

EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

MEETING 6/8/22 Q+A

Public questions and comments submitted during the Q&A session of the June 8 virtual public meeting have been copied and pasted below. Questions that were answered live have been copied and pasted below. Questions that were not able to be answered live have also been copied and pasted below. Answers have been added below each question.

If you have any further questions, you may direct them to project planner Alex Ellis at aellis@providenceri.gov or 401-680-8522.

Question: The data for speeds is based on the 95th percentile. It would be helpful to know the outliers (e.g. highest speeds). Even if you have just a few cars going significant speeds (e.g. >30 mph) this could lead to greater likelihood of injury or death. What is the source for using the 95th percentile and not taking into account high speed outliers? Could this metric be adjusted?

Answer: 95th percentile speeds are the standard metric used by most American cities that are doing the best at redesigning streets for people. This value is more strict than the 85th percentile speeds that are more often used when looking at vehicular speeds. We collect this sort of traffic data using automatic traffic recorders (road tubes). The 95th percentile does collect the more common outlier speeds.

Question: Could you give an example of a "vertical" separation?

Answer: There are lots of kinds of vertical separation. So far, Providence has mostly used "flex-posts" like on Olney Street, or "Tuff Curb" like on South Water Street. The latter remains our first choice, but ultimately we would like to upgrade all of our trails to the more protective, more aesthetic, and more expensive options such as granite curbing or other options.

Question: How about raised crosswalks?

Answer: Raised crosswalks are a possibility that we can explore in combination with or instead of speed lumps if community members are interested in them for these corridors. The reason many streets have had speed lumps installed instead of raised crosswalks is so that access for emergency vehicles is not slowed down, but that being said, the City has successfully installed raised crosswalks in various parts of the city so we can explore that if there is a strong preference for it on these streets.

Question: None of the corridors address connecting the East Side to downtown, train station, and the Capitol building. When will Angell and/or Waterman paths be addressed?

Answer: Angell St and Waterman St are included in the Great Streets Plan, and on streets as busy as they are, the only appropriate urban trail would be protected by vertical elements. RIPTA's Transit Master Plan also highlights Angell and Waterman for increased transit service. The City is currently talking with RIPTA to get on the same page, and before those conversations get too much further we expect to bring the community into the conversation to hear what your priorities are. Stay tuned!

Question: I am concerned the lack of protection on many neighbor greenways. I like to ride with my 8 year old daughter (and in the future my 5 year old daughter). On page 11, it showed that when speeds were less than 25 mph no separation is needed. How often are actual speeds assessed vs speed limit? E.g. Blackstone Blvd I am concerned that speeding cars put a high risk to my family. If the average speed is above 25 mph, this would support separation.

Answer: The speeds we consider are not speed limits, but actual speeds measured during a traffic study. Specifically, the 25 mph threshold applies to the very fastest cars: the 95th percentile speeds. This is quite a strict standard, necessitating measures to slow down traffic even on some neighborhood streets, and requiring separation on busier neighborhood collector streets. We have not recently measured speeding on Blackstone Boulevard, but vertical separation may be possible there in the future.

Question: Would it be possible to explain (or show) what a walker or biker will experience in these new implementations? I am lost in all the detail here.

Answer: Streets where similar improvements have recently been installed include Washington Street in Federal Hill, Oxford and Ontario streets in South Providence, and Vermont and Farragut in Washington Park. Since someone also suggested raised crosswalk, you can see raised crosswalks on Pleasant Valley Parkway to better understand what those might look like.

Question: Isn't there a plan to put in a proper urban trail on North Main? Then it would make sense to extend the Doyle greenway to that urban trail? North main is an important road to connect to to actually get around the city.

Answer: Yes, North Main Street is in the Great Streets Plan for a separated urban trail, and Doyle Street is also in the Great Streets Plan all the way to North Main Street. In this project, we are working on shared-street neighborhood greenways, and unfortunately the traffic counts of

the western part of Doyle Street indicated traffic volumes higher than are feasible for a safe neighborhood greenway, instead requiring a separated urban trail. So we will not make that connection as part of this project because it's a bigger change than what this project is scoped for, but we do still plan to make the connection at a later time.

Question: How will the city work to reduce speeding in these streets? How will the city enforce proper adherence to these new systems?

Answer: The goal of traffic calming such as speed lumps or speed tables is to make it physically difficult or impossible for drivers to drive too fast. Best practice from other cities is to reduce speeding by this sort of infrastructure rather than through more temporary measures.

Question: Is ongoing maintenance part of this planning? Both the paint additions, and debris maintenance of curb access.

Answer: Yes, maintenance requirements are always a consideration when designing complete streets improvements. For one example, protected urban trails such as south water are much easier to maintain for plows and street sweepers if they are bidirectional such as South Water Street, instead of single direction like Olney Street. For another example, the drainage implications of traffic calming elements such as curb extensions and raised crosswalks are a significant consideration in choosing what to install. The plan for maintenance of both street paint and sweeping is for new complete streets features to be maintained by DPW just like the rest of the roadway.

Question: Will the proposed Doyle route be linked to Olney path?

Answer: Yes, in the Great Streets Plan, the vision is for the two streets to be linked by Camp Street, North Main Street, and Hope Street.

Question: Has the city considered enforcing speed limits (with cameras) to support bikers? / **Question:** What about cameras to enforce speed limits on certain roads, esp those that are concerning re: bikers?

Answer: There are some locations in the City where the State has allowed the installation of speed cameras: within a certain distance from schools. State law governs speed camera placement. The speed cameras installed so far have been successful, and we continue to rotate cameras to other locations where the Traffic Engineer believes they would be useful.

Question: Has alternating the parking along benefit street on each block from the east to the west side to create more of a 'yield street' been considered?

Answer: That's a great idea, and we will look into it.

Question: Is there any data on the effectiveness or lack thereof of sharrows?

Answer: Without other improvements to a street, they do not do much. That's why currently, we only install them in combination with traffic calming.

Question: Are there set goals to reduce accidents or reduce motor vehicle speed?

Answer: Not as a citywide goal currently, but we are hoping to include some of these sorts of metrics in an update to the Great Streets Plan soon.

Question: Perhaps you could get rid of parking on one side of Doyle Street to reduce the issues there and be able to include it in the urban trails?

Answer: That's a great suggestion, we will look into it.

Question: Will the non-compliant curb ramps be upgraded as part of this project as well?

Answer: No - unfortunately, we do not have funding through this particular project to make improvements to sidewalks or curb ramps, but we understand that those are important investments to improve access for everyone and DPW continues to make such improvements citywide with funding from the Capital Improvement Program. Some of these streets have separate repaving projects that do include curb ramp upgrades.

Question: Would you share how many attendees are on this zoom this event? [Response in chat: I'm curious how many community members are attending tonight.]

Answer: There are 34 community member attendees (not including presenters). Including people who have dropped off, there have been about 45 community members in attendance.

Question: Has the team assessed the wide approaches of some side streets which intersect with Benefit? They work sort of like slip lanes, which are dangerous.

Answer: Yes, DPW has also been talking to neighbors and Councilwoman Anthony about the intersection of Benefit Street with Angell, and tightening that intersection up. Other locations are not currently part of our scope, but if there are other locations we should look at, please let Alex know via email.

Question: Is there funding to daylight any intersections? Visibility is poor at a number of Camp Street intersections due to parked cars & trucks.

Answer: Daylighting means clarifying existing parking restrictions at corners so drivers & pedestrians can see each other better. Yes, that's something we may be able to do as part of this project.

Question: Other parts of Great Streets are actual Urban Trails; this is... paint. Why is this part of the plan so weak on protecting vulnerable road users?

Answer: Off-road is the most ideal facility but we can't do that everywhere. The next best, safest option for all ages and abilities of people to bike on a street is a protected urban trail. We do that where we can. The next best option is focusing on neighborhood streets that are already pretty quiet and reasonably comfortable to bike on. We would never put a shared street facility on a busy street. But on some of these neighborhood greenways, merely traffic calming and a few other improvements can make those streets comfortable for people from age 8 to 80.

Question: Is there a truck tonnage max that is allowed on neighborhood streets? Many trucks avoid speed bumps by going down heavily residential/neighborhood streets.

Answer: While individual streets may have truck restrictions posted on them, there is no citywide limit on truck weight on neighborhood streets. Trucks weighing more than 30,000 pounds are not permitted on bridges, and commercial vehicles are only permitted to park in residentially zoned areas if they are actively loading or unloading, and they are not permitted to idle while doing so.

Question: what is planned for the intersection of Olney and Benefit? how can southbound cyclists safely make that connection

Answer: That connection is somewhat dependent on the planning process for North Main Street, which RIPTA is planning to pick up in the near future. Ultimately, the Great Streets Plan suggests both Benefit Street and Olney Street would connect to a protected urban trail on North Main Street. In the meantime, it may be feasible to improve the connection between Olney Street and Benefit Street along the eastern curb between Burrs Lane and Olney Street, but there are not currently plans to build this connection.

Comments

- As much as pedestrians appreciate bumps, drivers will object. *[Response in chat: I am a driver that does not object]*
- If you wait for drivers to approve every measure to calm traffic and reduce speeds, you will do *nothing* to make children and other vulnerable road users safe. And I am a

driver and a cyclist who does not object to more stringent measures to make vulnerable road users safe. Sharrows do *nothing*.

- The speeding on all of these streets is extreme.
- Friends of Brown St Park would love to see speed humps or raised crosswalks in front of Brown St Park. We also love the idea of a urban trail between Brown St Park and Billy Taylor Park. *[Response in chat: Thank you Brandy! As a user of Brown Street Park I would also like to see physical measures like you describe]*
- I agree that speeding is a persistent problem all along these streets AND on the ones in between.
- I'm hoping that the city will improve visibility at all intersections on Camp Street by limiting on-street parking near those intersections. Paint will not be enough to discourage on-street parkers. Trust me. *[Response in chat: Agree with Val about parking and improving intersection visibility!]*
- Here are the virtual meeting for the East Side Urban Trail Network, and I am hearing that there will be no separated bike lanes. So what exactly are we doing here? Disappointing. To be clear, if you wait for drivers to approve every measure to calm traffic and keep vulnerable road users safe, you will end up doing *nothing*.
- Parked cars on Benefit and Camp/Brown interfere with visibility at intersections. Parked trucks make it really dangerous.
- Neighbors have resorted to posting their own signs begging drivers to slow down.
- speeding on Benefit is very prevalent
- A strategy to daylight all the intersections by placing some kind of heavy vertical barrier (ideally a planter or tree pit a la Sycamore street!) on the painted curb extensions would be great
- As a community member, I would like to share my support for any traffic calming methods to improve safety. *[Response in chat: +100% Bill]*
- I always feel like I'm going to die crossing Benefit
- I am hoping the city will consider daylighting the intersections along all these routes. Drivers park right up to the stop signs and even if they are back a bit, the very large vehicles obscure the stop signs. We need to consider the sightlines.
- People parking on the wrong side and the city not issuing tickets on Benefit is a huge problem. If they don't enforce the rules, there's no point.
- I would appreciate street calming on Camp & Brown. I walk my nephew's dog there twice a week. :)
- I and my son (11) bike on these streets regularly. Sharrows do *nothing* and are a waste of time *[Response in chat: completely agree with Christian Roselund on waiting on drivers - we will end up with nothing! Also agree that sharrows do not do much, unfortunately.]*
- Sharrows offer a minor amount of support to litigation that ensues an accident involving a bicycle. That is all.
- Calming Benefit Street is complicated! Cross traffic roads have very wide aprons at the intersections. Almost like slip lanes. Please note in your design plans.
- Thank you for showing the examples of what these things look like!
- The drainage grates are about the only plan I have heard here that is meaningful.

- I bike with my 8 year old daughter (and in the future plan to bike with my 5 yo daughter) and agree with Christian's comments that sharrows do not notably change the risk to bikes. I question how much drivers' behavior changes when seeing sharrows
- The grates are fantastic for bikers- really glad for them!
- Because the drainage gates are the only thing that is physical infrastructure, not paint. By limiting yourselves to nothing that reduces lanes or parking, this plan has been rendered mostly meaningless.
- In a couple of decades of cycling on roads with "share the road" signs and arrows in multiple cities, I cannot count the number of times I've been cursed at by drivers while there's a sign or arrow *right next to me*.
- Seems mostly half measures.
- I concur with previous comments on sharrows. Don't actually do anything for safety.
- The problem with the split bumps is that the wider based SUVs, trucks, etc. also just speed over them.
- Agree with Christian. There is no effort here to slow down traffic in a meaningful way. Maybe I missed something? Are there set goals to reduce accidents or reduce motor vehicle speed?
- I also often feel afraid riding too close to parked cars, even on roads like Elmgrove. Drivers aren't paying attention and could easily door bikers as they get out of their cars. The parked cars also push me further out into car traffic; space and parked cars are an issue.
- Please note that Benefit St traveling north to North Main widens past the intersection with Jenckes and cars routinely speed up—often to 40mph and run through the stop sign at the junction with North Main and Olney—very dangerous for residents, bicyclists, people walking to the mall, Whole Foods, etc.
- Please note that Benefit St traveling north to North Main widens past the intersection with Jenckes and cars routinely speed up—often to 40mph and run through the stop sign at the junction with North Main and Olney—very dangerous for residents, bicyclists, people walking to the mall, Whole Foods, etc.
- I like using the 95th percentile vs 85/80th percentile. that's good to hear, but curious if could even go higher. It would be interesting to know the 100th percentile as just 1 death is 1 too many (which is more likely to happen with 100th percentile speed driver)
- Glad to hear that about N. Main Street. More drastic measures are fine; Great Streets needs safe connections [*Response in chat: More drastic measures sound great to me!*]
- Perhaps you could get rid of parking on one side of Doyle Street to reduce the issues there and be able to include it in the urban trails?
- May 24, 2021: "Providence- Doyle Ave @ Camp St, pedestrian struck." yes please plenty of neighbors of the community here now :) to encourage you
- CW Anthony verbal comments - supportive of Great Streets and proposals on East Side. Interested in what residents think.
- CM Goncalves verbal comments - excited to hear community feedback
- I have taken note of some of these speed related concerns and will work on it.
- A driver struck a pedestrian, who was pregnant, about a year ago in Wayland area. Her husband posted that on Nextdoor

- Which will be prioritized in Great Streets: the physically separated urban trails, or these improvements that are mostly just paint?
- As a resident, I would like to voice my support for making safer to bikers and walkers. I would be more interested in seeing more significant improvement vs mostly sharrow on neighborhood greenway [*Response in chat: +100% Bill*]
- The lack of connection between Olney and Benefit is a problem [*Response in chat: agree ! Olney & Benefit needs safety improvements!*]
- This all sounds like progress to me, even if it isn't everything we would like, so thank you for anything that slows cars down and gives pedestrians and bikers more breathing room!
- As a resident of this area, I support more robust safety improvements here on the East Side--I especially want to see some sort of vertical element and a buffer on every street here.
- LOVE South Water St! Great improvement for cyclists!
- There is value in paint as it shows what a city values. Hopefully we can progress beyond this to more deeply ingrained civic infrastructure. This is a good start, but ***so many of us*** want to see more.
- Crossing the crosswalk that simply goes across Whole Foods (on North Main, e.g. to get to that bus stop in front of the Santander bank) is horrible because there's a ton of traffic coming from every direction constantly in/out of the plaza

Attendees

- Tim Rondeau
- Tim Shea
- Andy Koziol
- Annie Newman
- Brandy McKinnon
- Chris Martin
- Greg Gerritt
- Kathleen Gannon
- Miko
- Rosie Jaswal
- Val Reishuk
- William Brown
- Denise Guadanino
- Tim Maly
- Mary Leite
- John Goncalves
- Helen Anthony
- Tom Schrama
- William Trimble
- Katherine O'Shea
- Eva Anderson

- Bill Thomas
- Katie Silberman
- Nirva LaFortune
- Liza Farr
- Archana Ramanujam
- R
- Christian Roselund
- James Baumgartner
- Liza Burkin
- Tiffany
- Hayley
- Lauren Goldberg
- Matt O'Connor
- Bradly J. VanDerStad
- SNA Host
- Debra Chase
- Sarah Wu
- Linda
- Evan Moorman
- Joseph Chazan Maker
- Katherine Prevost
- Lara
- Ronald Yuan
- Stephen Ursprung
- Will Helt