



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Tuesday, September 13, 2016, 5:30 PM

Location: Fellowship Hall, Immanuel Congregational Church, 10 Woodland Street, Hartford

Subject: Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Working Group #8

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
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1. Meeting Location

The meeting was held in Fellowship Hall of the Immanuel Congregational Church, 10 Woodland Street, Hartford.

2. Presentation / Discussion

Francisco Gomes, of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), thanked the group and new members for attending. He said that the working session would focus on the details of local streets. He reminded those in attendance that the at-grade highway would have a smaller footprint than existing conditions, allowing for new development opportunities and complete streets design.

F. Gomes reviewed changes to the Sisson Avenue area. He traced the proposed route of the East Coast Greenway (ECG) which would be a 10-12 foot-wide path between Sisson Avenue and Laurel Street. He explained that having few at-grade crossings would make the ECG a convenient route between Downtown and points west, while also providing uninterrupted connections to Frog Hollow and Asylum Hill. He concluded that the project team aims to include on or off-street bike facilities on all local streets within the project area.

F. Gomes discussed integrating busses and bus stops into the design. He said that local roads are being designed to account for bus turning radiuses, recognizing that they will be the largest vehicles to most frequently travel in the corridor. He added that the project team supports including a shelter at every bus stop in the project area, while also consolidating bus stops into strategic locations. He said that there are currently too many bus stops, which reduces efficiency and lengthens travel times. He noted that the project will improve the overall pedestrian environment, so that walking an extra block to a bus stop will not feel uncomfortable or inconvenient. He concluded that where feasible the project team will recommend far-side bus stops in order to avoid traffic delays at intersections.

Mary Rickel Pelletier, of the Park Watershed Association, remarked that cyclists already pass through Bushnell Park without the proposed Bushnell Park West boulevard, and cautioned that the boulevard and reconfigured ramp system would negatively impact Bushnell Park and the historic rail viaduct. Rich Armstrong, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), said that no decisions have been made yet regarding the rail viaduct, and that its historic value may mandate its preservation.

There was a discussion on flex barriers and buffered bike lanes. F. Gomes said that flex barriers installed on Brookfield Street have been difficult to maintain. He said that the group's challenge is to identify sustainable design solutions. He said the group should also consider design features like textured pavement and vertical separation between bike and motor vehicle traffic.

The group discussed cycling on sidewalks. F. Gomes said that in Hartford it is legal to cycle on a sidewalk, and that the design team is examining widening sidewalks to improve cycling safety and ridership. He concluded that many commuters prefer to cycle on the street.

There was a discussion of roundabouts. One person suggested that off-road cycling facilities were preferred in order to eliminate grade crossings, and that roundabouts were easier to navigate for cyclists. F. Gomes said that roundabouts will be considered in some parts of the project area, but could not manage traffic volumes at intersections with highway ramps.

Toni Gold, of the West End Civic Association, asked if parking-separated bike lanes had been considered. F. Gomes said that this kind of facility requires wider streets to account for buffer space. He said that it would be challenging to install this kind of facility on streets with existing development, but the opportunity to build an extension of West Boulevard / Hawthorn from scratch could allow for parking separated bike facilities.

There was a question on what design features could reduce speeding. F. Gomes said that the project team is designing streets with less than 12-foot lanes in order to discourage speeding. He explained how adding street trees and encouraging pedestrian activity could calm traffic. Tim Ryan, of Transystems Corporation, said that safely managing all travel modes would be a

balance. He displayed a rendering of proposed changes to a section of Capitol Avenue, pointing out how a separated cycle track, landscaped median, and buffer vehicles could help to close what would otherwise be a speed-encouraging open viewshed.

Tim Courtney asked what was being done to encourage a modeshift away from automobile travel. Deborah Howes, of AECOM, said that the project would not add capacity to I-84 and noted the important regional role automobiles play in transporting freight. F. Gomes said that the project would aim to add capacity to bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure. He said that the project could add over 1,000 feet of sidewalk despite the removal of some local roads, and would reduce the amount of sidewalk under bridge structure by 90%. He concluded that **CTfastrak** and CTtransit service would be extremely valuable during construction, and that many travelers would likely make a permanent modeshift during and after project construction.

There were some discussions of bus frequency. Maureen Lawrence, of CTDOT, stated that the Hartford-area CTtransit fleet would soon enjoy geo-tracking infrastructure in order to track and anticipate bus arrivals and departures. Another individual asked if bus frequency would increase. F. Gomes said that there will likely be a higher demand for buses during construction, and that proposed improvements could reduce traffic and allow for shorter bus headways.