

CT Department of Transportation
Installation of Centerline Rumble Strips on Route 67 (Southbury Rd) in Roxbury
Virtual Public Informational Meeting for the Town of Roxbury
August 24, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.
Zoom Live Event

Report of Meeting

In Attendance: There were 32 attendees in the Zoom webinar.

Presentation: The meeting went live at 5:55 p.m. with an informative introduction slide for attendees to view before the event began. The official start of the meeting was at 6:00 p.m. with an introduction from Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) Engineer Rob Smith, who also covered the process for how attendees could interact with the project team. Mr. Smith gave a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by a Question-and-Answer session. Natasha Fatu, Balazs Szoke, and Jake Chamberlain were also present and involved with the event on behalf of the Department.

The presentation covered the following items:

- The extents of proposed centerline rumble strips (CLRS) installation on Route 67
- The safety benefits of centerline rumble strips
- The crash history on this segment of Route 67
- The schedule and estimated Construction cost, which is \$15,000 and using 100% State funds
- Question-and-Answer session

Comments and Questions: The questions and responses from the Q & A session are listed below.

- 1. Question:** I think the CLRS on Route 67 will be inadequate, have you considered reducing passing zones and/or considered speed bumps?
Response: The Department has a variety of treatments for places that have a history of crashes, such as high friction surface treatment. We can look into the passing zones to see if they are acceptable or need to be revised.
- 2. Question:** Are you planning to put these CLRS in passing zones?
Response: The Department didn't previously put CLRS in passing zones, but in accordance with FHWA guidance currently and going forward CLRS will go in passing zones.
- 3. Question:** My main concern is noise, many houses are close to the road. The rumble strips on Weller's Bridge Rd are extremely noisy.
Response: It looks like Wellers Bridge Road would not meet at least two of the Department's criteria for CLRS; the speed limit and the road width. That road is narrow and it doesn't give a driver much room to avoid rumble strips. Noise is a valid concern. When someone runs over the rumble strip, it means they crossed the centerline and it may alert them to avoid a crash. If there is a road where a lot of drivers are crossing the centerline, that may need more attention such as enforcement to address distracted drivers. There have been crashes related to crossing the centerline on this road before. CLRS are one tool to keep people in their lane, there are also other measures to keep people in their lanes and from crossing the centerline.

- 4. Question:** Wouldn't reducing the passing zones help with crashes? Also, drivers are routinely driving upwards of 70 mph on this stretch.

Response: It seems like the passing zones are a real concern there. Those are handled by the Office of State Traffic Administration (OSTA) and we will reach out to them. The passing zones do get reviewed by OSTA as part of this. For people speeding, as engineers we try to address issues with infrastructure improvements, and that sounds like some enforcement is needed to go hand in hand with engineering solutions to address driver behavior.
- 5. Question:** Are centerline rumble strip elements reflective?

Response: No, no reflector will be added since they do not work well with the plowing in the winter time. There will be more reflective pavement markings when the road gets repaved with fresh epoxy pavement markings with reflective glass beads.
- 6. Question:** Who will pay for the resurfacing after the CLRS installation and how much will it cost?

Response: The resurfacing is done prior to the installation of the CLRS. We are not sure of the cost since we are involved more with the safety side and the CLRS. Roads in CT are on a cycle for Vendor-in-Place paving and Pavement Preservation based on roadway age and traffic volumes, but that is typically handled by our Pavement groups. If someone is looking for more information on that please let us know and we can reach out to get the answer.
- 7. Question:** The areas in town that are below 30 mph speed limit will not have rumble strips, correct?

Response: Correct, the extents of the rumble strips are only going from the Southbury Town line to Route 317 (Church St.)
- 8. Question:** Is this a proposed project that we have the right to object to?

Response: This is an informational meeting and we are gathering people's comments. The Pavement Preservation project will be happening and is part of normal resurfacing, but the centerline rumble strip part of the project will be discussed more after this meeting.
- 9. Question:** There are residents in the Historic District near to the road, has this been considered?

Response: This has been considered. We do look at the residential density within 100 feet of the road. If the density close to the road is high, then there is a greater chance any one of the houses will hear cars going over the rumble strips.
- 10. Question:** The minimum road width is 14 feet, this road does not have a continuous road width that would comply. What are the stats for the rumble strips for drivers going 70 mph in a 40 mph zone? As the ZEO for the town I can say the set backs from the property line are only 50 feet.

Response: We use state roadway inventory data, aerial imagery, and a field visit to check the road width but we can take another look at that and they can also send us data if they have it. A number of things are considered before CLRS are installed, including road width, speed limit, and residential density, as well as all the public feedback.
- 11. Question:** The \$15,000 cost of the CLRS only covers the portion of Route 67 in Roxbury, correct?

Response: Yes, that cost is only for the portion that goes through Roxbury. For the full cost of Route 67 it would be around 50% more. CLRS are actually one of the lowest cost safety treatments we have and can be used in more places than other treatments. As a separate note, CLRS are meant to address locations with a history of crashes but also locations where the crashes have not yet occurred.

12. Question: The CLRS likely won't help and will only increase sound pollution. Reducing speed is a more effective solution.

Response: We reiterate the importance of other elements beyond just infrastructure, like enforcement, to address safety concerns. If speeding is a known issue, please reach out to local police.

13. Question: What other criteria does a road have to meet to be chosen for CLRS? The crashes we know of were related to outside factors like DUIs. New cars also have safety technology to monitor lane drifting.

Response: The criteria that we use deals with the amount of traffic, the pavement condition, the posted speed limit (35 mph or more), and residential density. In the fatal crash that occurred, the driver was impaired and CLRS are supposed to address impaired drivers. They were also distracted according to the police report when they drifted across the centerline. Regardless of what is going on with the driver, like they are unfamiliar with the road, they're distracted, or they are impaired, the CLRS are supposed to reduce the potential for crashes from crossing the centerline. The new technology to alert drivers of lane departures is a good thing because it will mean fewer people are crossing over the centerline so the noise from the rumble strips shouldn't be an issue at that point.

14. Question: The project extent include heavy terrain and land use, is there a possibility to reduce speed limits.

Response: Some of these questions we have touched on before. Speed limits are set by OSTA and they are not being changed as part of this project, but we can take that comment into future consideration. Lowering speed limits has to go hand and hand with enforcement because people will drive at whatever speed they feel comfortable, even if that is too fast. We did look at the residences that were within 100 feet of the road. There are 60 residential units that are outside the 100 foot threshold and 15 units that are within. We would consider that low density within the 100 feet and expect that rumble strip noise should be rare.

15. Question: We have non-conforming homes within 25 feet of the road. You say the CLRS are for speed management but there were only 6 crashes even though thousands of cars travel the road each day. The frequent trucks on the road will cross over the rumble strips.

Response: As mentioned before, we install CLRS in places that have a crash history and also to prevent future crashes. There were many more than the 6 crashes on this segment of Route 67, but the 6 that were related to crossing the centerline included a fatality and serious injuries and are the kinds of crashes we are trying to prevent. Our goal is to try and save as many lives as possible, we will try whatever we are able to mitigate crashes and CLRS are an FHWA proven safety countermeasure. If the noise is happening, it means vehicles are going over the centerline and the rumble strips are working as intended. We appreciate the comments and will record all of them before a final decision is made.

16. Question: What is the design for the CLRS? Will it be a continuous line?

Response: We are using a newer specification for centerline rumble strips and the CLRS are not continuous and here is a photo of what they will look like. Rumble strips under this spec are being called "mumble" strips since they are significantly quieter than the older version rumble strips.

17. Question: You said CLRS shouldn't be installed with houses closer than 100 feet to the road. The homes near the center of town are right on the road. Can you clarify the decision criteria on this?

Response: It's more about density and the chances of any one house hearing a lot of people going over rumble strips, it isn't a completely restrictive criteria. We will take the comments regarding the

historic district and the houses close to the road into consideration when we discuss this project after the meeting tonight.

18. Question: I live on Wellers Bridge Road where CLRS were installed and it has massively degraded our way of life as vehicles go over the centerline, particularly on curves. It happens all times, day and night. Are the proposed CLRS still under discussion or has the decision been made?

Response: We have gone over some of this, but Wellers Bridge Road was an older style spec, the roadway would not have passed our criteria for rumble strips for state roads since it is much narrower than the road being discussed today.

19. Question: I live near the end of the passing zone and I see people illegally pass outside of the passing zone. Removing the passing zone will actually increase the rumble strip noise since people will try to pass and cross the centerline anyway.

Response: Thank you for that comment. That may go back to the enforcement aspect of road safety.

20. Question: Are CLRS allowed along a designated scenic road?

Response: When we looked into this before and believe the answer was yes. We can check that again.

21. Question: You stated several times that CLRS can prevent head on collisions, do you have evidence for this?

Response: Yes, we looked back at the crashes on the UConn crash repository. Anyone can take a look at the crash history if you google Connecticut Crash Repository, you can actually look at some of the crashes that occurred on this section of Route 67. In that crash history there were some lane departure crashes where someone crossed over to the other side of the road and hit another car or hit a fixed object.

22. Question: Below speed limit of 35 mph, are there no rumble strips installed?

Response: Yes, that's what we follow on State Roads.

23. Question: The crash statistics show that 6 out of 34 crashes on Route 67 could have been prevented by CLRS but you also said CLRS can prevent 50% of crashes. How did you arrive at the 50% number?

Response: That has to do with the difference between the proportion of all crashes and specific types of crashes with those two statistics. When we look at run off the road and head on collisions, which are some of the most dangerous crashes that can result in fatalities, we see CLRS are effective against those. CLRS prevent less crashes as a percentage of all crashes, but in terms of the most serious and fatal crashes it's a higher percentage. This is why we focus on using CLRS to address roadway departure, especially on rural roads. Addressing those types of crashes is an Emphasis Area for CT DOT and part of our Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The fatalities that occur on rural roads are a serious concern that we are actively trying to address with several different treatments including CLRS. This may not be the only safety solution on this roadway but we know from Before and After studies and FHWA documentation, as well as crash information we have through the repository, that this is an effective safety countermeasure.

24. Question: The proposed CLRS are in the Roxbury historic district, there are many historic homes close to the road, closer than 100 feet and we are concerned about the noise and vibrations. We have sent an email explaining the process of approval for the historic district

Response: Thank you for that comment, we did go over the number of house that we found within the 100 foot buffer.

25. Question: Will there be any additional height added to the road with the resurfacing? Previous resurfacing altered the incline of my driveway and caused an issue.

Response: We aren't sure since that is handled by our pavement groups and we are in the safety group. If you like, you can send a follow up email and we can get an answer for you.

26. Question: How far ahead of the intersection at Church street do you plan to end the rumble strips?

Response: The spec says to end CLRS 25 feet from an intersection with a town road, which doesn't include driveways to businesses or homes, just anywhere where there is a break in the double yellow centerline marking. In practice, that ends up being closer to an 80 foot CLRS limit to an intersection than 25 feet. The current proposed extent will go right to the Church street intersection.

27. Question: I live in a house built in the 1835 on Southbury Road for 28 years, my house is 22 feet from the pavement. Route 67 has traffic 24 hours a day, people speed and I've seen people going over 80 mph. It is worse at night, I have had two drunk drivers go off the road and flip their cars, go through my fence and leave the scene. People pass over double yellow lines in front of my house. Noise from CLRS will make sleep impossible and life intolerable. There are numerous antique homes on this section of road.

Response: Thank you for that comment. We did already comment on enforcement and preventing crashes. All these comments will be taken into consideration and recorded.

28. Question: What towns near Roxbury have the CLRS in place that you are proposing?

Response: Most of the towns that surround Roxbury have rumble strips. If you would like a list of locations, you can follow up with us.

29. Question: I want to clarify that crash history is important, as I was in a collision in my driveway because of a distracted driver and CLRS would likely not have prevented that. There was temporarily a "Your Speed" sign which helped a little, however it was solar powered in a heavily treed area. An area with less tree cover may help.

Response: Yes, CLRS will not address all crashes. The signs were added as part of a CTDOT effort with the T2 center in UConn. As part of that program every town that requested it were given two signs at no cost to be posted by the town. There was training involved with that program which discussed the sign placement and when to move them. We are trying to combine different proven countermeasures to decrease the number of crashes as much as we can.

30. Question: I'm not sure when you did your field visit if you observed the 50-100 dump trucks that travel on Route 67 daily. They are not equipped with the new lane detection features and they are extremely loud already without the rumble strips.

Response: We would like to reiterate that if there are vehicles crossing the centerline that is an important concern whether rumble strips are there or not. It's likely that the truck itself is louder than the rumble strips in general.

31. Question: One of the residential units you said you were not sure if it was a hotel, it is likely the elderly housing community Bernhardt Meadows.

Response: We recently installed centerline rumble strips in North Haven and there was an elderly community there. I asked the staff whether they had gotten any complaints about the CLRS and they actually hadn't realized they had been installed. At least in that location it didn't seem the noise was an issue.

32. Question: If your mission is to save as many lives as possible, I think you should get the support of other State agencies that are integral to the success of this mission. If you are not addressing buy in from others, who are you suggesting should do this?

Response: That's a good comment and it's something that we work on at DOT. We work with a lot of other Agencies and we have a lot of initiatives going right now. We are working on more than just the centerline rumble strips, we have other projects within the safety group and in other groups in the Department. One of the things is the strategic highway safety plan which we mentioned. That is a 5-year plan to decrease the number of fatal and serious injury crashes throughout the state, not just through rumble strips but through many other countermeasures. We do work with other stakeholders to address the four "Es" which are engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency response services. At a high level there are a lot of stakeholders that we do work with and that are onboard with what we are trying to do.

33. Question: Can the area be adjusted and not include right in town?

Response: This goes back to the other comments regarding where exactly the rumble strips should be. We will take those into consideration when we have a discussion after this meeting.

34. Question: I understand the benefits of rumble strips and I live in the Historic District. The traffic in the center of town is much less on Route 67 past the firehouse. I don't see the need for rumble strips through the center of town. After the strips stop at Route 67 and Route 317, where do they start again?

Response: The CLRS do not continue past that point in Roxbury, that intersection is supposed to be the most North limit and then they would extend South into Southbury to Route 6.

35. Question: Antique Homes on Southbury Road in the area you plan on doing this are at these addresses: 3, 4, 8, 9, 20, 23, 29, 31, 50, 73 (mine), 127, 168, 212. All of these houses are less than 50' from the road, and most of them are within 25' of the road.

Response: Thank you for sending those addresses, we will take another look at those houses there.

36. Question: How many of the 6 of 34 crashes actually happened in the Town of Roxbury as opposed to somewhere else on Route 67?

Response: Those crashes all occurred in Roxbury. If you would like to look at the data that is publicly available on the UConn Crash Repository. To be clear those are the crashes just in the past 3 years, and we were actually surprised by the number of crashes given the traffic volume on Route 67.

37. Question: Has a member of the team observed the town? There are no businesses here except one small antique shop.

Response: Yes, we did go out to the town.

38. Question: Would you post the email address again?

Response: Yes, its DOT2024CLRS-Roxbury@ct.gov.

39. Question: Have you accounted for the way that sound reverberates in Roxbury? Sound in the center of Roxbury carries a great distance and our grade school will likely be in the effected area.

Response: We have had people go into the field and purposely drive over rumble strips and the sound does go down with distance. There is also background noise as well from it being a state road.

40. Question: Is Route 67 the only state route where these are planned in Roxbury? If all state routes get CLRS, there will not be a part of Town that isn't effected.

Response: At this time, only Route 67 is being considered. The CLRS installation follows the pavement projects to keep costs down and because installing CLRS on older pavements reduce the life of the pavements.

41. Question: We have about 5,000 cars per day through town, many are trucks. Something unique to this town is how sounds travels. We can hear vehicles accelerating from far distances in town. I strongly encourage you to spend time in town during the evening hours to appreciate how sounds travel as the noise created by the current rumble strips is awful. Your assurances that these CLRS are not going to be as intrusive is fine unless they aren't.

Response: Thank you for the comment, it seems the noise reverberation is a concern. If there are speeding vehicles and trucks creating excessive noise, that is likely louder than these new proposed rumble strips.

42. Question: As outlined in CT enabling statue the Roxbury Historic District Commission has to approve any structure. The term "structure" as used in the statue is defined as "any combination of materials. other than a building, which is affixed to the land." Included are signs, fences, walls, street, bridges, dams, driveways, monuments, parking lots, etc. The installation of centerline rumble strips within the Historic District would be considered an alteration to the road and would be subject to review by the Historic District Commission, requiring the submission of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to be reviewed by the Commission at a Public Hearing. Thank you. The HDC looks forward to discussing this with you.

Response: We have been in discussions with the town already and if this is something that they want to look into further, then we can.

43. Question: There are a number of homes on Route 67 that are close to the road. Will the concerns of residents who live on these roads have any impact on the decision to install CLRS? I know that guiderails have been replaced several times in front of our home. Maybe we should have the rumble strips added to the white edge lines

Response: Yes, we are having this meeting to share information and get concerns from the public. We are not doing shoulder rumble strips at this time on any road that isn't limited access.

44. Question: How loud is a car driving on a rumble strip in decibels?

Response: That depends on how far away from the road you are. At 100 feet it's definitely less noisy. We have tried to measure it, and sometimes we don't even get readings above background noise depending on how busy the road is, so that is a difficult question to answer. We can take your concerns into account about particular homes that are close to the road on Route 67.

45. Question: This is such a common sense item it should just be a standard installation on all newly paved or repaved roadways that have a double yellow line. In my real estate line of work, as well as during normal driving to places like the supermarket, on countless times I have seen distracted drivers looking at their phone instead of the road and they constantly cross the yellow line. There is also this strange phenomenon called a lazy driver who decides that they want to go straight instead of following the curves of the road, even if it means crossing the yellow line. I know progress and change is slow in the government, but this should be expedited and pushed up to a top priority so it can continue to save lives.

Response: Thanks for the comment.

46. Question: We are 100% in favor of the installation of centerline rumble strips on Route 67 to reduce roadway departure and head on crashes. With the alarming increase in the number of texting/distracted drivers on the road, you are putting your life on the line each time you get behind the wheel. Hopefully the State can also address this issue with education and legislation to reduce distracted driving and remove distracted drivers from the road.

Response: Thanks for the comment.

47. Question: Does Public opinion matter at all in this decision or is installation of the CLRS a foregone conclusion?

Response: In case you joined late we can answer that again, we will be taking public opinion into consideration.

48. Question: Is there a place where we can see the new rumble strips that are close?

Response: Yes, we can follow up with that in an email. We have a list of locations where the new “mumble” strips are installed.

49. Question: How does Roxbury crash density compare with crash density in the rest of the state?

Response: The crash density I would have to check, but we were surprised by the number of crashes that are happening on this road given that there are 2,500-4,000 vehicles on the road per day.

50. Question: How do we register our opinion for or against the CLRS?

Response: Opinions given during this Zoom Q&A are recorded, after tonight you can email DOT2024CLRS-Roxbury@ct.gov or leave a voicemail at 860-594-2020. There is also a project webpage with some information which is <https://portal.ct.gov/DOT2024CLRS-Roxbury>

51. Question: If you stop the rumble strips 300 feet before the intersection you are not in the Historic District.

Response: Thank you for that comment.

52. Question: More emails with detailed questions are being sent.

Response: We likely won't get to answer all the emails during this forum tonight, but we will reply to each one and any questions that come in until the end of the comment period on September 8th.

The meeting ended at 7:15 pm when new Zoom Q&A questions stopped coming in. Any outstanding email questions not answered during the meeting were followed up by email. Attendees were reminded to fill out the survey and that the comment period would be open until September 8th, 2023 should anyone wish to submit further comments or questions to the project email or phone number.