

The I-84 Hartford Project  
Meeting of the Public Advisory Committee  
Thursday, November 21, 2013  
8:30 – 10:15 AM  
Conference of Churches Collaboration Centre  
224 Farmington Avenue, Hartford

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The second Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the I-84 Hartford Project was held on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at the Conference of Churches Centre in Hartford. The purpose of this meeting was to review the scope of the project, provide information about the current structural condition of I-84, to outline the cost to repair and maintain the highway (the no build alternative) if a comprehensive reconstruction project does not take place, to present traffic data and to discuss the next steps in the project process.

Each member of the PAC was provided with a meeting agenda and copy of the presentation.

### **Project Team Presentation**

#### **1. Introduction.**

Following welcome and introductions, the meeting began with a summary of the first PAC meeting. Michael Morehouse, PAC facilitator, from Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc., noted the following:

- a. The last meeting involved an introduction of the project.
- b. PAC members suggested three topics for this meeting:
  - i. Cost to do the “no build” alternative (i.e., how much it will cost just to keep I-84 open and in acceptable condition through the design year of 2040.)
  - ii. Some traffic findings from the data collection process
  - iii. More involvement of PAC in the development of the Statement of Purpose and Need
- c. The first two PAC suggestions are on today's agenda, but the project team decided that the most productive way to involve the PAC more in purpose and need identification is to form a smaller “PAC working group” to discuss this.
- d. The Purpose and Need (P&N) statement will continue to evolve throughout the project. The purpose of the P&N is to clarify the reason for the project and define the problems it is anticipated to solve.

- e. Morehouse asked PAC members, who are interested in being on this working group to tell him, or other project team members, after the meeting. It is anticipated that other working groups will be formed for other specific purposes.

## **2. Bridge Conditions/Cost of No-Build.**

Following some introductory information about the nature of bridges, Project Team Member Julie Gorges, of A. DiCesare Associates, noted the following:

- a. A large percentage of I-84 within our project limits is made up of bridges.
- b. Surveys were done to determine condition of all the bridges in the project, and prediction models were developed based on the history and condition of each bridge.
- c. This analysis led to a preliminary cost analysis for keeping the bridges at an acceptable rating until the design year of 2040. It will cost roughly \$670 million (in today's dollars) to rehabilitate I-84's bridges under the "no build" alternative. This is likely a low estimate; rehabilitating the bridges could cost considerably more because the cost to maintain traffic during rehabilitation is not included in this number.

## **3. Traffic Data.**

Dave Stahnke, of TranSystems Corp., presented some preliminary traffic data and noted the following:

- a. The project team collected this data by using cameras, aerial videos with helicopters, and cell phone and GPS technology.
- b. I-84, as designed, causes many cars to weave between entrance and exit ramps. This has contributed to traffic congestion and accidents.
- c. The team is not done synthesizing and analyzing the traffic data. More traffic information, as well as information about other transportation modes, will be presented at future PAC meetings.
- d. Some preliminary results of the traffic flow patterns within our study area were presented.

## **PAC Comments and Questions**

Throughout the meeting, PAC members asked questions, made comments and offered opinions. Below is a summary of questions or comments raised by members of the PAC, with some remarks followed by responses from the project team:

***Why did the Mianus River Bridge collapse in 1983?*** (Jackie McKinney, ArtSpace Resident Association)

[Georges's response: Bridges fail for a number of reasons, such as poor design or structural failure. The main reason for the Mianus River Bridge's failure was due to

lack of redundancy. A bridge with redundancy has several components to keep it standing after one or more of its parts fail. The I-84 bridges are redundant and can continue to function even if one or more elements fail.]

***Are bridges on I-84 failing because of rust?*** (Michael Riley, of the Connecticut Motor Transport Association)

[Georges's response: Yes. That's a major reason. Corrosion of materials, mostly relating to many bridge joints, are causing the bridges to deteriorate.]

***The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National Bridge Inventory is the system used to rate bridges along I-84. The ratings are not Connecticut standards, but national standards that all states use.*** (Amy Jackson-Grove, of the Federal Highway Administration)

[Georges's comment: The state does not have its own system for rating bridges. It uses the FHWA rating system.]

***What does the "do nothing" alternative involve?*** (Michael Riley, of the Connecticut Motor Transport Association)

[Georges's response: The do-nothing alternative (or no-build) involves doing what is needed to keep the bridges open and in acceptable repair. At some point, this means replacing them even under the "no build" alternative when repair can no longer achieve the needed results.]

***What are the limits of the project? Which bridges will be included in the I-84 project and how large of an area will the project cover?*** (Toni Gold, of the West End Civic Association)

[Stahnke's response: The project will go from approximately High Street to Park Street, but our analysis goes further out for certain elements. For example, we are analyzing traffic east of the river on I-84 and also on the I-91/I-84 intersection. Stahnke: The Capitol Avenue ramps were constructed much later and it has not yet been determined if the Capitol Avenue ramps are in the project.]

***Is the railroad bridge included in the project?***

[Stahnke's response: The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Project is taking place at the same time as I-84 project. That project involves a detailed study of the railroad viaduct Union Station. The I-84 project and the rail project are closely interrelated, and work on them is being closely coordinated.

***What assumptions will you use about traffic growth? For example, would the analysis ever consider decrease in growth? The decrease in traffic is not just a scientific determination, but can also be driven by public policy.*** (Toni Gold)

[Stahnke's response: The team is taking into account other transit projects in its analysis and expects traffic growth to be "very flat." Cambridge Systematics is

completing the Traffic Demand Modeling work, which will calculate the future traffic projections for our project corridor. Once these projections are established, we can have them present their findings.]

***Is there a statistical summary of traffic data on the ramps? This is a good way to summarize the data, but I would like to see more detail about traffic at the ramps.*** (Ronald Van Winkle, the Town Manager of West Hartford)

[Stahnke responded affirmatively and said the team has a lot of data that can be shared. Today's presentation is just a "teaser" for more information that will be presented later.]

***Will the study be broad enough to look at diverting pass-through traffic onto Interstate 691 and the Charter Oak Bridge?*** (Toni Gold)

[Stahnke's response: Yes. The project team will be looking at this.]

***One of the weave patterns you showed during your presentation is one of the nightmares of traveling on I-84. Is the weave pattern a design flaw?*** (Jackie McKinney)

[Stahnke's response: The weave patterns were typical for highways designed in the 1960s. These highways, including I-84, were designed for a lower volume of traffic when they were built and the weaves were not as big an issue.]

***Will the weave pattern modifications be included in the "no-build" model?***

(Jackie McKinney)

[Stahnke's response: No, there would not be a lot of ramp reconstruction under the "no-build" alternative. However, the other "build" alternatives will consider ramp modifications.]

***Have you looked at I-84's impact on local traffic?*** (Ronald Van Winkle)

[Stahnke's response: Yes. The team will use a model that will look at the highway and local streets as one system.]

***I would like to see a discussion about the wording of the Purpose and Need. This should be early on the agenda and the topic of a working group. Having PAC meetings every two or three months may not be enough; meeting monthly may be more appropriate.*** (Toni Gold)

[Morehouse's response: The project schedule calls for a PAC meeting approximately every other month. However, we are definitely willing to meet more often, especially early in the project when we are all getting up to speed. With the holidays coming up we don't envision another meeting before January, but if we form a working group, perhaps the working group may want to meet before January.]

**How will the I-84 project impact economic development in local neighborhoods? If it doesn't produce economic development, we might as well not do it.** (Jackie McKinney)

[Project team member Christine Tiernan, of AECOM's response: Economic impact and benefit will be part of the environmental impact analysis. Evaluation of alternatives does not usually "begin" with economic impact as a consideration but it figures heavily in the "second tier" alternatives analysis. Morehouse's response: The project team will ensure that economic development is considered in the development of alternative designs. This may potentially be a working group topic.]

Information about future meetings: The next PAC meeting will be early next year.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

**In attendance:**

**Public Advisory Committee** (check mark denotes committee members in attendance)

- ✓ Robert Benzinger, Assistant Vice President Capital Projects, The Hartford
- ✓ Jennifer Carrier, CRCOG
- ✓ Thomas Deller, Director, City of Hartford Department of Development Services
- ✓ Lynn Ferrari, President, Coalition to Strengthen Sheldon-Charter Oak Neighborhood
- ✓ David Fichandler, Director of Public Safety, Hartford Hospital (substitute for Bimal Patel, Vice President of Operations, Hartford Hospital)
- ✓ Toni Gold, President, West End Civic Association
- ✓ Frank Hagaman, Executive Director, Hartford Preservation Alliance
- ✓ Aaron Kupec, Public Affairs Manager, AAA
- ✓ Michael Marshall, Head of Global Asset Management, Aetna
- ✓ Jackie McKinney, ArtSpace Residents Association
- ✓ Doug Moore, Director of Management Services, Facilities Management Division, State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services
- ✓ David Morin, President, Parkville Revitalization Association
- ✓ Mark Riley, President, Connecticut Motor Association
- ✓ Vicki Shotland, Executive Director, Greater Hartford Transit District
- ✓ Ron Van Winkle, Town Manager, Town of West Hartford
- ✓ Julio Concepcion, of Metro-Hartford (substitute for Frank Hagaman)
- David Corrigan, Chair, Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone
- David Corrigan, Program Manager, Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance
- Jeff Gerlach, Principal, Capital Program Development
- Oz Griebel, Executive Director, Metro Hartford Alliance
- Rev. Donald Hamer, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Conference of Churches
- Anne Hayes, Director of Parking, Traveler's (permanent replacement for James Scanell, Senior Vice President of Administrative Services, Travelers)
- Charles Hunter, General Manager, Southern Connecticut Railroad

- Hans Keck, Safety and Security Manager, Hartford Courant
- Kelly Kennedy, Executive Director, Bike Walk Connecticut
- Marcia Leclerc, Mayor, Town of East Hartford
- Msgr. John McCarthy, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Hartford
- Paul Mutone, Vice President for Finance and Operations, and Treasurer, Trinity College
- David Nardone, Federal Highway Administration
- Robert Painter, Chair, HUB of Hartford
- Bimal Patel, Vice President of Operations, Hartford Hospital
- Erin Pollard, Executive Director, Business for Downtown Hartford
- Liz Rotavera, Senior Planning Associate, St. Francis Hospital
- Hyacinth Yennie, Chair, Maple Avenue Revitalization Group

### **Connecticut Department of Transportation**

Rich Armstrong, CTDOT

Jose Catalan, CTDOT

John Dudzinski, CTDOT

Brian Natwick, CTDOT

Tim Wilson, CTDOT

### **Consultant Team**

Muhammad Ammad, TranSystems Corp.

Jill Barrett, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Ruth Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Julie Gorges, A. DiCesare Associates

Stacy Graham-Hunt, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Debbie Hoffman, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Casey Hardin, TranSystems Corp.

Deborah Howes, AECOM

Michael Morehouse, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Tony Moretti, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Tim Ryan, TranSystems Corp.

David Spillane, Goody Clancy

David Stahnke, TranSystems Corp.

Kristen Stiff, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Christine Tiernan, AECOM