

MEMO

TO: Justin Rabidoux
FR: Chapin Spencer, BBC SoCo Subcommittee Member
RE: Bike / Ped Review of the Southern Connector

First, thank you for Public Works' ongoing commitment to bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in the City of Burlington and on this project in particular. The Southern Connector (SoCo) presents a unique opportunity as it is widely regarded as the last major road that will be built within Burlington. As a new construction project, the City has the opportunity to use the latest best practices to ensure a project that will suit all users. We are seeking a respectful and productive way to move forward.

The Burlington Bicycle Council established a SoCo subcommittee (Becka Roof, Chapin Spencer, Will Flender and Alex MacRuetter) this summer. The SoCo subcommittee met, made recommendations, and brought the concerns to a subsequent Burlington Bike Council meeting. The Council unanimously endorsed the concerns. The issues are detailed below.

The overall Southern Connector design appears to be more of a higher speed road with suboptimal bike/ped accommodations. What is the design speed of this corridor? 25-30mph? Specific concerns to substantiate our overall design concerns are as follows:

CURB RADII:

- The curb radii of many intersections is large making vehicle turning movements faster and lengthening ped crossing distances. This will make intersections less safe and less friendly to bike/ped traffic. For example, look at Pine Street and Pine Terrace(?). On this dead end street, the curbs are proposed to be pushed way back and the proposed pedestrian crosswalk distance is almost twice as long as it is currently.

SEARS LANE:

- Sears Lane is being opened up to be a through street between SC and Pine Street yet no sidewalks appear to be planned for this section of Sears Lane – very pedestrian unfriendly. This is the route from Lakeside neighborhood to Champlain School and must incorporate a sidewalk minimally and a shared-use path optimally. Why is Sears Lane being turned into a major corridor?
- Similarly, what is the bike/ped linkage to the Burlington Bike Path from the SoCo shared-use path at Sears Lane? This is a major bike/ped linkage. The maps are unclear on this point.
- Why is there a RT lane SB on SoCo at Sears Lane? This will encourage cut through traffic to avoid Lakeside?

LAKESIDE AVENUE:

- We did not receive a map of the Lakeside Ave and SoCo intersection so we were unable to evaluate bike/ped connections.
- One critical area will be how bicyclists and pedestrians transition from the SoCo path to Pine Street. The Lakeside /SoCo and the Lakeside/Pine intersections and number of curb cuts are critical in determining whether a sidepath or bike lanes are the appropriate treatment for the short stretch of Lakeside.

UNCLEAR LANE CONFIGURATIONS:

- Four travel lanes on SoCo at Sears Lane? Unclear configuration.
- There are four travel lanes at the SoCo intersection with Pine Street at the northern end. Lane configuration is unclear at this point. Thought SoCo was a two lane configuration with occasional center turn lanes.

PINE STREET:

- Existing bike lane north of Kilburn is not shown on plans. The Burlington N/S Bicycle & Pedestrian Study called for Pine Street to be a major N/S route for bicycling. Current map shows Pine Street north of Gregory's Supply has 15 travel lanes with 2 foot shoulders – why no bike accommodations?
- Existing southbound bike lane on Pine Street south of Lakeside not shown on plan. Why?

PATH TERMINUS AT SHELBURNE ROAD:

- The proposed path shows it dead-ending into a sidewalk on Route 7 at an highway interchange. How are bicyclists supposed to transition to the road network or to the SB path network over at Shaws across the street? Does the path connect into the Price Chopper shopping mall?

HOME AVENUE:

- At Home Avenue intersection – this is the primary route for bike/ped traffic connecting the southern end of the Burlington Bike Path to the SB path network – and the bike connection is unclear at this intersection. For example, how does a bicyclist traveling north on the SC path get to the Burlington Bike Path once they reach Home Avenue? Note: it is illegal in Burlington to ride a bicycle on a sidewalk.
- Is it true that there will only be 2 crosswalks at this intersection – not the usual four?

GENERAL DESIGN CONCERNS:

- There are places where we are concerned that the plans may not be in accordance with the VT Bicycle & Pedestrian Policy Manual such as bike lanes that do not continue through intersections.
- The SoCo sidepath needs “No Right On Red” signage for all northbound SoCo traffic so they don't run into sidepath users. Sweeping curb radii will only further increase the danger for path users crossing side streets as SoCo traffic can turn right at considerable speed.
- Some in the group expressed concern about the entire project – specifically that there will be more lights on the So Co route from Shelburne Road (Price Chopper) than using the existing Home and Flynn cut thrus. What can DPW provide that will assure folks that cut through traffic will be reduced?
- Overall, the beginnings and endings of the bike facilities and the intersections are confusing in terms of how we are asking the bicyclist to navigate them.
- Many pedestrian facilities are not shown on the maps we received and made it difficult to discern where bike/ped facilities would exist and where they would not.