



MEMORANDUM OF MEETING

DATE: October 22, 2010

TO: File

CC: John Shevlin, P.E., PARE
Caroline Wells, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development Town of Warren

FROM: Craig Pereira

RE: Public Workshop Meeting No. 1
PARE Project No. 10168.00

A Public Workshop was held on October 6, 2010 at the Warren Senior Center to kick off the Warren – Metacom Avenue Corridor Plan project. The first half of the meeting was targeted as an informal drop-in session where residents could stop by, learn about the project and provide comments for improvements. The second half of the evening included small group work to identify and prioritize strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) pertinent to framework, character, connections and vibrancy along the corridor. Orthophoto map mark-ups have been combined into one map. The following information was collected/summarized from the drop-in session, small group work and comment sheets returned during the public comment period following the workshop:

Group 1 (CP) = red

Group 2 (SB/CW) = blue

Group 3 (PS) = green

Character

building facades, size, sense of enclosure, landscaping, sign clutter, natural areas

- Plant street trees along corridor
 - Regulate landscaping at intersection to maintain visibility
 - Consider solar panels for parking lot lighting (subsidy/incentive for business to install)
 - Better building design/orientation
 - Underground utilities
 - North end of Metacom feels more pedestrian scale
 - Need physical buffer between roadway and sidewalk...vegetation/landscaping
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- Farm, mill and existing greenery are all assets to the corridor
 - Business landscape/site layout of nursing home should be reinforced
 - Need physical buffer between roadway and sidewalk...vegetation/landscaping
 - No formality/dominance to building styles
 - Mill housing near mill contributes to the character

- Neighborhoods lack descriptive names
- Child St/Metacom area unattractive
- Vernon to Franklin is transitional area (residential), can this be reinforced?
- Beautification through landscaping requirements
- strip commercial area considered chaotic due to many signs and uneven setbacks

- 1950's – 60's...Rural (two lanes)
- 1960's ...A & P, Grants Plaza (two lanes)
- Late 1960's - 70's...widening to 4 lanes (Arlington originally a dead-end)
- Farm vision for parcel to rear of church– over 55 community/ conservation development/open space preserved have been proposed.
- Chickens are raised in residential neighborhoods, indicating that the agricultural heritage of the area continues.
- Signage...zoning has limited authority, and is not enforced. Better coordination with businesses and Zoning Board/Building Official. Branding is needed

Framework

nodes of activity, patterns, street grid, access points/curb cuts, traffic patterns

- Mark driveway curbcuts with white painted lines
- Consider center turning lane throughout Metacom
- Move truck access to behind buildings
- More parking is needed
- Consider permeable pavement solutions
- Better signalization coordination (Seymour St.)
- Are there restrictions in place for truck traffic along Metacom?
- Parking in north end of Metacom only an issue on St. Patrick's Day/X-mas
- Route 114 is more peaceful...many use this as north/south, then cut over depending on final destination on Metacom
- Presently 20% more traffic on Metacom due to weight restrictions on Sakonnet River Bridge
- Metacom and Child St. intersection heading west on Child is an informal 2 lane road...right-turning traffic moves over, next to thru traffic lane (in shoulder) to make the turn. Also, the stop lines at this intersection should be pushed back...trucks/buses turning has difficulty making the radius.
- Development plan for Stop n' Shop fuel facility before Planning Board, seeking additional curbcuts (right turn in/out)...Planning Board requesting access from within Plaza, citing Stop n' Shop facility in Somerset, MA as an example
- Town should consider opening Cutler to South Cutler (at Franklin, to alleviate traffic directed towards Metacom/Child St. intersection, as well as a bike connection to rail-trail
- Lack of well-defined activity nodes/centers
- Side streets off Metacom are narrow with tight turning radii which causes excessive back up

- Sight line issues at Ocean State Plaza
- Speed limits and mentality of drivers first and foremost
- Traffic control/safety/number of vehicles is first priority
- Consider center turning lane throughout Metacom with different (brick) pavement

- Mandate design oversight to reinforce a unified, staged plan...physical changes (walks, plantings, etc.) and zoning/regulatory/infrastructure
- Sidewalk upgrade RIDOT/new curbing...ADA issues exist, particularly for scooters
- Traffic is an issue...80% is Bristol local traffic (Bristol grows faster than Warren)
- RIDOT plans in 1994 were for 4 lanes from Mt Hope Bridge to Swansea...due to fiscal constraints, the roadway was resurfaced with the existing number of lanes
- Town should consider opening Cutler to South Cutler (at Franklin, to alleviate traffic directed towards Metacom/Child St. intersection, as well as a bike connection to rail-trail)
- Existing sewer easement south of Libby Lane, along shoreline could be an alternative trail to reconnect with rail-trail
- Out of the box transportation solution for the future: Tram over bike path (like at Disney)
- Trolley on rail line (Narragansett Electric Easement)
- Bike Path study in Town Planner's office details options for connections from the broken bridge to town
- Former railroad ROW is not available
- Seymour St. connection potential to Ocean State Plaza via rear parcels used for ministorage.

Connections

multimodal, neighborhood/building access, sidewalks/crosswalks, ADA accessibility, Safety

- Remove barriers (telephone poles) from sidewalks
- Maintain sidewalks (snow/ice removal)
- Separate sidewalks from street with plantings
- Consider adding a bike lane
- Pedestrian shelters for RIPTA
- Better wayfinding/directional signage (particularly at Arlington St.) that tells drivers what they can get to...i.e.: signage on Arlington St. could read, 'Rosa Blvd. Left lane, thru traffic, right lane'. Residents may not be happy with billboard-sized signage to clarify street network
- Existing sewer easement south of Libby Lane, along shoreline could be an alternative trail to reconnect with rail-trail
- Access management options wherever applicable to remove traffic from Metacom
- Crossing Metacom is unsafe...even for those who live here, and are on Metacom daily
- Pedestrian shelters for RIPTA
- Separate sidewalks from street with plantings
- Lighting at night is needed
- Create obvious, predictable pedestrian connections/crossings
- Well designed RIPTA bus shelters were considered for shelter for users and also as regularly spaced streetscape amenities giving identity to the corridor
- Ocean State Plaza/Grants
- Gas Station - Seymour St.
- There is an opportunity for a good pedestrian connection between Libby Lane, Broken Bridge, and River View Street/West Street. This provides a connection to the middle school.

Vibrancy

aesthetics, activity/foot traffic generators, signage, sense of enclosure, architectural features

- Develop better sign standards...too much sign clutter
- Metacom lacks walkability
- Sidewalks and the nature of businesses detract from pedestrian experience

- Require landscaping (particularly at Ocean State Plaza)
- Celebrate/reinforce the mill architecture
- Buildings in disrepair (Child/Metacom)
- Parker Mill, Harris Ave to Homestead are nodes of activity
- A mix of business types/sites is needed
- Establish gateways (especially at the north end)

Base Map mark-up comments (marked on orthophotos of project area during Drop-In Session and during individual group work):

- Turning radius from Harris or Overhill to Metacom is too tight – hard for trucks to maneuver and hard to pull out into traffic (is there limited site distance?)
- Concern for the safety of the handicapped person who uses his scooter on Metacom Ave. (not on sidewalk). Lives in an apartment to the rear of Metacom Plaza
- Need a safe pedestrian connection between the apartment to the rear of Metacom Plaza and the shops in front (including convenience and pizza)
- It is so difficult to make a southbound left turn into Parker Ave that some people turn right into the Ocean State Plaza parking lot and then turn left at the light and right onto Parker
- There is no pedestrian phase on the signal at Ocean State Plaza
- Child St. at Metacom, make 2 lanes westbound to alleviate traffic
- Corner of Libby/Metacom...9 unit elderly housing proposed
- Metacom towards approach to Bristol becomes a racing strip, jockeying for position as it transitions to one lane, which also causes delays from side streets emptying onto Metacom
- Create a sense of a gateway at the Bristol Town line