Route 7/15 Norwalk Project – Project Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Monday, March 27th, Norwalk City Hall
• Welcome
• Meeting Overview
• Introductions
• PAC Process
• Project Background
• NEPA/CEPA Process
• Update on Work Status
• Alternates
• Public Outreach
• Next Steps
• PAC Questions and Comments
1. Get acquainted
2. Clarify the PAC’s role and process
3. Clarify the project mission
4. Review the basics together
To be instrumental in helping to craft a successful outcome, by:

1. Attend meetings, review material and **educate yourself**
2. Share **viewpoints and ideas** in project dialog
3. Link between the study team and the community - **in both directions**
4. Help reach consensus on project issues and alternates - **honor differences in opinion and perspective**
5. Support the **consensus** of the PAC
Consultant Team

- **Stantec** - lead consultant, engineering, environmental and traffic analysis
- **Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.** - community engagement lead
- **BL Companies** - engineering design support
- **Archeological Historical Services** - historic resources
- **VN Engineers** - data collection
- **KB Environmental** – air/noise analysis
Route 7/15 Norwalk - PAC COMPOSITION

- Major Landowners/Developers
- Municipalities
- Neighborhood Groups
- Economic Development Groups
- Transit Providers
- Interest Groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAC MEMBERSHIP</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BikeWalkCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Norwalk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation</td>
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<td>Creeping Hemlock/Cranbury Neighborhood</td>
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<td>CT Trust for Historic Preservation</td>
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<td>Greater Norwalk Hispanic Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbor Point / Building and Land Technology</td>
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<td>Marcus Partners/Merritt 7 Merritt Parkway Conservancy</td>
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<td>Merritt Parkway Trail Alliance</td>
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<td>Norwalk Association of Homeowners (NASH)</td>
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<td>Norwalk Bike Task Force</td>
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<td>Norwalk Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>Norwalk Land Trust</td>
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<td>Norwalk Preservation Trust</td>
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<td>Norwalk River</td>
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<td>Watershed/HarborWatch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwalk Transit District</td>
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<td>Norwalk Valley River Trail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silvermine Community</td>
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<td>Silvermine Community Association Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Cyclists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Wilton</td>
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<td>Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG)</td>
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Route 7/15 Norwalk - PAC PROCESS

CTDOT

FHWA

Stakeholders

Stakeholders

Stakeholders

Stakeholders

Stakeholders

Stakeholders
PROJECT BACKGROUND
Project Goals
• Provide connectivity
• Increase mobility
• Increase safety
• Improve mobility and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists
Guiding Principle for Solutions
Avoid, minimize, mitigate environmental and historic impacts
# Route 7/15 Norwalk - PROJECT WORKFLOW

(PRELIMINARY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Data Collection / Analysis</th>
<th>Alternate Development</th>
<th>Environmental Documentation</th>
<th>Permitting</th>
<th>Preliminary Design</th>
<th>Final Design</th>
<th>Construction</th>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>2021</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
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Public Outreach...
NEPA/CEPA PROCESS
Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA FOCUS


<table>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Documentation</td>
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</table>

- Environmental Assessment
- Environmental Impact Evaluation

Public Outreach...

Permitting

Preliminary Design

Final Design

Construction
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA - 1969)
Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA - 1971)

**Purpose:** To promote better decision-making by ensuring:

- A full set of reasonable alternatives is evaluated
- Impacts (and to whom they accrue) are understood before decisions are made
- Impacts are avoided, minimized or mitigated
NEPA/CEPA TOPICS

Social Impacts

Purpose & Need

Public Input

Environmental Impacts

Economic Impacts

Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA TOPICS
## Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA TOPICS

### Purpose and Need
- System Linkages
- Mobility
- Safety
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations

### Social Impacts
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Historic and archeological sites
- Visual and scenic resources
- Public Health and Safety
- Consistency with State Environmental Equity Policy
- Consistency with Adopted Municipal and Regional Plans

### Environmental
- Water resources
- Wetlands
- Water quality
- Groundwater
- Coastal resources
- Endangered, threatened and special concern species and critical habitats
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Agricultural lands

### Economic
- Energy use
- Cost
- Cost/Benefit Analysis (CEPA)
- Indirect and cumulative effect
- Support local and regional development initiatives

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### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
• 2008 Stakeholder ranking evaluation matrix of stakeholder concerns

• Are there new issues to consider?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Rank</th>
<th>Issue From Survey</th>
<th>Alternate #12A</th>
<th>Alternate Cloverleaf W/ D2</th>
<th>Alternate #21</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improve Safety and Reduce Accidents</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Impact to Neighborhoods</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Impact to Wetlands</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
<td>Least</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tree Clearing</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Impact to Historic Character/Aesthetic Integrity of Parkway</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
<td>Some</td>
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<td>5a</td>
<td>Number of Historic Structures Impacted</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Noise Impact to Neighborhood</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
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<td>Impact to Historic Character of Silvermine Area</td>
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<td>Least</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Ability to Maintain Natural Barriers Between Highways and Neighborhoods/Landscaping</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Impact to Home Values</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Introduce Weave on Parkway</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Advance Project to Construction</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reduce Congestion</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Ability to Construct Glover Ave &amp; Creeping Hemlock First</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Reduce Project Scope</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Flooding/Drainage Concerns Due to Loss Trees</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
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<td>Ability to Accommodate Bicycles-Pedestrians</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Widening of Glover Ave</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Keep Location of Ramps in the Commercial/Industrial area of Main Ave</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Impact to the Norwalk River</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
<td>Some</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ability to Include Aesthetic Treatment to New Structures</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Draft Purpose and Need
Traffic and Safety
- Traffic data collection program completed Fall 2016
- Crash data
- Origin & Destination Study
- Travel time and delay data
- Bicycle and pedestrian analysis
- Developing traffic models (VISSIM and Synchro)
Route 7/15 Norwalk - CURRENT WORK EFFORT

• Review future land use and development
• Environmental and Cultural Resources
  • Initial Phase 1A/Archeological Preliminary Assessments Complete
  • Phase 1B Investigations Scheduled for Spring 2017
  • Wetland Delineations Complete
  • Habitat Assessments Complete
• Public outreach - ongoing meetings and promotion
Route 7/15 Norwalk - ALTERNATE SCREENING

FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

Agency Coordination

Initial Screening

Comparative Screening

Detailed Screening

Alternative Refinement

Public Involvement

FINAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EVALUATION
Route 7/15 Norwalk

- Refinement of 21C
- Alternate 26
- Consideration of additional alternates
Route 7/15 Norwalk

“NEW”- Alternate 26 Design Concept
Route 7/15 Norwalk

Alternate 26 Interchange Configuration

- Make all connections (Route 7 / Main Ave)
- Number of lanes on Route 7
- Eliminate non-standard Main Ave ramps
- Eliminate weaves on Merritt Parkway
Alternate 26 Review - Benefits and Drawbacks

Potential Benefits

• More compact (less footprint) and simpler interchange for Route 7/15
• Less structures required
• Significantly less expensive - Initial and long-term
• Potential to minimize environmental impacts - both natural resources and historic resources/parkway character
Impact of Removing Trees and Shrubs

Potential Drawbacks

- Greater air quality and noise impacts on Route 7 (signals)
- Potential safety concerns at new Route 7 traffic signals
- Potential reductions in LOS from Alternate 21C
- Alternate 21C considered free flow (preferred)
Initial Alternate 26 Concept Analysis
Questions to be Answered / Unknowns

• ROW acquisition?

• Travel time benefits (over directional ramps)?

• Alternate 26 Access: Limited? Development opportunities?
Are there other alternates to consider?

- In 2008 refined list of alternates to:
  - 12A
  - Cloverleaf
  - 21C (consensus as preferred alternate)
- Current effort:
  - Alternate 26
  - No-build
  - ??????
Meetings
Website
Newsletters
Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)
Newspaper article
Route 7/15 Norwalk - Meetings

- City of Norwalk
- Town of Wilton
- WestCOG
- Merritt Parkway Conservancy
- MPAC
- NASH
- Merritt 7/Marcus Partners
- Building Land Technology
- Norwalk River Watershed
- Norwalk Preservation Trust
- Norwalk Transit District
- Cranbury/Creeping Hemlock Neighborhood
- Norwalk River Valley Trail
- Norwalk Bike/Ped Task Force
More vetting ahead for plan that would add signals to Route 7 Connector

The Hour | Published 12:00 am, Monday February 6, 2017

The Route 7 Connector looking north to the Merritt Parkway, west of the new Transportation Plaza, at the entrance to I-95 on Feb. 3 in Norwalk.

NORMAN — Motorists driving the Route 7 Connector will be adding the brakes to the Connecticut Department of Transportation's interchanges. The alterative to the Route 7/Merritt Parkway interchange.

After 26 years, as the design is called, would add existing lanes, make the interchange fully directional and create three traffic lanes in each direction along the connector near the freeway.

But it also would change the connector from a freeway to a signalized boulevard by installing two traffic signals — one north and the other immediately south of the parkway.

And that would create a whole new commute for the thousands of motorists, many of whom use the connector to get to and from their jobs at nearby Route 7 Corporate Park.

DOT explains Route 7/15 interchange project

The Hour | Updated 11:41 am, Wednesday January 31, 2017

The Environmental Protection Agency is reviewing the Department of Transportation’s proposal to improve the interchange of Route 7 and Route 15 near Norwalk.

The project includes the construction of a new bridge over Route 7, a new on-ramp and a new off-ramp to connect Route 7 and Route 15.

The Environmental Protection Agency is reviewing the project for potential environmental impacts.

The project is expected to begin in 2018 and be completed in 2020.

The new bridge will replace the existing bridge and will improve traffic flow and safety for motorists.

The new on-ramp will provide access to Route 7 from Route 15 and the new off-ramp will provide access to Route 15 from Route 7.

The project will also include the construction of a new bus lane on Route 7 to improve public transportation options.

The project is estimated to cost $60 million and will be funded through a combination of federal, state and local funds.

The project will be constructed in phases to minimize disruptions to traffic.
NEXT STEPS
Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEXT STEPS

- Upcoming meetings -
  - Schedule PAC Meeting number #2 - May
- Six-month lookahead
  - Public Scoping Meeting - June
  - Alternate Analysis
  - Fall PAC meeting to review alternates
- How to stay connected?
- Additional focus meetings?
- Invitation to meet individually
Route 7/15 Norwalk - CONTACT INFORMATION

- CTDOT
  - Andy Fesenmeyer - Project Manager Andy.Fesenmeyer@ct.gov
  - Jen Sweeney - Project Engineer Jennifer.Sweeney@ct.gov
  - Rich Armstrong - Principal Engineer Richard.Armstrong@ct.gov
- Stantec
  - John Eberle, - Project Manager john.eberle@stantec.com
- Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
  - Ken Livingston - Community Engagement klivingston@fhiplan.com
We deeply appreciate your time and your commitment to helping us reach the best possible solution for the State, the region and the City.

Your 7/15 Norwalk Project Team