

Unionville Traffic Committee

**Town Council Presentation
South Main St/New Britain Ave
Intersection**

October 25, 2011

The Purpose of Today's Meeting

To present the recommended plan for the
South Main St/New Britain Ave
Intersection

- To review the difficulties with this intersection
- To explain why this plan is being recommended

Committee Charge

The Unionville Traffic Committee was established in June 2010 by the Farmington Town Council to form a partnership of Town Officials, the Unionville Village Improvement Association (UVIA) and the Unionville Business Cooperative (UBC) for the purpose of developing improvements for vehicle and pedestrian flow within the village. The Committee was specifically charged to gather the ideas of Farmington and Unionville residents as input to the planning process.

Committee Members

- Charlie Keniston, Town Council
- John W. Vibert, Town Council
- Ted Lindquist, UVIA
- Tim Eagles, UBC
- Robert Sanford, UBC
- Jan Colturi, Resident
- Bernard Erickson, Resident
- Paul Melanson, Chief of Police
- Jeff Ollendorf, Town Planner
- Carol Golas, Recording Secretary

Background

- The Committee has used public input to craft recommendations for improvements to Unionville's traffic flows
- Several of the short term solutions were presented to and approved by the Town Council in May.
- These include:
 - “Right Turn on Red” at West Avon Road
 - Light Changes at Unionville Center
 - A Longer turn arrow at New Britain Ave
 - Restriping South Main St north of New Britain Ave

Background

- In May, the Committee presented several mid-term improvements, including one for the South Main St/New Britain Ave Intersection, but requested additional time to explore additional possibilities
- Tonight, the Committee's recommendation regarding the South Main St/New Britain Ave Intersection will be presented

Background

- Our process has been to share ideas with the public before making a firm decision and two plans were considered and discussed with constituents
 - We have met with impacted landowners and business owners
 - We have met with impacted neighborhoods
 - And we have presented potential directions to interested residents
 - Presentation slides and maps have been posted on the Town website

Background

- The Committee concluded that the South Main St/New Britain Ave intersection is critical because problems there, impact other intersections in the area

Specific Observations

- This particular intersection has numerous difficulties that we are trying to address.
 - Southbound traffic is slowed and stopped by traffic turning left on New Britain Ave
 - Even when southbound, left turning traffic pulls tightly to the center line, if 6-9 cars queue up, through traffic will halt and cars will stack up across the bridge
 - Trucks and/or buses will quicken the problem
 - Traffic coming from New Britain Ave has difficulty turning right due to the configuration (i.e. turning radius) of the corner

Specific Observations

- This particular intersection has numerous difficulties that we are trying to address.
 - Traffic coming from New Britain Ave can be slowed or halted by left turning traffic
 - Rails-to-Trails users cross South Main unsafely
 - Northbound traffic is slowed and stopped by traffic turning left on Railroad Ave
 - Southbound traffic that is turning right onto Railroad Ave needs to slow dramatically due to a poor turning configuration
 - Commercial entrances/exits heighten the danger and impede the flow of the intersection

Recommended Solution

New Britain Ave Relocation

- **We recommend that the New Britain Ave Relocation Plan be approved with the conditions that:**
 - **The Town develops a village improvement design plan for the South Main St/New Britain Ave/Railroad Ave neighborhood**
 - **The Unionville Traffic Committee's charge would be expanded to specifically oversee the development of the village improvement design plan**
 - **And that the Town offers its assistance in support of the businesses which would be affected, directly or indirectly, by the proposed plan.**

New Britain Ave Relocation

- Moves the New Britain Ave intersection to the south while leaving the Railroad Ave intersection in place
 - From approximately Wall St, New Britain Ave would be relocated onto the current Burnham Ave intersecting with South Main just north of the Rails-to-Trails
 - Several properties would be taken by the State including a tailor shop, Air Tool Sales and Service, a single family home, and several rental properties

New Britain Ave Relocation

- Widens South Main St creating traffic lanes for dedicated turns
 - A left hand turn lane for New Britain Ave and a left turn lane for Railroad Ave will facilitate through traffic
 - Widening requires several properties to be taken by the State including the liquor store and the beauty salon
 - Coordinated traffic signals at both Railroad and New Britain Ave will improve the exiting from both streets
 - Crosswalks will now be available for Rails-to-Trails users

New Britain Ave Relocation

- Moves the entrance to Depot Place from South Main St. to New Britain Ave
 - Signage improvements will be required to avoid confusion
- Reconfigures the corners of Railroad Ave to facilitate turns
- Village improvement plans will be needed to complement the traffic plans
 - Unplanned empty lots are unacceptable
 - Increased business activity is an achievable goal if traffic concerns are addressed

New Britain Ave Relocation

- While solving many problems, it requires:
 - Dramatically changing the flow on the current Burnham Ave and lower New Britain Ave
- But it:
 - Dramatically increases the potential queue for southbound, left turning traffic alleviating the need to replace the existing bridge; the existing bridge will not impede traffic flow

New Britain Ave Relocation The Northside Component

- Difficulties with the South Main St/Mill St intersection will be addressed as part of the overall project
- Problems at this intersection include:
 - Southbound traffic turning left into the CVS Plaza impedes southbound through traffic
 - Left turning traffic exiting the CVS Plaza impedes traffic bound for Mill St.
 - Misalignment of streets limit lane assignments
 - Underutilized southbound right-turn lane allows aggressive drivers to jump the traffic queue.

New Britain Ave Relocation The Northside Component

- Reconfigures the South Main St/Mill St intersection
 - Improved alignment of Mill St and “Water St” and of South Main St with the bridge is the goal
 - Improving the flow out of the CVS Plaza by allowing straight traffic, heading for Mill St, to use the right-hand lane
 - Improving the flow southbound on South Main St by eliminating right-turn lane and creating a left turn lane into the CVS Plaza.

New Britain Ave Relocation

- Should the recommended relocation advance, the project would be administered by the State.
 - The Design, Right of Way & construction costs (estimated at approximately \$10 million total) will be funded with 80% Federal & 20% State funds.
 - Currently \$2.6 million of STP-Urban funds are allocated. Additional funding will be required.
 - In addition to fair market value compensation for impacted properties, the DOT will provide relocation assistance for businesses, property owners and tenants.
 - Depending on available funding, the project could be completed in a 3 to 5 year period.

New Britain Ave/Railroad Ave & South Main St – A Considered Alternative

- Widens South Main St and New Britain Ave creating traffic lanes for dedicated turns
- Several properties are required to be wholly or partially taken to provide for the additional width including several buildings
- It redirects the Rails-to-Trails to facilitate controlled pedestrian crossing.

New Britain Ave/Railroad Ave & South Main St – A Considered Alternative

- While solving many problems, it requires:
 - Increased pedestrian traffic on the east side between New Britain Ave and the eastbound bike path
 - Abandonment of the existing path from Hunters Ridge to South Main

New Britain Ave/Railroad Ave & South Main St – A Considered Alternative

- And it:
 - Still has a limited queue for left-turning cars before bridge traffic is impacted
 - This cannot be cured without replacing the existing bridge with a widened replacement

Beyond Today's Meeting

- If the recommended plan is approved by the Town Council, the following steps will occur
 - The DOT will hold a public informational meeting & will seek a Resolution of Support from the Town Council prior to project initiation
 - The Unionville Traffic Committee will commence the process for creating the village improvement design plan
 - Once the preliminary design is completed and all impacts identified (property & environmental), the DOT will hold a public hearing. DOT officials will inform all impacted property owners (or their tenants) of the property acquisition/easement process, its probable schedule and their rights.
 - If a business is impacted, the Town's Economic Development Director will also be available for further assistance.

Unionville Traffic Committee

Questions or Comments