

**CT Department of Transportation
State Project No. 0171-0478
Proposed centerline rumble strips on
Route 190 (West Stafford Road) from Route 30 (Crystal Lake Road) to Route 32 (Monson Road), and
Route 319 (Orcuttville Road) from Route 32 (Monson Road) to Route 19 (East Street)
in the town of Stafford
Virtual Public Informational Meeting
July 14, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live**

Report of Meeting

In Attendance: There were approximately 11 people on Teams and 6 on YouTube in attendance for this event, including First Selectman Sal Titus and Director of Public Works Devin Cowperthwaite. The rest of the attendees were likely residents.

Presentation: The meeting went live at 5:45 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 the Department's Project Engineer Balazs Szoke, who also covered the process for how attendees could interact with the project team. Mr. Szoke gave a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by a Question-and-Answer session. Natasha Fatu, Stephen Bruno, Jannat Khadiza, Robert Smith, and Yi Lou 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 Route 190 and Route 319 as eligible centerline rumble strip segments were discussed.
- 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 and ice accumulating in the grooves were most prominent. The comments/questions are summarized below:

1. **Email Question:** HB Hatch - How will these rumble strips effect the stability of two wheeled vehicles, motorcycles, crossing over them, in fair, or inclement, rainy or snowy weather? Will these strips hold ice, or be icy in the wintertime?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded he understands the concern. Centerline rumble strips (CLRS) have not been found to cause stability concerns for motorcyclists and other two/three-wheeled vehicles, instead rider/driver behavior has been shown as a central factor in crashes involving those types of vehicles. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration has allowed CLRS to be installed in areas with existing passing zones. Additionally, there are breaks in the CLRS at intersections with town roads for areas where the crossing maneuver volume is expected to be high. With respect to water and CLRS, the water does not accumulate in the centerline rumble strip groove because it is forced out by air/wind created by vehicles driving by and these CLRS are much shallower compared to those in the highways.

2. **Chat Question:** Resident west of Big Y - The 40-mph speed limit posted just west of the Big Y leads to drivers accelerating toward the Route 190-Route 319 roundabout. Shouldn't this speed limit be reduced to improve safety?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded he understands the concern. He reminded attendees that the primary purpose of the project is to discuss the proposed CLRS. The local traffic authority should be reached out to regarding speeding issues. The local traffic authority can reach out to the office of the State Traffic Administration which determines the appropriate speed limits based on surrounding factors, such as businesses nearby, how many driveways, etc. If there is a request to lower the speed limit in an area, it should be done so through that process.

3. **Chat Question:** Does ice buildup in the grooves during Winter? If so, does that create a safety concern?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded that the water does get forced out by wind created by vehicles driving by. Ice could build up if the CLRS doesn't have vehicles driving by for a long while. However, there are no complaints about that being an issue in the past for almost 400 miles of CLRS on state roads and 100 miles on local roads. The vehicles will only be going over the icy part for a very brief period while there is an error in driving. Ms. Fatu reiterated there is not much experience of ice buildup in the CLRS. She added the Department does salt treatment in winter to help to melt the ice.

4. **Chat Question:** Mandy - Can you reiterate...are the green highlighted sections on the maps the only areas that will have the rumble strips installed for this project?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded thank you. He confirmed that only the green highlighted sections on the maps will have CLRS installed for this project.

5. **Chat Question:** Is the visibility of the yellow lines compromised when the grooves are present?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded that no, since the grooves are recessed, and the paint is put into the recesses, the drivers can still see the paint so the visibility is not compromised. He added the pavement markings actually tend to last a little bit longer. As the CLRS helps the drivers to take correct actions actively if they drive on it, it reduces their tendency of staying on the center lines. As a result, the pavement marking doesn't need to get repainted as often.

6. **Chat Question:** Is the durability of pavement compromised by cutting grooves into the surface?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded no. That is partially why we are doing this project now. When the Department repaves the roadway, the pavement condition is known since it is brand new. For projects of this nature, the pavement needs to be in good condition and less than 3 years old. As a result, we haven't had any experience where the pavement starts cracking or deteriorating.

7. **Email Question:** Lynn Fontaine - We have many people who ride bicycles and walk on the road to and from the High school. With this being said, the vehicles will be constantly crossing the line. We need sidewalks before rumble strips.

Response: Mr. Szoke responded that with the new universal design standard across the state as roads get repaved, the Department is trying to provide shoulders as wide as possible. For the segments to be eligible for CLRS, each lane needs to be at least 14 feet wide from the centerline to the edge of the road, and the lane width will be 11 feet wide once repainted. That will give at least 3 feet of shoulder space for shoulder users after the road gets repaved. As for the sidewalks, the Department usually does not install those. Those are typically installed by the town. Ms. Fatu reiterated this is primarily a paving project and sidewalk is out of the scope of this project. The residents are encouraged to reach out to the town and local officials for sidewalk installation.

8. **Chat Question:** When are rumble strips beyond the shoulder strip used? Would they be warranted on these stretches of road to keep drivers within the lanes?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded that the main goal of CLRS is to keep drivers in their lanes. Ms. Fatu responded that we are really focusing on CLRS now, not shoulder rumble strips, and we want to work with our bike and pedestrian communities before we begin to pursue implementing shoulder line rumble strips on secondary roadways. The shoulder line rumble strips are now only installed on what are qualified as limited access highways. The Department is not installing shoulder line rumble strips on secondary roadways at this time.

9. **Phone Question:** Art Gary - He is concerned about the impact of sound on residents and animals along the roadway. Is there going to be an increase in sound for vehicles turning left over the rumble strips onto commercial driveways? He is also concerned about speeding.

Response: Mr. Szoke responded that he understands that the noise may be a concern. However, most of the sections have been vetted for homes in the vicinity and the Department is actively trying to avoid residences where possible. Having said that, in order to keep the segments continuous, there will be a couple of homes where the CLRS is being installed. Mr. Szoke reiterated that noise only happens when drivers are crossing over the centerline and need to take corrective action. As mentioned earlier, there have only been 5 crashes on Route 190 that are attributed to being correctable by CLRS, and 2 crashes on Route 319 in the latest 3 years. There is no way to know how many close calls or near misses there were. Any time the noise is heard, it reinforces the fact that people driving in the area are not staying in their lane. As mentioned earlier, we looked into the residential density and took that into account. Once the CLRS are installed, people tend to stay within their travel lane, which is one of the things we are trying to do as part of this. As far as speeding, the process to do so is to reach out to the town and the local traffic authorities who can reach out to the Office of State Traffic Authority. The Department can put a speed limit sign but cannot enforce it. Ms. Fatu added that regarding with the left turn vehicles crossing over the CLRS, the vehicles tend to slow down when turning left, and so the noise is significantly lessened when vehicles are turning left. But with that in mind, there will be a break in CLRS for those town road intersections as well as any town road intersections and signalized or major traffic generator driveways. Ms. Fatu also stated that the CLRS will help keep those distracted/fatigued drivers out of crossing over the centerline into oncoming traffic. Speeding is an enforcement issue. Local residents are encouraged to reach out to local police to request increased enforcement in an area where speeding is a concern.

10. **Phone Question:** Resident on the Route 190 section concerned about noise that would be produced by running over rumble strips every time a car on the left would be passing around right turning vehicles entering private driveways.

Response: Ms. Fatu responded that it may happen, but because of the vehicles are slowing down to make the maneuver across the CLRS, we haven't found any significant concern with the noise increase from the maneuver. Mr. Szoke added that the CLRS also acts as a deterrent for drivers turning into the driveway too quickly.

11. **Chat Question:** On side roads that diverge from the state road at an angle, can the gap in the rumble strips be made larger? The existing condition at Route 30 and Burbank Road is too narrow so it is hard to not cross the rumble strip when turning left.

Response: Mr. Szoke responded that the newer standard installation practice for now is to install 25 feet back from the side street extension line in each direction. The sections on Route 30 might

be installed before the standard was changed few years ago. There should be a buffer where the vehicles are turning so that they don't accidentally hit those rumble strips to cause the noise.

12. Chat Question: How long will the project take?

Response: Mr. Szoke responded once the construction crews mobilize, they travel at speed at 2 to 3 miles an hour and they do the work during non-peak hours. They can complete a combined 1.33-mile-long segment like this in a few hours. Once the new pavement is installed, this will be a short process which is not anticipated to impact regular commutes or lead to any sort of major delays. Ms. Fatu added that the time mentioned by Mr. Szoke does not include actual repaving time. The repaving will take a little bit longer. It is a separate operation. Once the roadway is paved, the crew will come back for the CLRS installation. Mr. Szoke reiterated that the CLRS installation is a moving operation and there is no detour of traffic anticipated.

13. Chat Comment: Thanks for the info. Nice job.

Response: Mr. Szoke and Ms. Fatu responded thank you.

14. Chat Comment: Resident west of Big Y - We look forward to new pavement. That alone means it will be quieter along Route 190.

Response: Ms. Fatu agreed and responded thank you. Mr. Szoke agreed.

15. Phone Comment: Art Gary - general comment that the format of questioning in this manner in the meeting is inadequate.

Response: Ms. Fatu responded thank you. She also apologized for this being the only mechanism for now. The public information meeting eventually will be going back to in person in the future. Any feedback is welcomed. We are always open to making changes. Mr. Szoke added feedback through the survey is also welcomed and will be used.

The meeting ended at 7:00 pm after all questions were answered. Attendees were reminded to fill out the survey and that the comment period would be open until July 28th should anyone wish to submit after further comments or questions to the project email or phone number.