

***Safe Routes to School Project: Champlain Elementary School Bicycle and  
Pedestrian Planning and Feasibility Study***  
Alternatives Presentation Meeting Notes  
February 21, 2013

**Attendees:** Michael Fisher  
Stu Lindsay  
Greg Fanslow  
Christine McConnell  
Carin Lilly  
Jim Sullivan  
Maggie Leugers, Burlington Parks and Recreation Department  
Jason Van Driesche, Local Motion  
Nicole Losch, Burlington Public Work Department  
Gail Henderson-King, Lamoureux & Dickinson (L&D)

**Discussion**

***1. Introductions***

Ms. Losche introduced herself and gave a quick overview of the project. She introduced Ms. Henderson-King, who welcomed everyone.

***2. Brief Overview of Project***

She gave a quick overview of the Champlain Elementary School Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning and Feasibility Study project. She described the study area which includes:

- Birchcliff Parkway and how it intersects with the Birchcliff Parkway Neighborhood, Callahan Park and the Five Sisters Neighborhood,
- Locust Street and how it intersects with the Five Sisters Neighborhood and Callahan Park,
- Pine Street from Locust Street to the School, and
- Shelburne Street / Prospect Parkway intersection to the School.

Ms. Henderson-King reviewed the overall goals and objectives of the study along with the project purpose and needs statement. The Purpose of this Project is to:

- Determine the feasibility of creating safer pedestrian and bicycle routes to the Champlain Elementary School from several surrounding South End neighborhoods: the Five Sisters, Birchcliff Parkway and Shelburne Street;
- Analyze current and proposed pedestrian and bicycle routes that can link existing sidewalks and trails;
- Study and analyze potential traffic calming measures to create safer pedestrian and bicycle networks; and
- Analyze existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities at the Champlain Elementary School and recommend improvements that will eliminate conflicts with vehicles, increase safety, and encourage greater use.



The Need for this project is based on:

- Unsafe roadway / intersection crossings within the study area as a result of vehicle driver behavior.
- Perceived speeding traffic that creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely cross and use local roadways.
- Lack of continuous sidewalks on one or both sides of neighborhood streets.
- Lack of crosswalks at some intersections where pedestrians are crossing.
- Limited or lack of facilities for students to safely secure bicycles when arriving at school.
- Limited or lack of facilities for students to safely access the School.

### **3. Brief Review of Existing Conditions / Site Analysis Documentation and Local Concerns Meeting Summary**

Ms. Henderson-King gave a brief reviewed the existing conditions of the project area. For discussion purposes, the project area is broken down by street. The following physical limitations are noted.

#### Locust Street

Physical Limitations:

- Long pedestrian crossings across Locust Street.
- Sidewalk ends at Callahan Park on south side of road.
- Parking area conflicts with mid block pedestrian crossings.
- Steep grades bordering Locust Street near Pine Street.
- Lack of sidewalk on south side of Locust Street along Callahan Park and to Pine Street.

Traffic:

- Conflicts between traffic cutting through neighborhood and pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists must cross Locust Street either mid block or at Pine Street

#### Birchcliff Parkway

Physical Limitations:

- Can visually see Champlain Elementary School from Birchcliff Parkway, but access is through private parking areas, where there is concern about safety.
- Sight distance limitations at mid block crossings.
- Undefined streetscape through industrial area.

Traffic:

- Conflicts between traffic cutting through neighborhood and pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Sight distance concerns, especially at S curve.

#### Champlain Elementary School and Shelburne Street

Physical Limitations:

- No sidewalk from Prospect Parkway /Shelburne Street intersection to school.
- Pedestrian path from Prospect Parkway / Shelburne Street crossing is behind fence. It is very narrow and traverses through a wooded area creating safety concerns.
- Sidewalk bordering parking area is narrow.
- Conflicts between parent drop off area and students walking and biking to school.
- Bike racks on north side of school often full.
- Bike rack in unpaved area off, far removed from front door of school.



Ms. Henderson-King gave a brief update on the activities that have occurred over the past several months.

- Held a Local Concerns Meeting on October 13, 2011.
- Met with Burlington Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments in August 2012 to discuss Callahan Park and public road rights-of-way.
- Met with Champlain Elementary School Staff in November 2012 to review proposed alternatives for the school campus.
- Hartgen Archaeological Associates completed Archaeological Resource Assessment (ARA) Report February 2013. There is one area identified as archaeologically sensitive - the area along the stream along the southern property lines of the school and school maintenance facility.

#### **4. Presentation of Alternatives**

Ms. Henderson-King presented the three alternatives. She gave a brief overview of some of the traffic calming elements that are included in the alternatives:

- Curb extensions with crosswalks and plantings: curb extensions help to make the shortest possible distance for pedestrians to cross a roadway. Plantings can help make curb extensions attractive, be used for stormwater gardens, and be another visual element to help slow traffic.
- Speed tables and raised intersections force car drivers to slow down on a street.
- Textured crosswalks and crosswalk lighting options help give vehicle drivers visual elements to slow down for pedestrians.

Ms. Henderson-King presented three alternatives for the project area.

*Alternative A* features include:

- Locust Street: New on street parking area, a new sidewalk on south side of street, new curb extensions with textured crosswalks at street intersections, expanded rain gardens, and improved signage.
- Callahan Park: Paved path connection to Cherry Lane with rain garden, and a sidewalk connection to Gove Court.
- Pine Street: New plantings in green strips, reduced curb cuts where possible, and improved signage.
- Birchcliff Parkway: New speed table at one intersection, new textured crosswalks, reduced roadway width, new sidewalk on north side of street, and street tree pruning.
- School: New parent drop off area on Pine Street, consolidated parking areas, new path from Birchcliff Parkway to school, new and improved pedestrian circulation to school entrances, new bike rack area, and new gravel path and sidewalk connection from Shelburne Street.

*Alternative B* features include:

- Locust Street: reorganized and expanded on street parking, new sidewalk on south side of street, new speed tables at two intersections, new curb extensions at intersections, new textured crosswalks, and improved signage.
- Callahan Park: New paved path connection to Cherry Lane, sidewalk connections to Gove Court, and expanded rain gardens.
- Pine Street: Reduced curb cuts where possible, and improved signage.
- Birchcliff Parkway: New speed tables at three intersections, new textured crosswalk at one intersection, reduce roadway width, and street tree pruning.



- School: Better parent drop off area separated from consolidated parking areas, improved pedestrian circulation to school entrances, new bike rack area, and new gravel path and sidewalk connection from Shelburne Street.

*Alternative C* features include:

- Locust Street: New off street parking area, new sidewalk on south side of street, new street trees, new curb extensions at intersections, and improved signage.
- Callahan Park: Paved path connection to Cherry Lane, and a sidewalk connection to Gove Court.
- Pine Street: Reduced curb cuts where possible, and improved signage.
- Birchcliff Parkway: New speed tables at intersections, reduce roadway width, and street tree pruning.
- School: Better parent drop off area, consolidated parking areas, improved pedestrian circulation to school entrances, new bike rack area, and new gravel path and sidewalk connection from Shelburne Street.

## **5. Open Discussion / Public Comments of Alternatives**

The meeting shifted to a discussion of the various alternatives elements advantages and disadvantages. Below is a summation of the comments provided during the meeting.

*Alternative A*

- Recommend adding a stop sign at Birchcliff Parkway / Pine Street intersection. Apparently there is no stop sign there today.
- Consider narrowing pavement on the curved downhill section of Birchcliff Parkway to 20 or 22 feet wide (10 or 11 foot travel lanes) to help slow down traffic even more.
- Make proposed paved paths a minimum of 10 feet wide.
- Investigate formalizing the cut through path from the Callahan Park wooded area to the northwest corner of Cherry Lane. This would be over private property, but is used now by children walking to school.
- Like path off street within Callahan Park instead of sidewalk along street on south side of Locust Street between Locust Terrace and Pine Street.
- Instead of a sidewalk along the perpendicular parking by soccer fields in Callahan Park, it was recommended to keep the 10 foot wide shared use path continuous through this area connecting with the other proposed paths.
- Recommend eliminating the northern entrance to the school parking lot so it is not possible for cut through drop off traffic.
- Make shared use path across school soccer field intersect with the school access road at the curve and eliminate path along northern side of this road.
- Like the Pine Street drop off area. However, there are concerns about children safely crossing the road from the west side of the street. Also, it would be difficult to add in a bike rack with the drop off area in this location.
- Add some sort of feature to Prospect Parkway / Shelburne Road intersection to enhance the stop light. A suggestion is to include a strobe light with the pedestrian signal.
- Add bike racks on the north side of the school where the parking spaces were eliminated. Bicyclists come from the north, too.
- Pave the path from Shelburne Road to the school so it can be plowed in the winter.



*Alternative B*

- The proposed path on the east side of the tennis courts in Callahan Park is not a good idea. It is very wet and a circuitous route for children to walk. Drainage would need to be addressed for any path in this area because of stormwater flowing down hill. There was a path here many years ago. However, it was felt that children would continue to use the existing gravel road as the preferred route to get to Cherry Lane.
- The preferred walkway on the southern side of Locust Street should be a path within the park rather than a sidewalk along the street.
- Add in some speed control on approach to Bittersweet Lane - maybe speed bumps.
- Add crosswalks at all four roads that intersect Birchcliff Parkway. Extend the speed tables to avoid conflicts with driveways.
- The school parking lot should have an exit only on north end of lot.
- Add the path across the east side of parking lot behind Lake Champlain Chocolates to connect Birchcliff Parkway with the school.

*Alternative C*

- Likes consolidated parking and drop off areas at school.
- The two paths on the north side of Callahan Park will conflict with maintenance vehicles. Suggest separating them.
- Speed tables on Birchcliff Parkway are critical to have.
- Add pedestrian activated lights at crosswalk at Birchcliff Parkway / Cherry Lane intersection.
- Maybe add a pedestrian crossing barrel in the middle of street at Birchcliff Parkway / Cherry Lane. This could be problematic for the City to maintain.
- Work with businesses along Pine Street to move sidewalk back and add in a green strip separating it from the roadway. Another idea is to eliminate on street parking and move the curb closer to the centerline of the road.
- Close off teacher parking area before parents start arriving to drop off students. This would help reduce further conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Install lighting along new paths.
- Need crosswalks at all of the streets intersecting with Locust Street. There are quite a few children from the Locust Terrace neighborhood that cross Locust Street and having a better pedestrian connection into Callahan Park here would be good.

*Preferred Alternative*

After much discussion and consideration of each of the alternatives, a preferred alternative was recommended. Following is a list of the proposed elements by street.

Callahan Park / Locust Street

- Preference is for path within Callahan Park parallel to Locust Street instead of a sidewalk along the south side of the street to Pine Street. The possibility of a pervious pavement surface for this walk could help address stormwater runoff, but should be looked into further.
- Include a crosswalk at Locust Terrace on east side to connect the existing sidewalk on the east side of Locust Terrace with a new sidewalk and path in Callahan Park.
- For the proposed parking along Locust Street, there was no consensus as to which was the best option. It was felt this needed more study and not be dealt with now. This should be looked at as part of the Callahan Park master plan.



- For the proposed path through Callahan Park from Locust Street to Cherry Street, it is recommended to keep alignment along the existing gravel path.
- Look into formalizing a path through the woods in Callahan Park and securing an easement for the path between homes on Cherry Lane to connect near the Cherry Lane curve. There is a dirt path here now that is heavily used by children, and the property owners seem agreeable to allowing children to cross their properties.
- Include crosswalks on all legs of each intersection on Locust Street, except western leg of Locust Terrace where there is no sidewalk.
- Include speed tables and curb extensions at all three Locust Street intersections.
- Keep on street parking, but adjust depth to narrow roadway.

#### Birchcliff Parkway

- Include a speed table and add a pedestrian activated flashing sign (RRFB or similar) at the Cherry Lane/ Birchcliff Parkway intersection.
- Add the sidewalk on the downhill curve of Birchcliff Parkway. Suggest narrowing the street to 22' or even 20' wide.
- The speed table at Bittersweet Lane is good. This will help slow vehicles before heading down the hill.
- Consider a chicane design along Birchcliff Parkway from Shelburne Road to Bittersweet Lane. The chicane design could shift at each roadway intersection.
- Investigate securing a ROW for a path between homes across from Linden Terrace intersection with Birchcliff Parkway to access the school property.
- Add sidewalk on last section of Birchcliff Parkway - on the north side along new Lake Champlain Chocolates warehouse.
- The general consensus is the best place to have a path connecting Birchcliff Parkway and the school is on the east side of the Lake Champlain Chocolates parking area and along the east side of the school field.

#### School Site

- Add bike parking on the north side of the school and upgrade parking on the south side to meet current accepted bike parking standards.
- Make a path that comes from Lake Champlain Chocolates parking lot intersect the school drive at the apex of its northeast curve.
- Prohibit all vehicle traffic on the drive around the school except for deliveries and service vehicles and add a physical barrier to exclude vehicles. Redesign the drive around the north and east sides of the school as a wide pedestrian walkway that accommodates service vehicles, rather than as a vehicle lane that accommodates pedestrians.
- Use the parent drop off area layout from Alternative A with modifications. Make one way entrance on south side and one way exit on north side. Add a one way drop off lane on east side of loop, with 15-minute angled nose-in parking spaces along the west side of the drop-off lane. Recommend closing off parking area closest to road with removable barriers during parent drop off times.
- General recommendations for Pine Street: move sidewalk further away from curb and add a green strip, consolidate curb cuts where possible, and look into adding a bike lane or cycle track on roadway.
- Figure out how to incorporate an on-street bus stop/drop-off area without allowing on street drop off for cars.



- Path from Prospect Parkway to school to be paved so it can be plowed in winter.

#### **6. Summary of Meeting and Next Steps**

Ms. Henderson-King wrapped up the discussion with an explanation of the next steps in the process.

The preferred conceptual plan will be created based on selected alternative elements. A conceptual cost estimate of the various elements will be done along with recommended phasing. The final feasibility report will be prepared and a final presentation will be held before the end of March.

The above is my summation of the Champlain Elementary School SRTS Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning and Feasibility Study Alternatives Presentation Meeting. If you have any additions and/or corrections, please contact me for incorporation into these notes.

**Prepared By:** Gail Henderson-King, PLA, ASLA  
Lamoureux & Dickinson

