ENFIELD SQUARE MALL

Traffic Impact Study

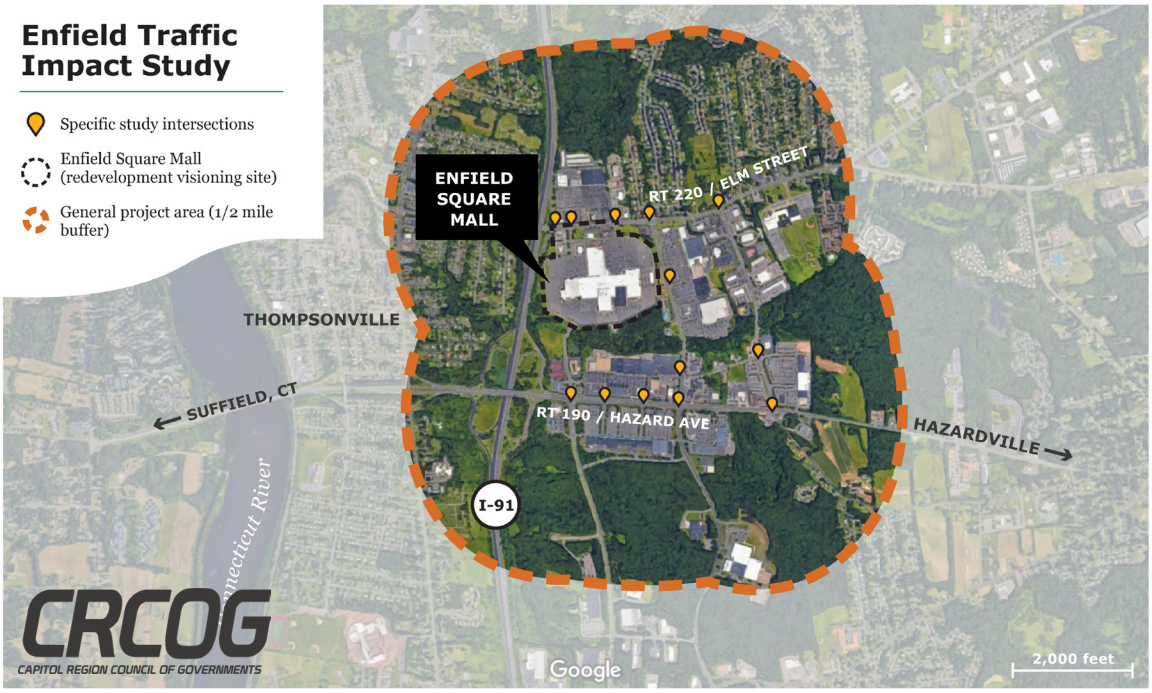
The study specifically analyzes 15 intersections, the majority of which are along the Route 190 (Hazard Avenue) and Route 220 (Elm Street) corridors. It will also provide a vision for the future of the Enfield Square Mall site informed by market trends and citizen input.

In partnership with CT Department of Transportation and the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Town of Enfield has initiated a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to evaluate traffic, congestion, safety, and roadway implications for a potential future redevelopment of the Enfield Square Mall. The study area includes the Enfield Square Mall and a total of 15 intersections around the mall located primarily along Hazard Avenue and Elm Street (Routes 190 and 220) as well as several intersections along Freshwater Boulevard and Palomba Drive.

Results of a market study and visual preference survey will be used to identify potential redevelopment alternatives for the mall site. The "preferred" development alternative will be evaluated for travel demand growth and anticipated traffic impacts on surrounding roadways, as well as mitigation measures that could be taken in response to increased traffic.

Questions? Please contact Caitlin Palmer at ***cpalmer@crcog.org*** for questions or to join our Interested Parties email list.

Project Website available at https://crcog.org/2021/03/enfield-traffic-impact-study/.



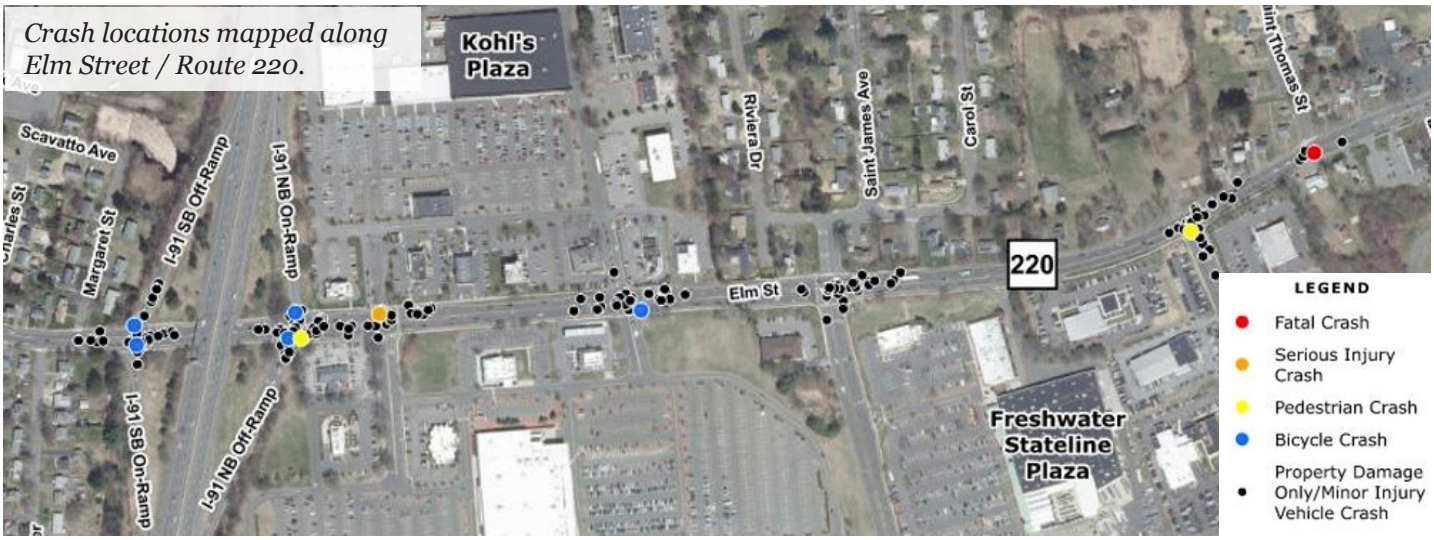
EXISTING CONDITIONS

In the Fall of 2021, the consultant conducted a site visit of the Enfield Square Mall site and streets of the study area. They made several observations regarding vehicle operations and pedestrian accomodations as they walked the area.

Regarding vehicular operations they noticed a near miss crash at Elm and Freshwater Boulevard, lots of left turn demand at Elm and the Kohl's Plaza intersection, turn lanes exceeding the storage provided, and missing pavement markings. For pedestrian accommodations they made several notable observations, including a lack of marked crosswalks, pedestrian pushbuttons, and "ped heads;" pedestrian ramps that are not ADA compliant; the narrow sidewalk under the highway bridge; and based on observations, pedestrian crossing timings may not match signal plans. They also noted that Elm Street already serves as an active pedestrian route despite the missing pedestrian accommodations, and also noted several bicyclists as well.

When conducting the crash analysis of the area, the consultant noted multiple crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians along Elm Street, particularly around the Interstate 91 ramps. In the last four years, there have been six bicyclist and two pedestrian-involved crashes. More generally, the crash history for that same timeframe (January 2017 to December 2020) has recorded 471 crashes in the project area. A large portion of these crashes (45%) are rear end crashes - not uncommon with stop-and-go traffic and frequent driveway entrances. Not far behind rear-end crashes are angle crashes (35%) often seen on commercial corridors where drivers attempt to maneuver around left and right turners slowing down in the travel lane.

Lastly, "Level of Service," or LOS, is commonly reviewed as part of an existing conditions analysis. LOS is a metric used to measure vehicle delay time at intersections on a scale of A (very little delay = 10 seconds or less) down to F (significant delay = 80 seconds or more for signalized intersections and 50 seconds or more for unsignalized intersections). Current performance at intersections varies depending on time of day and/or day of the week but most intersections perform acceptably now. However, future conditions - not including any redevelopment of the mall - are expected to worsen unless traffic mitigation measures are taken, especially in the afternoon peak (4-6pm) and on weekends.



Crash locations mapped along Elm Street / Route 220.

MARKET ANALYSIS

A market analysis of Enfield and the adjacent region was conducted in order to examine redevelopment opportunities for the mall site. Opportunities are based on local and regional market conditions and the outlook for suburban malls. The study concluded that significant amounts of residential and entertainment uses are economically viable as well as more limited retail and medical office uses. The study also identified other uses, all are discussed in greater detail below.

Residential
There is significant market potential for multi-family residential units at a variety of housing styles (apartments, townhomes, condominiums, etc.) and price points (upscale, affordable, senior living, etc.). Mixed use development combining residential development with shopping, dining, recreation, and entertainment venues allow for the site to achieve its full market residential market potential. The market potential for the mall site is 690 residential units over 5 years.

Retail
There is market potential for future retail on the site despite recent struggles of retail on the property. The strongest market potential is for restaurants, whether they be mid-tier, upscale, or independent. All new retail will likely perform better and enhance market potential when paired with residential or mixed use development.

Entertainment
There is unmet demand for new family-oriented recreation and entertainment establishments in and around Enfield. Specific uses include but are not limited to: brewery, indoor sports complex, indoor waterpark, bowling alley, golf simulator, etc. The study notes that favorable conditions for new hotel development existed prior to the pandemic, but has diminished and is no longer feasible in the near term.

Office
There is very limited market potential for office space, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is market potential for medical office space, at the rate of 38,000 square feet over 10 years.

Warehousing/Distribution
The study also noted market potential for warehousing and distribution uses on site, but based on current zoning for the mall site and direction by town staff, this option will not be explored.

General Shopping Mall Trends
The study notes that suburban style shopping malls are in decline due to the rise of e-commerce, shifts in consumer behavior, and the decline in department store anchor tenants. New strategies and trends have been used recently to facilitate mall redevelopment projects. These trends include:

- Bringing in new types of tenants, especially entertainment uses
- Shifting to alternative uses, such as multifamily housing, office, hotels, and mixed-use development
- Creating a themed destination, such as a repurposed mall site being used for a gym or healthcare centers, with similarly themed retail tenants.

The results of the market study and the VPS will be used in combination to inform the development concept(s) for which the next phase of the project - the Traffic Impact Study - will be conducted. *The full market study report is available at* ***https://crcog.org/2021/03/enfield-traffic-impact-study/.***

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

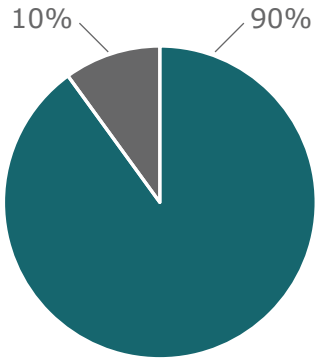
A visual preference survey (VPS) is a technique for obtaining public feedback on physical design alternatives by showing various images and asking users to rate them. The survey opened in February of 2022 and voting was open for four weeks. We had amazing participation with a total of 1,187 responses, including 37 Spanish survey responses. Additionally, we had over 900 written in comments as part of the survey.

1,187 survey responses!

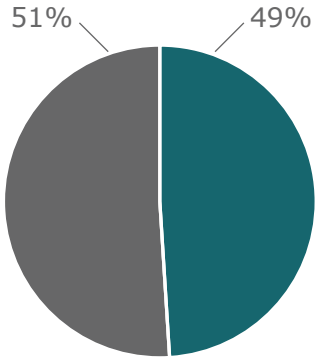
Approximately 40 questions were divided into the following themes: Building Density, Site Layout and Parking, Building Architecture, Building Heights, Residential Use, Entertainment Use, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities. Respondents were shown various images for each theme and were asked to rate the images according to what they felt was "Very Desirable," "Okay," or "Not Desirable." Several highlights of the survey results are shown to the right.

Where applicable, responses to the survey will be used to inform development concepts. For example, any hypothetical development will likely not involve buildings higher than four stories or a visible parking garage. A surprising number of respondents (95%) were supportive of single story development actually, however, to maximize development and therefore to best assess future traffic impacts, redevelopment concepts would likely explore 2 to 3-story redevelopment, which was still supported by a majority of responses (66%).

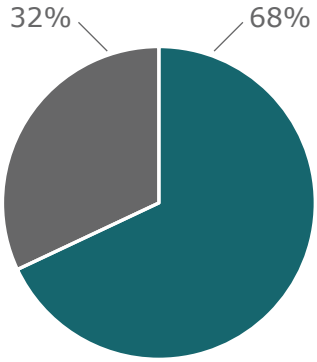
*The greatest majority of respondents (90%) were comfortable with an **Outdoor Walking Mall** with a pedestrian scale roadway and were shown an image of Evergreen Walk in South Windsor, CT.*



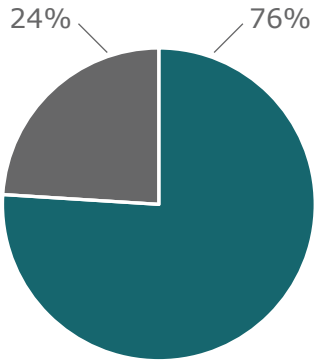
***Multiple Standalone Retail** or pad sites were viewed as the least desirable with 51% opposed (and only 16% of responses identifying as "Very Desirable").*



*Bridging the gap between retail and residential, a substantial number of respondents are supportive of **Mixed-Use**, with ground floor retail and residential uses above.*



***Townhomes** with individual access were clearly favored in the survey more than any other residential use, while apartments were viewed the least favorably.*



CRCOG
CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Please note that in order to depict the results more clearly, the "Very Desirable" and "Okay" responses have been combined in the graphics; this is making an assumption that anyone responding with either of those choices would be comfortable with that option.