

Consideration hope: City wants study included in state DOT Rt. 6 widening project



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BRISTOL - The next step in the Route 6 widening project is for the state Department of Transportation to begin the implementation process and the City of Bristol hopes they take into account information that was generated from a study by the Planning Commission.

The study, which was completed last week, references the 5.5 mile stretch of Route 6 in Bristol that spans from the Plymouth town line to the Farmington town line, explained City Planner Robert M. Flanagan. It focuses on providing a balance between travel locally and through the city by effectively and safely connecting the corridor with other parts of the community and joining towns through multiple modes.

“We hope they read it, we hope they’re listening to us,” said Flanagan. “The widening project started before the study. We periodically have meetings with the DOT and have been using avenues to get the information out there. We will have a plan in place to point back to with the DOT.”

Flanagan stated that the next step for the corridor study is for its approval by the Planning Commission.

“The Planning Commission will review the final draft plan at a special meeting of the commission on May 31,” said Flanagan. “The study then needs to be adopted in the early fall during a public hearing, which leaves more room for public discussion.”

Overall, the study aims to improve the aesthetic of the corridor while relieving congestions by adding another eastbound lane between Carol Drive and Peggy Lane, and improving travel for pedestrians and public transportations.

Concrete sidewalks will be added to the north side of the roadway, and to the south side except in the residential area between Carol Drive and Stafford Avenue.

Traffic lights will be improved at Stafford Avenue, Kathern Street and Camp Street, and bus pull-offs will be on the eastbound and westbound sides of Kathern Street.

The lack of bus stops is an issue that is going to be looked at more when the widening is completed, according to Flanagan.

“We are looking at lobbying the DOT for bus shelters along Route 6 when the widening is finished,” said Flanagan. “It’s never going to be a pedestrian friendly area but this will help.”

The study divided the corridor into three segments to identify specific issues and opportunities for improvement.

The first is the Terryville Avenue segment that spans from Clark Road to the railway overpass, which is an even mix of residential and commercial zones.

It was found in the study that this segment is lacking infrastructure for bicycle, pedestrian and transit services. There is no consistent network for pedestrians along the corridor or bike facilities, and CT Transit bus route do not extend west of North Main Street.

The second segment is the downtown gateway, which begins at the railway overpass and extends to Maple Street, which consists of pockets of residential areas in industrial and commercial zones.

According to the study, this segment has a lack of accommodations for bicyclists and linkage to downtown, but there is opportunity to create public parking and strengthen its link to downtown for walking and biking.

The third is the Farmington Avenue segment that spans from Maple Street to Camp Street on the Farmington town line. The segment is a mostly commercial area with pockets of residents and has the highest traffic volume of all the segments.

The state DOT aims to make the entire segment four-lanes wide with turning lanes at signalized intersections.

It was also revealed in the study that there is opportunity to create pedestrian connections among businesses in this section so patrons could park once and visit numerous destinations on foot.