



MEETING MINUTES

Mount Read Boulevard Corridor Study
NYS Route 33 (Buffalo Road) to Stone Road
City PC # 124464
UPWP Task No. 7574

Public Meeting #1
Monday May 20, 2013 6:00-8:00PM
School 43 Cafeteria, 1305 Lyell Avenue, Rochester, NY 14606

Summary:

Erik Frisch (City of Rochester) welcomed meeting participants to the meeting. Mike Croce (Bergmann Associates) provided an overview of the study goals and objectives. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the purpose of the project, the study area, the study goals, existing conditions, and to solicit information from the public that will be useful for the study.

Study Area

The study area covers Mount Read Boulevard from NYS Route 33 (Buffalo Road Traffic Circle) to Stone Road. The length of the corridor is 4.4 miles and includes portions of the City of Rochester and the Town of Greece. The land use in the area is a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential.

Study Goal

The goal of the study is to develop a vision for the Mount Read Boulevard Corridor that will improve conditions, operations, safety, and pedestrian/bicyclist accommodation while maintaining access to commercial buildings, industrial facilities, and neighborhoods.

Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes for the project could include:

- Support continued economic growth
- Enhance neighborhood character
- Improve safety
- Encourage appropriate speeds
- Address congestion & operational issues
- Improve pedestrian, bicyclist, & transit accommodation
- Maintain or improve business access
- Continue to accommodate trucks
- Improve infrastructure conditions and aesthetics
- Eliminate confusion associated with service roads

Current Schedule

The current schedule includes a study of existing conditions and public outreach to be conducted in spring 2013, future conditions forecasting and concept development that will take place during the summer of 2013, a review of the concept by the PAC and the public that will occur in fall 2013, and the production of a corridor vision document by spring 2014. As of today, the next phases (further study and design) are not programmed. However, it is possible that preliminary design and environmental studies could be initiated by 2016, detailed design could begin in 2030, and a project could be constructed by 2035. The overall project could also be broken up into several smaller increments for an optimized, phased approach.

Existing Conditions

Today, infrastructure conditions are fair. There is some pavement cracking and rutting at the Jay and Lyell intersections. There are potholes and cracking on the service roads. The curbs, gutters, signs and guiderails are at the end of their useful life. Signals and lighting are older and outdated. Bridges are in fair to good condition.

Corridor traffic volumes are relatively stable. Trucks make up 3-10% of all vehicles on the road (depending on location). The Monroe County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) forecasts a growth rate of 1% per year for the study area. Today, traffic volumes range from 15,000-20,000 per day, with the busiest segment being I-490 to Lyell Avenue.

There are 11 signalized intersections and numerous stop or yield controlled and uncontrolled ramps. Service roads provide access to businesses & residents from Lyell Avenue to Joanne Drive. The service roads provide connectivity, but can be confusing.

The Lyell Avenue intersection operates at capacity during the evening peak hour. Most intersections currently have one movement at capacity.

The study team reviewed accident data records from May 2009 - April 2012. There were a total of 375 accidents, 60% of which were at intersections and 40% were midblock. One third involved rear end collisions. Accident hot spots include the Lyell Avenue and Lexington Avenue intersections.

There are numerous RGRTA Bus Routes and stops on the corridor. Lyell Avenue and points south are the most heavily used areas for transit.

Bicycles are not restricted or prohibited from Mt. Read today, however there are no separate facilities and few suitable crossings. There are few bicyclists or pedestrians on Mount Read Blvd today due to the number of trucks and vehicle speeds. Comfort is also a factor in the low rate of bicycles and pedestrians observed. The majority of the study area lacks ADA accessible ramps or crosswalks.

Demographic Data

In 2010, the population in the corridor was 29,542. Nearly 24% of population is under age 18. Approximately 30% of the households leave for work before 7am, compared to 26% across the City of Rochester and 25% across Monroe County. Approximately 82% of households commute less than 25 minutes. Only 12% commute less than 10 minutes; therefore, few residents work within the general study area.

The median household income was \$42,000 in 2010, showing there is a strong segment of middle income households. There was a 7% vacancy rate, which is lower than the City of Rochester rate of 10% and just higher than the Monroe County vacancy rate of 6%.

The average assessed value of homes ranges from \$49,000 to \$97,000.

Land Use

Approximately 73% of the frontage (within 200 feet) has industrial use. Only 2% of the area within 200 feet of Mount Read Boulevard is vacant. There are nearly 3,500 residential parcels within ½ mile.

The National Park Service recommends a ratio of parkland to population at 6.25 acres per 1,000 persons. Today, there are 64 acres or 2.2 acres per 1,000 people within and around the study area.

The study area has undergone a recent resurgence in development, with Holleder Technology Park, the expansion of Monro Muffler/Brake, the redevelopment of the Canalside Business Center (Old Valeo), Foodlink, and JC Fibers. There is also the potential for additional future redevelopment at Eastman Business Park and other sites in the area.

There are approximately 18 acres of vacant industrial land in the corridor. Conversion of this vacant land to industrial uses could conservatively equate to:

- 250,000 to 300,000 SF of new construction
- \$1.3 million in additional assessed value
- 150 to 300 new jobs
- \$5 million to \$13 million in new wages

Public Outreach

To date, the City has held one Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. The study team has conducted 4-5 interviews with stakeholders. The City sent notices to 500 residences and businesses along the corridor to advertise the public meeting, emailed 35+ businesses, and developed a project web site at <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/mtreadblvdcorridorstudy>.

To date, we've heard the following comments from stakeholders:

- Buffalo Road traffic circle is confusing
- Infrastructure looks worn away from I-490
- Congestion and pedestrian accommodation are issues at the Lyell Avenue intersection
- Traffic management at the service road intersections needs improvement
- Future development could include linear buildings in front of the large industrial developments
- Mount Read Boulevard is needed as a bypass corridor for incidents or construction on Route 390
- Mount Read Boulevard acts as a barrier between industries to the west and residences to the east
- Bicycle and pedestrian accessibility needs improvement, but be thoughtful about how it would mix with industrial traffic
- Green it up! Consider a linear park.

Breakout Groups:

The final segment of the meeting involved the formation of three breakout groups. Each group was facilitated by a member of the study team and asked to discuss a series of corridor related questions. The results of the session were summarized and presented just before the conclusion of the meeting. Results of the breakout group sessions are summarized below:

1. What works well?

- Adequate capacity overall with lots of lanes and handles volume well
- Speed limit
- Timing of lights... until Lyell
- Industrial hub of the region
- Snow removal, because there is lots of space
- Not much diversion off Mount Read into neighborhoods
- Continuous thoroughfare
- U-turns at median breaks (Jay to Lyell)
- Service roads – industrial/residential
- Alternative to NYS Route 390
- Mount Read gets motor vehicles northbound and southbound
- Two lanes in each direction carry traffic well
- Tractor trailer access

- Access control (left turns aren't allowed at every driveway or access point)
- The NYS Route 104 interchange

2. What could work better?

- Trucks run over the curbs; need better turning radii at Lyell
- Better maintenance of medians (garbage, grass)
- More space to have a breakdown safely (southern segment of the corridor)
- Make the light shorter when turning westbound from Lyell on to Mount Read southbound
- Stop trucks from running lights
- Traffic cameras
- Pedestrians need more time to cross at Lyell and throughout the corridor
- Bike lanes or wayfinding to side streets.
- Fix the lane by the school; Students need more room for drop-off and pick-ups
- Accidents at Lyell and Mount Read Plaza; traffic needs to be slowed and there is no safe lane out
- Stop people from driving faster than the speed limit
- Pedestrian signal at Lyell isn't working
- Maltby has cut through traffic; might need a traffic light at Lyell.
- The Mount Read and Driving Park intersection could be improved to reduce congestion caused by heavy truck traffic
- The Lexington and Mount Read intersection could be made less confusing and congested
- A coordinated traffic light system with different weekday and weekend settings is needed; reduce the number of times you hit a red light - especially where red light cameras are in place
- Better consistency of traffic control at intersections
- Wider the service roads
- Facilitate vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic across Mount Read Boulevard
- Improved truck access; more room to easily complete turning maneuvers
- General maintenance
- Stop instead of yield at NB/SB service roads north of Driving Park
- Service road interaction with ramps
- Building the road like an expressway
- Pedestrian walk signs
- Sidewalks, connectivity for kids to school, especially in winter
- Better bicycle facilities, separate from pedestrians
- Better pedestrian facilities, north/south and east/west; promote crossing and business traffic
- Understanding of the corridor's purpose. Is it a commuter route or a destination?
- Make the "second" turn easier (after you turn off of Mount Read and on to a service road)

3. What would you add or change if you were the project designer?

- Remove service roads implement u-turns
- Roundabouts
- Better signage
- Traffic calming features
- Encourage slower travel speeds
- Mount Read SB to I-490 WB needs a right turn lane
- Right turn lanes throughout the corridor
- Better signage, especially on the service road SB to Ridgeway because it's two-way traffic and that is not always understood
- Slow lane needed to help decelerate at Ridgeway
- Longer stacking lane and longer light for left turn lane at Lyell Avenue
- Reduce three lanes to two lanes, add bike/pedestrian accommodations (not everyone agreed)
- Get rid of Buffalo Road traffic circle; some were open to a roundabout

- Cosmetic improvements like grass median and trees; try to make it less commercial feeling, like Oxford Street.
 - Move the roadway into the center and add more green space on the outsides rather than installing a median no one will maintain
 - Maintain u-turns from Lyell to I-490
 - Roundabout at Buffalo Road, Emerson, Driving Park?
 - Encourage restaurant, drug store, residential services
 - Improve pedestrian accommodation and safety
 - No [need for] bike accommodations in the middle area.
 - Separate facility for improved pedestrian and bicyclist mobility
 - Sound barrier for homes north of railroad
 - Lyell intersection needs pedestrian refuge areas, wider sidewalks, better aesthetics, medians (only if well maintained)
 - Remove Ridge Road ramps or install signals at Mount Read
 - North of Lyell, squish traffic into the middle and add green to the outside, on one side add linear park and on the other, add curves
 - Maintain Mount Read as a viable emergency response route
 - T intersection at Buffalo Road traffic circle
4. What unique local, cultural, geographic, visual, or historical concepts could we incorporate into the design?
- Why is it called Mount Read?
 - Something easy to maintain and graffiti proof
 - Highlight Mount Read Plaza
 - Green Lexington, watch for brownfields
 - Historic signs at:
 - Haloid Street, where Xerox started
 - Avery Street, the first Ragu sauce made
 - General Otis on Lyell
 - First bowling alley in area
 - Former Aquinas stadium on Mount Read at Ridgeway

Erik Frisch encouraged meeting participants to take comment sheets, and either hand them in or mail them to frische@cityofrochester.gov. Attendees were advised they could visit the project website for more information and submit additional comments by May 30, 2013.

The above constitutes our understanding of issues discussed and decisions reached during the meeting. Please notify the undersigned, in writing, with any errors or omissions within 5 business days.

Best regards,

Highland Planning LLC



Tanya Mooza Zwahlen, AICP
Public Outreach Coordinator

cc: BA Project file