



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Thursday, August 10, 2017, 1:00 PM

Location: Training and Conference Center, The Chrysalis Center, 255 Homestead Avenue, Hartford

Subject: Local Road Connections Working Session

Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS and MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC		
Bruce Donald	East Coast Greenway Alliance	bruce@greenway.org
Cathy Zeiner	YWCA	cathyz@ywcahartford.org
Steve Balconoff	Connecticut Children Medical Center	sbalcan@connecticutchildrens.org
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Ken Gosselin	Hartford Courant	kgosselin@courant.com
Mike Sevino	Journal Inquirer	msevino@record-journal.com
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1. Meeting Purpose and Format

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss concerns related to local road connectivity with Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members and other interested members of the public. The event lasted for over an hour.

2. Discussion

Rich Armstrong, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), welcomed everyone to the Local Road Connections working session. U.S. Congressman John Larson arrived and acknowledged the good work completed on the I-84 Hartford Project to-date. He stated that while the scope of the I-84 Hartford Project is specific, the needs of Hartford are great. These needs include replacing the aging viaduct, fixing the levees along the Connecticut River, alleviating congestion at the I-84 / I-91 interchange, and reconnecting the city to the riverfront. He proposed a 100-year vision to address these needs, which would include realigning I-84 and I-91 in underground tunnels. He provided handouts to supplement his vision.

Mike Morehouse, of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., thanked Congressman Larson for his commitment to the Hartford region. He queried the other attendees to learn who sat on the project Public PAC, who had been to a project public meeting before, and who was new to the project. He referenced a handout created and distributed by the Project Team outlining various design items. He said the Project Team is comfortable with the design of highway ramps in the western portion of the corridor, and is close to becoming comfortable with conceptual CTfastrak connections to Downtown. He noted that the Project Team is still evaluating other design items, including the local road network in the Trident area.

M. Morehouse asked the attendees about their concerns for local streets related to the project. Stated public concerns included:

- The quality of connections across the lowered highway. Would the highway be low enough to see across, or would steep grades on local roads passing over the highway obstruct sightlines?
- Highway ramp interchanges with local roads and in neighborhoods. What treatments will be in place to calm traffic in these areas?
- The location of the new rail station and access along local roads.
- Local road connections in the Trident area, particularly the potential closing of Broad Street to vehicular traffic between Asylum Avenue and Farmington Avenue.
- Impacts to local businesses during construction and potential mitigation.

Casey Hardin, of TranSystems Corporation (TSC), described the Lowered Highway Alternative. He said that the Project Team has looked at about 10 ramp configurations in the western portion of the corridor and 15-20 ramp configurations in the eastern portion of the corridor. He said some appear to be more promising than others. He described four of these ramp options in detail; one in the west and three in the east.

Attendees asked what the orange and blue markings on Lowered Highway Alternative graphics signified. C. Hardin answered that orange represents proposed bridges, whereas blue represents potential property impacts.

An attendee asked why Park Street would pass under I-84. C. Hardin answered that design challenges in this area, including the Park River, do not easily allow I-84 to sit at a low enough elevation for Park Street to pass over the highway.

Tony Gold voiced support for the western interchange option, currently called W3-3. She also supported the new West Boulevard / Hawthorn Street connection.

Jennifer Cassidy, speaking on behalf of Ashley Street residents, voiced support for the third eastern ramp option, currently called EB-E6(S), because it would not utilize residential streets as the primary access routes for traffic to and from the eastbound highway ramps.

Toni Gold, of the West End Civic Association, requested more information on the potential closure of Broad Street to vehicular traffic between Asylum and Farmington Avenues. C. Hardin described the conflicting traffic movements and peak hour traffic volumes that cause much of the congestion in this area. Tim Ryan, of TSC, described several scenarios being considered in this area, including converting Asylum and Farmington Avenues to one-way streets travelling in opposite directions, installing one- and two-lane roundabouts, and relocating Farmington Avenue further south. He said that each option has benefits and flaws. He concluded that the option to close Broad Street to vehicular traffic between Asylum and Farmington Avenues will improve congestion and allow for fewer travel lanes on Asylum and Farmington Avenues.

J. Cassidy stated that she did not support closing Broad Street to vehicular traffic between Asylum and Farmington Avenues. T. Cherolis voiced support for continuing to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to pass through this area. R. Armstrong acknowledged that this option does maintain bicycle and pedestrian access.

Robert Painter, of the Hub of Hartford, said that he is still struggling with the eastern end ramp options. Other attendees agreed. R. Armstrong suggested a future working group session to discuss this issue in detail.