



Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

Staff Report: “Dean Street/Pleasant Valley Parkway/Oakland Street Corridor Discussion” – Federal Hill, Smith Hill, Valley, Elmhurst – Wards 12 and 13 (For Discussion)

Presented at September 20, 2017 BPAC meeting

Project Description

The City seeks comments from the BPAC regarding possible bicycle and pedestrian improvements to the corridor between Atwells Avenue and Eaton Street known as Dean Street, Pleasant Valley Parkway, Raymond Street, and Oakland Ave. Such improvements would come back before the BPAC at least twice before construction.

At the February 2016 public idea-gathering meeting hosted by BPAC, this corridor emerged as one of the top four priorities citywide for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. This review is in response to the passage of the City’s Capital Improvement Program, which includes funding for Complete Streets projects. A conceptual alternatives analysis for this corridor is one of the City’s top priority projects for this funding, and thus the Commission’s suggestions are sought to inform its scoping.

Below are maps of the corridor, broken down into three segments that correspond to the different names the corridor is known by.

Dean Street (Atwells Avenue to Promenade Street)



Staff notes:

- This half-mile section of the corridor is divided by a median for the majority of its length, and varies from 59 feet to 69 feet of width between curbs. It consists of four through lanes (two in each direction) with occasional left-turn lanes.
- This section of the corridor is dominated by interactions with the traffic from the highway it passes over, US-6/RI-10. There are two locations where traffic exiting or entering the highway is hazardous to walking and biking: the two-way ramp between West Exchange Street and Spruce Street, and the southbound onramp where the corridor crosses the train tracks. Both of these ramps are on the western side of Dean Street.

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- This section also includes the Pleasant Valley Parkway Bridge over the Woonasquatucket River, recently reconstructed by RIDOT and striped to include conventional bike lanes on both sides.
- The intersection with Atwells Avenue should be considered, with recognition that it may exist independent of other bicycle infrastructure at other legs of the intersection initially.
- The City is currently reviewing proposals for the design and construction of an improved bicycle and pedestrian route adjacent to the Woonasquatucket River including where it crosses Dean Street. It is not yet determined whether this Greenway would be on the Promenade Street side, the Kinsley Avenue/Providence Place side, or both. Nor is it yet determined what the exact nature of the Greenway will be, though it will include such features as separation from vehicular traffic and access points to the River.

Pleasant Valley Parkway (Promenade Street to Chalkstone Avenue)



Staff notes:

- This half-mile section of the corridor is divided by a median with frequent openings for turning between Promenade Street and Valley Street, and is 81 feet wide between curbs (including medians) for this block, with 4-5 lanes. Between Valley Street and Chalkstone Avenue, the corridor becomes an undivided, two-lane street that is 34 feet wide.
- This section's defining feature is its complicated intersections. The Valley Street intersection is essentially a six-way intersection, with West Park Street and Ayrault Street interacting with intersection traffic in addition to the bigger Pleasant Valley Parkway and Valley Street.
- The slip lanes at the intersection with Promenade Street both encourage high speed of traffic and add an additional place people walking and biking need to look.
- Another significant feature of this section is Davis Park on the west side of Pleasant Valley Parkway all the way from Valley Street to Chalkstone Avenue. There is an existing path that runs through the park near Pleasant Valley Parkway and parallel to the roadway. While it varies in length and is not wide enough to act as a shared-use path currently, it is an existing option for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel along the corridor separated from traffic.



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Oakland Avenue (Chalkstone Avenue to Eaton Street)



Staff notes:

- This half-mile section of the corridor continues the trend of the corridor diminishing in curb-to-curb width as it goes north:
 - 36 feet by Nathanael Greene Middle School near Chalkstone Avenue
 - 32 feet at the Smith Street approach
 - 30 feet between Smith Street and Chad Brown Street
 - 29 feet between Chad Brown Street and Eaton Street
- The section is two lanes for its length, though there is a southbound right-turn lane at Chalkstone Avenue and a school drop-off zone parallel to the Middle School.
- By Nathanael Greene Middle School, there are two options that may make sense to use for the corridor's walking and biking route. Twitchell Park, across Oakland Avenue from the school, currently includes a path from the intersection with Chalkstone to just past Higgins Avenue. Like with Davis Park, this path is not currently of adequate width to serve as a shared-use path, but it is still useful and is separated from traffic. The Middle School property itself also has space adjacent to the roadway (and on the same side of the street as Davis Park) that could be useful.
- The extension of Pleasant Valley Parkway that runs past Elmhurst Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center is worth considering. There are existing bike lanes for part of this one-way couplet road, and a connection should be considered to any new infrastructure on Oakland Avenue.
- North of Smith Street, Oakland Ave is a residential street. While it is conceivable that bike lanes could fit on this street, it could also be a strong candidate for a Neighborhood Greenway.
- Where the corridor terminates at Eaton Street, there are two important connections nearby that should be made. First, there is an entrance to Providence College's campus several short blocks to the west of Oakland Avenue. Second, several short blocks to the east is Douglas Avenue, which is planned for restriping in 2018 and which will have bike lanes for a portion of it.

Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.