

**Department of Transportation
State Project No. 0171-0456
Proposed centerline rumble strips on
State Route 534 (Camp Meeting Road) from the Manchester Town Line to Route 85 (West Street)
Virtual Public Informational Meeting
June 15, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.
MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live**

Report of Meeting

In Attendance: There were approximately 6 people on Teams and 3 on YouTube in attendance for this event, including First Selectman Sandra Pierog. The remaining attendees were likely residents.

Presentation: The meeting went live at 6:45 p.m. with an informative introduction slide for attendees to view before the event began. The official start of the meeting was at 7:00 p.m. with an introduction from the Department's Project Engineer Balazs Martai, who also covered the process for how attendees could interact with the project team. Balazs Martai gave a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by a Question and Answer session. Erika Lindeberg, Rahmane Camara, Ryan Pothering and Devyn Howe were also present and involved with the event on behalf of the Department.

The presentation covered the following items:

- The project description and location of the project limits. The background of steps and analysis process taken to evaluate State Route 534 as eligible centerline rumble strip segments were discussed. Crash history within the project limits was discussed as well.
- The use of centerline rumble strips in the nation and Connecticut were also discussed, as well as crashes affected by its installation, criteria for eligibility, scheduling, and costs, followed by the live Question and Answer session.

Comments and Questions: Questions regarding roadway noise were most prominent. The comments/questions are summarized below:

1. **Chat comment:** The Board of Selectman of the town of Bolton remains opposed to this installation for several reasons. The road is in a hollow with homes located up on the hill on both sides of the length of the project. Several years ago, a similar project on Route 6 caused multiple complaints about noise and this project will be no different. The accidents in this area are not lane crossings but occur at intersections where site lines are very bad, or vehicles leaving the travel portion of the road and going into the woods. Money would be much better served by improving site lines at these intersections and creating a road diet and adding bike lanes. Bad idea of rumble strips. The height of the homes off the road is not considered in your presentation. The length off the road is much less than the neighborhoods that complained from Route 6.

Response: Mr. Martai responded that the U.S. Route 6 project which had previously occurred took place before he was involved with centerline rumble strip projects, but he has some history on it. The U.S. Route 6 segment was about three-quarter miles long. Mr. Martai's understanding is that the centerline rumble strips were installed on that segment of U.S. Route 6 because State representatives wanted it at the time due to a number of head-on collisions that were happening in the vicinity. After a few months, the centerline rumble strips were removed at the request of the state representatives due to the noise. Mr. Martai mentioned during the presentation that

the rumble strips that the Department is proposing for the centerlines are a revised design. These centerline rumble strips are shallower and spaced further apart, so they make less noise. The ones that were previously installed on U.S. Route 6 were the same ones that are used on the interstates today, which are quite loud, but these ones are much quieter. The other important point to consider is that if the rumble strips are being heard, that means that vehicles are driving over them. One of the considerations that the Department reviews is the width of the road. In the proposed segment, the width of the road is around 16 feet for each lane, specifically 11-foot travel lanes and approximately a 5-foot shoulder on each side of the centerline. This gives vehicles plenty of room to maneuver, even larger vehicles, without encroaching on the rumble strips. To reiterate, if there is a vehicle that is driving over the rumble strips and creating noise, the rumble strips are serving their purpose. This project is a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. The Department's goal is to prevent crashes from happening in the first place rather than reacting to ones that have already happened and resulted in someone getting hurt. Even if the project saves one life or keeps one crash from happening, the project will pay for itself.

Mr. Martai thanked the First Selectman for her question and reiterated that the Department takes all comments into account. The first part of the process is to get input from people that are local to the area and once the comment periods over, the Department will further discuss the comments with local officials as necessary.

2. **E-mail question:** Are there any environmental impacts with installing these CLRS at these locations?

Response: Mr. Martai responded that no, there are no additional environmental impacts that are expected that would not already exist from the paving project. Since the paving project already took place, the only thing that will happen is the rumble strips will be milled into the pavement, however, there is not anything harmful being done. There are no additional environmental impacts other than what would have happened when the paving project took place. The centerline rumble strips that are cut into the pavement are then hauled from the job site and are recycled for future use and upcoming pavement projects.

3. **Chat question:** Has a study been conducted to determine what the noise level will be at each home after the rumble strips are installed?

Response: Mr. Martai responded that no, a study in terms of decibels has not taken place at this time. The centerline rumble strips are quieter than the shoulder rumble strips heard on the highway. The centerline rumble strips are narrower, spaced further apart, and the grooves are shallower. The primary goal is to get the attention of the driver, not impact the neighborhood. If noise is being heard, that is a sign that vehicles are driving over the centerline rumble strips, alerting the driver to move back in their lane, and possibly preventing a crash from happening. The noise shouldn't be a concern, as the Department analyzed the residential density in the area. The existing homes are at least 100 feet back from the road, a measurement that is based on national best practices. There is continuous research by the Federal Highway Administration for different designs of rumble strips, however, for this project, the Department is using the latest specification that is available.

4. **E-mail Question:** Will lanes be closed during the installation of these rumble strips?

Response: Mr. Martai responded this is a moving operation, so there should be very little interference with traffic. The construction will take place during off peak hours so that people commuting will not be impacted. There should only be one lane closed while the other is open to maintain traffic flow. Once the construction crews mobilize, they can complete the 1.6-mile

segment in a few hours. Since the pavement was put in place during last year's paving project, there will be an even shorter process.

5. **E-mail question:** How long will the project take and when will the work be scheduled?

Response: Mr. Martai responded the project will only take a few hours. This is a short section, and once the construction crew is mobilized, they can complete it in a few hours. The work will be scheduled for either the summer or fall of this year. A press release will be issued prior to any work so the public will be aware.

6. **E-mail question:** Will reflectors be installed in the grooves as part of this project?

Response: Mr. Martai responded that no, reflectors will not be installed. Reflectors often get ripped up when the plows drive over them in the winter. Therefore, not only do they have to be closely maintained, but they can pose an undesired safety hazard as debris that can hit vehicles. Therefore, reflectors will not be proposed in conjunction with the centerline rumble strips.

7. **E-mail question:** How much money will the project cost to the State and to the Town?

Response: Mr. Martai responded the approximate cost of installing centerline rumble strips for the 1.6-mile segment is around \$27,000. The state covers the entire cost of the work. The Department receives funding every year to repave roads on the vendor in place list. The Department is looking at centerline rumble strips now because the pavement is new. One of the qualifications for centerline rumble strips is that the pavement is either new, in good condition, or less than three years old. Since the rumble strips are considered in conjunction with the vendor in place lists, they are funded under the same umbrella. There is no cost to the town for the work that is being proposed.

8. **Chat question:** Were the sight lines reviewed along the length specifically from Route 85 to the Birch Mountain intersection in both directions?

Response: Mr. Martai responded that the main purpose of this project and this meeting tonight is to discuss the centerline rumble strips. Having said that, if the question is referring to the sight lines from Birch Mountain Road, French Road, or Fiora Road onto State Route 534, it is the responsibility of the municipality to ensure that there are proper sight lines cleared of obstructions, such as vegetation. Therefore, the Department did not look at sight lines from side roads as it was outside the project purview.

9. **Chat question:** How do I get permission to do those sight line improvements? We've been told we can't do anything.

Response: Mr. Martai responded that he is not sure who may have said the municipality cannot improve sight lines. Mr. Martai stated that when referring to intersections with town roads, it is the responsibility of the municipality to clear sight line obstructions from the town road approach. Mr. Martai stated that if First Selectman Pierog has further questions about this topic, she may send a follow-up email after the discussion so that he can provide additional information and resources.

10. **Chat comment:** Rumble strips seem to be much more cost-effective approach to preventing crashes on Camp Meeting Rd rather than blasting rock along the roadway improving sight lines.

Response: Mr. Martai responded that he agrees as rumble strips are a proven low-cost safety countermeasure. Rumble strips are easy to install, and since they are cheap, even if it saves one life or prevents one crash from happening, it pays for itself. The Department thoroughly

investigates a roadway's eligibility before suggesting centerline rumble strips. Noise is the primary concern, yet is a sign that drivers are travelling over the centerline. The proposed centerline rumble strips are not the same design as previously installed on U.S. Route 6, and have been revamped to be quieter. Once drivers feel and hear the rumble strips, it should only take one to two seconds before the driver performs the corrective action. The Department is not anticipating the noise to be an issue, unless there are other factors that the Department is not aware of, such as speeding, which could make it difficult for drivers to stay in their lane. In conclusion, Mr. Martai agrees that rumble strips are cost effective.

The meeting ended at 7:40 pm after all questions were answered. Attendees were reminded to fill out the survey and that the comment period would be open until June 29 should anyone wish to submit after further comments or questions to the project email or phone number.