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# Memo

*Date:* June 17, 2021

*To:* Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee

*From:* Nicole Losch, PTP, Sr. Planner

*Subject:* Colchester Avenue: Bikeways, Parking, and East Ave Intersection Safety Scoping Study

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## Recommendation

We respectfully request that the Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee approve the following motion:

- To accept the Colchester Avenue Bikeways, Parking and East Ave Intersection Safety Scoping Study;
- To endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendation as the preferred alternative to advance for funding and construction: raised and separated bike lanes on Colchester Avenue west of East Avenue; raised and separated bike lanes with short-term parking in targeted locations east of East Avenue; and an upgraded, realigned signalized intersection at East Avenue; and
- To recommend that the City Council accept and endorse the same through Resolution.

## Introduction

This Scoping Study continues the incremental changes to Colchester Avenue outlined in previous planning studies and recent design efforts. The City requested assistance from the CCRPC to complete a scoping process that will assist the City in selecting a preferred alternative for improvements to the Colchester Avenue corridor and East Avenue intersection.

The Executive Summary provides an abridged review of the purpose and need, existing conditions, public outreach, concepts, and preferred alternatives. The full Scoping Study is also available for additional detail.

The Advisory Committee considered public input and technical analysis to vet the concepts and vote for the alternatives they recommend the City select: raised and separated bike lanes along Colchester Avenue, pockets of on-street parking for short-term uses, and an upgraded signalized intersection at East Avenue.

The decisions were difficult for the Committee and unanimous decisions were not reached for either the corridor or intersection. While the corridor recommendations have been viewed favorably since the Committee meeting, the intersection recommendation continues to be a point of debate. The Advisory Committee's feedback on the roundabout: greater benefit to vehicles than pedestrians or bicyclists, not preferred by emergency services over signalized option, improved safety, aesthetics, and climate benefits. Safety considerations were heavily influenced by VTrans' High Crash Location (HCL) Preliminary Benefit-Cost Analysis. This indicates a crash reduction factor of 30% for the upgraded signalized intersection and 38% for the roundabout; a 20-year construction cost amortized at an annual rate of \$66k for the upgraded signalized intersection and \$235k for the roundabout; and a benefit/cost ratio of 1.12 for the upgraded signal and 0.40 for the roundabout.

At the June 16, 2021, Public Works Commission meeting, discussions focused on the added safety benefits of the roundabout, the less desirable and indirect path for people walking and biking through the roundabout, cost considerations, and community input in favor of the signalized intersection (without having a local roundabout as a point of reference). The Public Works Commission voted (5 to 1) in favor of supporting the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

## **Next Steps**

City and CCRPC staff will present to the TEUC a summary and outcomes of this Scoping Study. Following the TEUC's consideration and approval, this will be presented to City Council at an upcoming meeting suggested by the TEUC. City staff will work with any TEUC or area Councilors interested in sponsoring the Resolution for City Council consideration.

As mentioned in the Scoping Study, the preferred alternatives are long-term recommendations for which funding has not yet been allocated to design or construct. These are recognized as important projects and will be reviewed against other capital funding requests for major transportation enhancements.

## **Scoping Study**

Executive Summary and Scoping Study – Available online:

<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/colchester-ave-bikeways-parking-and-intersection-safety/>