

**Report of Meeting**

**Date and Time: Thursday, April 30, 2015, 1 PM**

**Location: Christ Church Cathedral Auditorium, 45 Church Street, Hartford**

**Subject: Historic and Cultural Resources Special Topic Meeting**

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### Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to provide background information on how historic and other cultural resources will be considered as part of the process of redesigning I-84 through Hartford. Additionally, the purpose of the meeting was to seek input from community stakeholders on their concerns and ideas for how to protect and preserve historic and other cultural resources as the redesign of I-84 takes place.

### Background Information Presentation

Two AECOM cultural resources professionals, Allison Rachleff and Nancy Stehling, provided a presentation outlining federal and state mandates for how to evaluate cultural resources during the environmental impact analysis for any federally funded project. They also reviewed the data sources and methods that have been used to consider those resources to date (and how they will be assessed in the future) relative to the redesign alternatives.

The presentation began with a review of the federal and state regulatory framework for identifying and analyzing cultural resources, which includes both properties and sites above and below ground.

They reviewed the four types of Historic Resources considered for this project thus far:

- National Historic Landmarks
- National / State Register of Listed Resources
- National / State Eligible Resources
- Local Historic Districts

They then explained that historically significant properties are defined as any site, property, or structure greater than 50 years in age and possessing physical integrity and historic significance in one of more the following ways:

- Associated with significant events
- Associated with significant persons
- Has distinctive architectural characteristics
- Has archeological significance

A map and table were reviewed of all the historic resources in the project study area that have been identified to date.

Next, they reviewed how impacts are defined for the purposes of the evaluation of how the project might affect these sensitive resources. Following federal guidance, impacts are categorized as:

- Direct - where a project would result in: a) removal of property from its historic location, b) physical destruction or damage to all or part of property, or c) alteration that is not consistent with federal standards for the maintenance of the integrity of Historic Properties.
- Indirect - where a project would result in: a) change of the character of property's use, b) change to the physical features within property's setting that contribute to its historic significance, or c) introduction of visual, atmospheric or audible elements that diminish integrity of the property's significant historic features.

Next, there was discussion of the next steps in the assessment of cultural resources for this project. Methods that will be used include:

- Confirm the list of historic and archeological resources already identified and then seek information to assure that any other important additional historic resources are accounted for;
- Reconnaissance-level survey of the locations and conditions of the resources within construction limits of build alternatives
- Conduct background literature and cartographic research for archeological resources
- Document past land use history
- Evaluate extent of prior ground disturbance
- Conduct site walk-over of targeted areas where archeological resources are anticipated to be present
- Conduct impact evaluation to assess the potential for the project alternatives to impact historic, archeological, and other cultural resources

### Questions and Discussion

Question - If a historic site would be threatened, will CTDOT try to work around it or find the best way to go through it? Answer - CTDOT will first try to avoid any historic sites, however this may be difficult given that the area has so many historic properties. If it is determined that the project will result in an adverse effect to a historic property, mitigation will be identified through a collaborative process.

Question - How long will the inventory take? Answer - The inventory will be undertaken in phases and will likely begin in the fall. The staff undertaking the inventory will first work with the design team to understand the footprint of the alternative or alternatives.

Question - How long will it take to get through mitigation? Answer - It could take the better part of a year. CTDOT has already been talking to the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office.

Question - Will the reconnaissance survey be done on all the alternatives? Answer - Yes. State forms to document the status of the historic property or site will then be completed for the Preferred Alternative. Similarly, a phased archeological study will be performed culminating in two reports, a Phase 1A Archaeological Survey will be completed for all the alternatives, and a Phase 1B Archaeological Survey undertaken for the Preferred Alternative.

Question - Is there anything that is historically significant in Frog Hollow? Answer - Yes. The neighborhood contains a historic district.

Question - Why is Frog Hollow significant? Answer - It is significant as an intact collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century residences, factories, and commercial structures. Many of the residences are what are called perfect sixes, a type of building that commonly housed urban workers.

Other Comments

- Hartford has a preservation ordinance. The local historical process will need to be factored into the schedule.
- Native American tribes will also need to be involved in the process.