Route 7/15 Norwalk

- Andy Fesenmeyer, CTDOT Project Manager
- Yolanda Antoniak, CTDOT Project Engineer
- Tom Doyle, CTDOT OEP
- John Eberle, Project Manager, Stantec
- Gary Sorge, Landscape Architect, Stantec
- CTDOT Landscape Design Staff
Route 7/15 Norwalk - Why are we here?

Merritt Parkway is…

• National Scenic Byway
• On National Register of Historic Places
• State Scenic Road
Route 7/15 Norwalk - AGENDA

• Tonight’s meeting format/intent
• Links to Purpose and Need Statement
• Guiding documentation and landscape considerations
• Representative visual features
• Work session
Route 7/15 Norwalk - PROJECT AREA
DRAFT PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT
Project Purpose

• Improve **system linkage** between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway

• Improve the **mobility** for all users (motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists) at the Merritt Parkway’s Main Avenue and Route 7 Interchanges

• Improve **safety** in the vicinity of these interchanges
Project Goals & Objectives

• Reduce Congestion
• Provide Long-term Serviceability of Affected Roadways
• Optimize value gained from Public Investment in the Project
• Integrate the Project Roadways with the Environment and Neighborhood context
Project Goals & Objectives

- Creating a design that is consistent with the Merritt Parkway’s historic and scenic character and design philosophy. Design intent includes preserving and restoring existing historic bridges and structures to the extent practical.
Project Goals & Objectives

- Preserving, enhancing and/or restoring surviving historic landscapes where practical or where the landscape has been significantly altered, creating a new landscape design that is consistent with the Parkway’s original design intent.
Guiding Documentation

- Merritt Parkway Landscape Master Plan
- Merritt Parkway Guidelines for General Maintenance and Transportation Improvements
- Merritt Parkway Bridge Restoration Guide
- Merritt Parkway National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
- National Park Service Preservation Brief- Protecting Cultural Landscapes #36
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Visual and Physical Landscape Considerations for the Merritt Parkway

- Spatial organization
- Scenic views and vistas
- Topography and grading
- Circulation
- Vegetation
- Built elements and structures
- Water resources

- Historic and current context
- Transition between built and natural landscape
- Accent on naturalized landscape
- Cohesive planting plan
- Modern adaptation of original design intent
- Other?
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Historic and Cultural Considerations

- Parkway and its setting
- Historic districts
- Historic bridges
- Archaeological resources
Route 7/15 Norwalk  Historic context
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Corridor - Historic Aerial (1952)  Aerial (Current)
REPRESENTATIVE VISUAL FEATURES
Critical View Corridors

View from West Rocks Road overpass depicts a typical condition of the Parkway’s travel lanes. Roadway relates closely to the surrounding landscape.
The driver's view along the Merritt approaching the Main Avenue exit is channeled by landscape, though views beyond to development open in late Autumn.
The Glover Avenue apartments immediately north of the Parkway and just west of the Norwalk River have a visual impact on the corridor.
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Median vegetation is sparse or absent along portions of the project area.
Model View (RT 7 N from Merritt Parkway) depicts rock cuts and a typical limited access highway corridor.
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Model View (RT 7 S from Merritt Parkway) depicts distinguishing rock cuts and a typical limited access highway corridor.
The overhead high-tension power lines that cross the Merritt are a major visual element in the landscape. The almost vertical face rock cuts are distinguishing features.
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Merritt Parkway bridge over Route 7 lacks traditional vernacular of structures within the corridor. The vertical rock cuts flanking both sides of Route 7 are distinguishing features in this interchange.
Driver’s view on Route 7 depicts the look of a modern interstate-level limited access highway with wide shoulders, concrete Jersey median barriers, and wider travel lanes.
Driver’s view on Route 7 illustrates the look of a modern interstate-level, limited access highway. Highway bifurcates the landscape.
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Driver’s view on Route 7 depicts a modern interstate-level, limited access highway. Mature vegetation flanks both sides of the road though there is limited roadway to landscape cohesiveness.

Route 7 Looking South
The bridge carrying Route 7 over Perry Avenue, built after the original Parkway bridges, lacks architectural characteristics of the original Parkway structures.
The bridge carrying the southbound Route 7 ramp connector to the westbound Merritt Parkway partially blocks the view of and visually impacts the Merritt Parkway mainline along Perry Avenue. Flanking structures lack the architectural characteristics of the original Parkway structure.

*Perry Avenue Looking South*
The eastbound Merritt Parkway and the exit ramp to southbound Route 7 are highly visible from neighboring homes, e.g. along Rae Lane.
The Merritt Parkway is in the direct viewshed of residential streets, e.g. Creeping Hemlock Drive.
The Merritt Parkway is in the direct viewshed of Lakewood Drive. Development is in close proximity to the Parkway within the project area.
The Main Avenue commercial corridor south of the Parkway is flanked by low and mid-rise buildings.
The Main Avenue commercial corridor south of the Parkway is flanked by low and mid-rise buildings and has an axial view, looking north, that terminates with the Merritt Parkway's bridge over Main Avenue.
The Merritt Parkway mainline bridge over Main Avenue is a visual resource within the densely developed commercial corridor.
The Glover Avenue corridor north of the Parkway is flanked by low and mid-rise buildings. The Metro-North Railroad Danbury Line traverses the corridor.
The Glover Avenue bridge over the Norwalk River is an historic and visual resource.
The Merritt Parkway's ramp and mainline bridge over the Norwalk River is an historic and visual resource.
Landscape Workshop Break-Out Group Instructions

• Duration: 45 minutes
• Assemble in groups of 5-6 people
• Appoint a facilitator, note taker, and speaker for your group
• Review materials provided
• Address prepared questions and identify landscape resources
• Document comments
• Report group findings (3-minute summary maximum)
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Landscape Workshop Group Questions

• What are the most appealing landscape/visual features within the project area?
• What are the least appealing landscape/visual features within the project area?
• What is most important to you?
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Landscape Workshop Group Discussion and Reporting