

## Report of Meeting

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, April 29, 2015, 9 AM

**Location:** Open Planning Studio, Christ Church Cathedral Auditorium, 45 Church Street, Hartford

**Subject:** Urban Design Working Group Meeting #2

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### Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to provide the Urban Design Working Group with an overview of the range of alternatives for redesign of I-84 through Hartford and to solicit their comments and ideas relative to urban design for the project.

### I-84 Hartford Project Alternatives Presentation

Mitch Glass, of Goody Clancy, began with a presentation of the various design alternatives and options. He showed a variety of potential streetscape views and options for the roadways that are near I-84.

Tim Ryan, of TranSystems, discussed how the various alternatives might be implemented and the impacts of construction required for some of the different alternatives. He said that some alternatives are more desirable than others with respect to construction impacts. T. Ryan noted that some alternatives could take several years to complete while others could be constructed in a much shorter

period of time. The schedule would also be dependent upon whether traffic is maintained throughout construction or if the highway is shut down for a period of time.

Lynn Ferrari questioned whether the tunnel alternative would affect the Capitol View Apartments. T. Ryan replied that there are various options, some of which would, and others which would not, affect the building.

L. Ferrari asked how parking would be affected and is there a plan to replace parking or would parking supply be permanently reduced. T. Ryan responded that parking under the highway is via a state lease that would be terminated. Some private parking spaces may be taken (purchased) from property owners leaving it to them to decide if or how to replace parking.

L. Ferrari asked if there is special planning that needs to occur for air rights. T. Ryan responded that FHWA would not fund the structural improvements for air rights. It would be incumbent upon a prospective developer to incur the cost of structural improvements. (Post Meeting Correction: FHWA would consider funding participation, depending on the particular proposal.) David Spillane, of Goody Clancy, said that air rights development is difficult to finance and should be used strategically to line the edges of roadways.

L. Ferrari said that more north/south connections are needed across the highway. T. Ryan responded that there are new proposed north/south roadway connections in the tunnel and lowered highway concepts. The Project Team is also looking at possibility of adding additional pedestrian/bike connections.

Khara Dodds asked what the options for the west portion of the corridor are. M. Glass explained the multiple options for the Sisson Ave area.

L. Ferrari stated that an urban boulevard would be a preferred concept for the highway. T. Ryan responded that there are not sufficient bypasses to accommodate the volume of traffic.

L. Ferrari mentioned that the diversion of Capitol Avenue off of its existing course might not be desirable. D. Spillane said that people have expressed interest in maintaining Capitol Avenue as a through connection, but this requires a longer bridge. By turning Capitol Avenue towards another road, the bridge is shorter and may be more pedestrian-friendly.

L. Ferrari noted that the multiple turns and intersections in the proposed roadway configurations would make east/west travel difficult along the Capitol Avenue/Boulevard Corridor. T. Ryan responded that there is a western interchange option that eliminates the Forrest Street and Laurel Street interchanges by grade-separating them. This would make east/west travel more efficient.

Mark Burns said that the large developable parcels shown in the concepts are preferable for development over smaller odd-shaped lots.

### Additional Discussion

Brett Wallace, of Parsons Brinckerhoff, discussed how the highway concepts affect the rail alignment and vice-versa. The I-84 Project Team and Rail Team have been sharing information and working to coordinate the rail and highway alignment. T. Ryan noted that the elevated highway options are challenging because of the required clearance over the rail corridor.

B. Wallace said that the intercity bus terminal will be needed in proximity to the new station head house. He noted that the developable areas identified in the concept plans would not entirely be available for development due to land need for rail-related improvements.

L. Ferrari asked what the impact would be on Amtrak. B. Wallace responded that there is a lot of competition for rail funding. He said that by packaging the rail improvements with the highway project, the rail improvements would be more likely to get the necessary funding.

L. Ferrari also asked about the timing of the rail planning. B. Wallace responded that the initial planning study is complete and will be coordinated with the highway project. Both analyses have concluded that there is a benefit to moving the rail corridor to the northwest. B. Wallace said that this proposed alignment presents multiple opportunities for urban design enhancements.

Toni Gold stated that Bill Mocarsky (present at meeting) has been doing graphics and renderings of highway concepts. His concepts are online and might be a resource to the study team.