



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 7:30 - 9 AM

Location: Hartford Marriot Downtown, 200 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford

Subject: MetroHartford Alliance Rising Star Breakfast

Attendees

Rich Armstrong, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Dave Stahnke, TranSystems Corporation (TSC)
Oz Griebel, MetroHartford Alliance
Marcy Miller, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI)
About 120 attendees

Meeting Purpose and Format

The purpose of the event was to provide the MetroHartford Alliance members with information on the I-84 Hartford Project and allow the breakfast attendees to ask questions about the project.

The meeting consisted of a presentation on the I-84 Hartford project followed by a brief question and answer period. Copies of the Winter 2016 Newsletters were placed on each table and I-84 Hartford Project business cards were placed on the sign in table.

I-84 Hartford Project Presentation

Oz Griebel, of MetroHartford Alliance, began by introducing Rich Armstrong, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and Dave Stahnke, of TranSystems Corporation. He then turned the presentation over to R. Armstrong, who thanked MetroHartford Alliance for profiling the project. D. Stahnke next provided an overview of the project and noted the study's limits, needs, and purpose. He explained that the project is currently in the environmental phase, during which the project team develops and reviews alternatives. He said that the project team is well into the alternatives analysis and is close to having a preferred alternative selected.

D. Stahnke provided an overview of the mainline alternatives. He explained that the tight nature of the corridor leaves little room for variation in the horizontal alignment. He also discussed the small differences in the alternatives as it relates to the horizontal alignment, especially in the area of Asylum Hill.

D. Stahnke explained that the highway access points at Trumbull and High Streets would be closed under all alternatives. He said that the proximity of these ramps to each other and the I-91 interchange contribute to congestion and create unsafe weaving movements across the highway. D. Stahnke discussed the cost ranges for each of the four main alternatives. D. Stahnke highlighted the road improvements and traffic analysis of Alternative 3B: W3-2/E2(S), which is one of the better performing alternatives.

R. Armstrong next discussed the urban design and local street network improvements. He discussed the urban design goals for the project, including reconnecting neighborhoods, integrating the ramps into the urban road system more efficiently, "Complete Streets," and creating opportunities for Transit Oriented Development around Union Station. He discussed the land that could potentially be freed up for open space and/or economic development on both the eastern and western portions of the corridor. R. Armstrong discussed the East Coast Greenway and the possibility of creating a raised urban park that could also serve as a barrier between the highway and adjacent neighborhoods. R. also presented street visualizations.

R. Armstrong concluded his presentation and offered that more project information was available on the project website.

Question and Answer Period

O. Griebel asked R. Armstrong to discuss the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) and its role in the decision making process. R. Armstrong answered that the PAC is a group of representatives from different neighborhoods, businesses, special interest groups, and other community entities in Hartford. They meet every 2-3 months to get regular updates and provide guidance on the project work. He stated that the next PAC meeting and Open Planning Studio will be on April 20-21, 2016.

O. Griebel asked D. Stahnke to discuss the project timeline and when the public can expect a decision. D. Stahnke answered that the project team has been doing the planning portion of the study about 2.5 years now. He stated that the team is getting close to being able to identify a preferred alternative. He stated that the alternatives analysis will be complete by the end of 2016. The environmental work will be complete around the end of 2018, and then the team will complete the final design of the preferred alternative.

O. Griebel asked if there is regular interaction between the major employers (e.g. Aetna and The Hartford) and the project team. D. Stahnke answer that yes, many of Hartford's major employers, including Aetna and The Hartford, have active roles on the PAC and Working Groups. This interaction will continue throughout the project.

O. Griebel asked about the impacts during construction. D. Stahnke answered that construction typically takes place over many years, and referenced the Quinnipiac River Bridge construction, noting that the construction timeframe is dictated by available federal funding on a year to year basis. D. Stahnke stated that I-84 construction would likely take place over many years as well, but the team will look into the feasibility of accelerated construction.

O. Griebel asked if alternative funding sources, such as addition tax increment financing and electronic tolling could have a role in funding the I-84 Hartford Project. R. Armstrong answered that the team has not looked into these sources yet, but will do so in time. He stated that this project will be the most expensive project the state constructs by the time it is finished.

O. Griebel questioned the baseline or No-build alternative. D. Stahnke answered that the No-build will also have considerable costs. \$80 million will be spent over the next 5 years to keep the highway in a state of good repair. This alternative is so costly because many of the bridges will ultimately need to be replaced or receive major rehabilitation. O. Griebel noted that the build alternatives' costs actually should be calculated as the difference between each of their cost and the cost of the No-build.