



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Thursday, September 6, 2018, 12:30 PM

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

Subject: Public Advisory Committee Meeting #18

Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
Jackie McKinney	ArtSpace Residents Association	jdcmckinney07@gmail.com
Toni Gold	West End Civic Association	toniagold@gmail.com
Anthony Cherolis	Center for Latino Progress	acherolis@gmail.com
Rob Aloise	Capitol Region Council of Governments	raloise@crcog.org
Jackie Mandyck	iQuilt	jackie@thequiltplan.org
Mary Falvey	Hartford Preservation Alliance	mary@hartfordpreservation.org
Yvonne Matthews	Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association	matthews.yvonne791@gmail.com
Sandy Fry	City of Hartford	sfry@ghtd.org
Aaron Gill	Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone	ajgill@edtengineers.com
Mark McGovern	Town of West Hartford	mark.mcgovern@westhartfordct.gov
Amy Parmenter	AAA	aparmenter@aaa-alliedgroup.com
Jennifer Cassidy	Business for Downtown Hartford	j.cassidy@snet.net
Hank Hoffman	The Hartford	hank.hoffman@thehartford.com
Mike Riley	Transportation Consultant	cttruck@aol.com
Bruce Donald	East Coast Greenway Alliance	bruce@greenway.org
Robert Painter	HUB of Hartford	painterbob4250@yahoo.com
Joe Sculley	CT Motor Transport Association	joe@mtac.us
Mary Zeman	Bushnell Park Foundation	manager@bushnellpark.org
David Nardone	Federal Highway Administration	david.w.nardone@dot.gov
Ted Aldieri	Federal Highway Administration	ted.aldieri@fdot.gov
Doug Moore	State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services	Doug.Moore@ct.gov
Sargent Marc Petruzzi	State Police Office of Administrative Services	marc.f.petruzzi@ct.gov
LaShaunda Drake	Greater Hartford Transit District	ldrake@ghtd.org
Joyse Utick	Coalition to Strengthen Sheldon-Charter Oak Neighborhood	jutick@jcj.com
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OTHER ATTENDEES		
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Jamie Bratt	City of Hartford	Jamie.Bratt@hartford.gov
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Tim Sullivan	Amtrak	sullivTC@amtrak.com
Amy Jackson-Grove	Federal Highway Administration	amy.jackson-grove@fhwa.dot.gov

Jennifer Nye		
Conor Quinn	Representative John Larson's Office	
Bill Mocarsky		bill@peopleofgoodwill.com
Tim Becker		
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		
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CONSULTANT TEAM		
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1. Welcome & Introduction

Mike Morehouse, of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), thanked everyone for coming. He introduced Adria Giordano of The Chrysalis Center who wanted to say a few words to the attendees. She described The Chrysalis Center's mission as well as the opportunities that they provide to residents of Hartford. M. Morehouse added that there are surveys in the lobby and asked Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members to fill them out after the meeting.

M. Morehouse next welcomed new PAC members and provided an overview of the afternoon's discussion. He then turned the presentation over to Casey Hardin of TranSystems Corporation (TSC).

2. Presentation

C. Hardin began his portion of the presentation by recapping the March 2018 PAC meeting. He provided information on the screening process, noting that the project team is currently in the process of conducting the Level 3 screening. He discussed the July 2018 Local Streets Follow Up Meeting, adding that the project team described the concept of traffic dispersion, new road connections, and Trident Area options at this meeting. He added that the project team heard feedback from the attendees on their desire to keep Broad Street open to motor vehicles in the Trident Area.

He continued on to discuss multimodal station Concepts E1 and E3. The primary difference between the two concepts is the location of the parking garage. It would be over the highway in Concept E1 versus closer to the existing Union Station in Concept E3.

He stated that the project team is considering options to build a parking garage that could potentially be repurposed later for other uses (e.g. commercial, retail) if appropriate. He said that sloping floors of traditional garages make it difficult to repurpose them if desired at some point in time. A garage with level (non-sloping) floors, however, will require exterior ramps for vehicles to access the various levels. There is some thought that these exterior ramps may encroach on the development potential of the site to its east. He noted that after receiving feedback from key stakeholders and urban design experts, the project team is reevaluating the use of exterior ramps.

C. Hardin next provided an update on the potential CT *fastrak* alignment. He provided details on Alternative 8, noting that this alternative works because it can be constructed and in service before the highway construction begins. He described the four potential eastern terminus options and associated route circulations in the Downtown area. C. Hardin added that the project team plans to explore all eastern terminus options further in the coming weeks. The project team will coordinate with key stakeholders on the development of the options. He stated that Toni Gold, of West End Civic Association, and Bill Mocarisky recently presented an additional option that the team will analyze as well. This topic will be covered in more detail at the next PAC meeting, which is expected to occur in late fall 2018.

Nick Mandler, of TSC, next presented on the I-84 / I-91 Interchange Study. He stated that in the early stages of the I-84 Hartford Project, when conducting the traffic analysis, the project team learned that this interchange is a bigger bottleneck than the I-84 Hartford Project area itself. This is largely because there are only two through travel lanes immediately leading up to the interchange in all directions. Both highways have three travel lanes in the remaining areas of the region. Thus, the I-84 / I-91 Interchange Feasibility Study was initiated.

N. Mandler stated that the study is in a similar state to the Hub of Hartford Study. He added that the environmental documentation, or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), process is not funded on the interchange at this time, and that it would not necessarily lead to a project. He said that the flood control improvements would be a separate project and fixing / replacing them would not require work on any of the region's highways beforehand or concurrently. He discussed the three objectives of the study as congestion relief, operations and safety, and mobility. All six concepts are measured on their ability to solve these deficiencies.

He discussed the six concepts in more detail. Concept 1 is the No Build, which would maintain the interchange in a state of good repair. N. Mandler stated that this concept would not solve any of the objectives of the study.

Concept 2 is to upgrade the interchange to current design standards in its current location. He said that this would require two new bridges adjacent to the Bulkeley Bridge across the Connecticut River, and that the Bulkeley Bridge would need to be widened. This would be a considerable impact to the historic quality of the Bulkeley Bridge. This concept would not address all the objectives of the study.

Concept 3, the southern corridor, would put I-84 in a tunnel beneath the southern part of Hartford, emerging at a major interchange with I-91 in the Coltsville area of Hartford. In addition, the Route 2 corridor would need to shift to the east to make room for a new I-84 / Route 2 interchange in East Hartford. This new Route 2 alignment would essentially be located where Main Street currently is, a significant impact. In addition, the tunnel could only accommodate three-foot shoulders. This concept would not address all the objectives of the study.

Concept 4, the northern corridor, would relocate the I-84 / I-91 interchange to the North Meadows area in Hartford and construct a new northern alignment of I-84 from the Asylum Hill area to East Hartford. The remaining I-84 corridor could be converted to a local boulevard, and the Bulkeley Bridge could carry local traffic and potentially CT *fastrak* over the Connecticut River. N. Mandler stated that the preliminary analysis is showing that this is the only concept that could meet all three study objectives.

Concept 5, the eastern corridor, would relocate I-91 east of the Connecticut River. N. Mandler added that this concept would have considerable property impacts in East Hartford due to the massive interchange required there, and that good traffic operations would not be likely. This concept would not address all the objectives of the study.

Concept 6 is the tunnel corridor. It would bury I-84 and I-91 underground. N. Mandler stated that four tunnel boring machines would be required to construct the tunnels and the interchanges would need to be dug out by conventional means. He stated that this concept would not solve any of the three objectives of the study. It would not serve local traffic going into and out of Hartford (2/3 of the highway traffic), and the portal interchanges would be massive.

In summary, Concepts 1 and 6 would not address any of the interchange's deficiencies. Only Concept 4 would address congestion, operations and safety, and mobility. Concept 1 would be the least expensive to design and construct. Concept 6 would be the most expensive to design and construct. Concepts 2 through 5 would be intermediate between them, with Concept 3 considered to be somewhat more expensive than 2, 4, and 5 due to the tunnel.

N. Mandler reiterated that the interchange study is separate from the I-84 Hartford Project. The I-84 Hartford Project is proceeding as planned. C. Hardin closed the presentation by discussing the next steps for the I-84 Hartford Project. He said the team plans to complete traffic model update by mid-2019 and continue advancing the multimodal station to 15 percent design. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected in early 2019. A Record of Decision is expected in summer 2020. Construction can begin in the late 2020s.

3. Discussion

T. Gold questioned the status of Congressman Larson's proposal. N. Mandler answered that it is reflected in Concept 6.

Mike Riley, Transportation Consultant, stated that he is pleased to see that one of the objectives is congestion relief, and that this is not just another urban renewal project. He expressed concern with Concept 6, suggesting that it seems to present more safety problems than what currently exist. He asked for more details on the cost estimates. N. Mandler stated that

the dollar signs represent order of magnitude, and the No Build could cost tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, Concepts 2 through 5 could cost billions of dollars, and Concept 6 could cost tens of billions of dollars.

Aaron Gill, of Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, stated that this is an urban project, whether it is on a highway or local road. He stated that it is short sighted to try to build our way out of congestion, and there needs to be an encouragement to get more people to live in cities. Hartford is the largest financial asset in central Connecticut.

Jackie McKinney, of ArtSpace, voiced disapproval for Concept 6. She added that I-91 Exit 29 is another safety concern. Commissioner Jim Redeker stated that the Department has an upcoming project to address this intersection, and it is expected to go to bid this month. She questioned whether safety and the size of the tunnel bore are considerations in the analysis. N. Mandler answered that these are considerations.

Sargent Marc Petruzzi, of the State Police, questioned whether the I-84 Hartford Project would still be required with the northern concept. N. Mandler answered that the I-84 Hartford Project would be required with any the interchange concepts. Sargent Petruzzi stated that if shoulders cannot be constructed with any concept, it should be eliminated from further consideration.

M. Morehouse asked if two lanes with wide shoulders could accommodate traffic in the tunnels. N. Mandler answered that two lanes could suffice for the lower level of the tunnel that bypasses Hartford. The upper deck that serves the interchange would be over capacity with two lanes.

Amy Parmenter, of AAA, asked whether the project team has had any interaction with other urban areas that have tackled such issues. N. Mandler answered that the team has looked toward Providence, Rhode Island as well as spoken to other agencies. He acknowledged the teams desire for additional communication with other agencies. M. Morehouse added that other than the Big Dig in Boston, many other comparable interchanges simply do not handle the level of traffic that the I-84 / I-91 interchange does. The Big Dig is the #1 most congested intersection in New England, and the I-84 / I-91 intersection is the #2 most congested intersection in New England.

A guest attendee from Transport Hartford cited concerns about the northern concept's potential impacts to north end of Hartford. N. Mandler answered that additional analysis would be needed to determine impacts, but some capping could mitigate these potential impacts.

Joe Scully, of CT Motor Transport Association, cited his support for the northern option and his pleasure with the upcoming work at I-91 Exit 29.

Jackie Mandyck, of iQuilt, said that this project provides an opportunity to influence how people can get into the City over the next 20-25 years. She cited the importance of investing in public transportation. She then questioned the percentage of truck traffic that travels on I-84. N. Mandler answered that it varies. It is about three to six percent truck traffic during peak hours on the I-84 viaduct, and greater than that during non-peak hours. It is also greater than five percent further away from the Downtown area. On average, truck traffic is about 10 percent in the region throughout the day.

M. Riley stated that the Department can toll new construction, including the new portions of the northern concept. He added that truckers, and many motorists, will pay to avoid congestion.

Yvonne Matthews, of Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association, cited support for keeping the gateway into Asylum Hill open during construction. She asked if the project team is still collaborating with The Hartford. C. Hardin answered that it is.

Bruce Donald, of the East Coast Greenway Alliance questioned the potential construction timeframe for the interchange reconstruction. N. Mandler answered that it depends on how long the environmental process takes and that Concept 6 would take a long time due to the slow rate of excavation at the underground interchange.

After the meeting, Jennifer Cassidy raised the issue that when CT *fastrak* service first began, many in the Asylum Hill neighborhood questioned the potential increase in buses that would travel and stop in the neighborhood. She stated that the group was only provided the actual numbers of CT *fastrak* buses. They were not provided with information on all the other buses that travel off Sigourney Street. These buses store and travel through the neighborhood and have a negative impact on Asylum Hill. She asked that future renderings show the routes and potential impact of all buses.