vehicles travelling through and liked the previous resident's comment about 'setting the tone' of the street with a gateway treatment. The resident asked why stop signs were not considered for this project. Philip answered that stop signs are for addressing who has the right of way at an intersection and stop signs in unwarranted areas can create dangerous conditions. The resident then expressed concern over a crosswalk without a speed hump tied in and concern for the width of the road.

A resident expressed great enthusiasm towards the gateway treatment. The resident also expressed concern for residents backing out of their driveway and hitting the bumpout if it had vertical elements. The resident asked if the



speed limit could be reduced to slow cars. Philip responded that driver behavior currently does not reflect an adherence to 25 mph so it is unlikely 15 mph would be adhered to.

A resident expressed concern for the impact traffic calming may have on emergency vehicles.

A resident asked if a gateway at Pine Street could be appropriate. A VHB representative said that a study conducted by VHB showed more traffic came from Shelburne Street and not Pine St. They also explained that businesses on Pine Street require that access which a gateway would block. Nicole agreed and stated that the city's right of way in that area was not wide enough to accomplish this. Nicole then said the city planned to study the impact of the Cherry Ln speed table on the speeds on Birchcliff.

From [resident] to All Panelists: 06:27 PM

opposed to Shelburne Rd bump outs - it is hard enough to turn into Birchcliff

From [resident] to All Panelists: 06:27 PM

I second that

From [resident] to All Panelists: 06:30 PM

the bump out at the intersection of Cherry Land and Birchcliff makes a right turn from Cherry to Birchcliff challenging - hard to see oncoming east bound traffic

From [resident] to All Panelists: 06:47 PM

agreed about high speeds on upper Cherry.

From [resident] to All Panelists: 06:49 PM

SAME.....

(and I live on lower Cherry too)

From [resident] to All Panelists: 06:57 PM

These are great points, Jim. We noticed neighborhood traffic held back about 20 feet from the stop sign at Shelburne St. and Birchcliff because it became unsafe to turn with the covid signs. And thank you for more eloquently stating my concerns with a Bittersweet cross walk, we see this every single day.

From [resident] to All Panelists: 07:10 PM

I *always* slow down!!! I love that you park and 'hacked' this for our neighborhood!!

From [resident] to All Panelists: 07:16 PM

I agree with setting a tone in the neighborhood to calm and slow down traffic

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:17 PM

One question/comment I forgot to bring up -- what about blinking lights at the crosswalks such as on Pine St? These provide a great visual cue to cars that they need to stop.

From [resident] to All Panelists: 07:22 PM

My partner and I have to sign off, but just wanted to say thanks to the presenters (and to all in the neighborhood who've shared their thoughts tonight). In the interest of sharing some quick feedback: our main concern is the gateway proposal at the intersection of Shelburne & Birchcliff. The differing speeds of the roads make that turn tricky



and we think it's important to have plenty of space for turning cars. We like the idea of placing calming infrastructure a little further west of that intersection, so that it still "sets the tone," but does not pose a danger for cars turning in or out. Thanks, and good night all!

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:23 PM

One thing that we have thought is that the East side of all of the bump outs would be around fire hydrants which I believe we cannot park within 15 feet of. I think the reduction in parking will be minimal. We definitely notice that people slow down when we are parked on both sides. I like the idea of the reduced speed limit!

Thanks for this forum - I need to leave, but appreciate the work to make our neighborhood safer. Also would like to add that a crosswalk at Alder Lane would be great, as that does feel like the safest place to cross currently.

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:30 PM

I totally agree about the issues at the bottom of Pine!!! In the evenings, people often park on both sides which makes it very difficult to get down the street.

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:32 PM

I feel like we're often talking about current behavior, but the whole point of traffic calming is to change the behaviors—of drivers, of pedestrians, of bikers, neighbors, visitors, everyone. I really feel for all the Birchcliff folks with the huge numbers of trucks that currently choose to use our neighborhood as a highway—it's scary enough living on Cherry, and I hear you about it being frightening on Birchcliff!

From [resident] to All Panelists: 07:36 PM

Thank you so much for all your work on this!

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Meeting Notes














-  18028811930
-  Amanda Hernan
-  Christine McConnell
-  Hollis Easter (he/him)
-  Jane Van Buren
-  Jasmine Easter
-  Jim Turnbaugh
-  Joe
-  John Stanton-Geddes
-  julie
-  Rebecca Cohen
-  Samantha Donalds
-  Torchiano / Zaloom

Image of Zoom attendees list