Public Information Meeting #2
October 23, 2019
AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Project Overview
3. Where We Have Been
4. Remaining Alternatives
5. Environmental Documentation Process
6. Schedule
Introductions
Tonight’s Speakers

- Mike Calabrese, Principal Engineer, CTDOT
- Andy Fesenmeyer, Project Manager, CTDOT
- John Eberle, Project Manager, Stantec
- Paul Stanton, Environmental Documentation, FHI
Merritt Parkway Crashes (2015-2018)

Exit 27: 213 crashes
Exit 38: 220 crashes
Exit 39: 62 crashes*
Exit 40: 365 crashes*
Exit 41: 209 crashes*
Exit 41*: 241 crashes
Exit 42: 222 crashes
Exit 44: 211 crashes

0.5 mi S of Exit 44:

Number of crashes from 2015-2018 in 1/2-mile segments:
- < 101
- 100 - 200
- 200 - 300
- > 300

* = fatal injury
Merritt Parkway Crashes (2015-2018)

Exit 27: 213 crashes
Exit 29: 128 crashes
Exit 35: 157 crashes
Exit 38: 220 crashes
Exit 39: 62 crashes
Exit 40: 365 crashes*
Exit 41: 209 crashes*
Exit 44: 211 crashes
Exit 49: 90 crashes
Exit 52: 8 crashes

Number of crashes from 2015-2018 in 1/2-mile segments:
- < 101
- 100 - 200
- 200 - 300
- > 300
* = fatal injury
Where We Have Been
### Project History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early 2000’s</td>
<td>Over 20 alternatives were developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Construction began on preferred alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Lawsuit halted construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferred alternative had “elevated ramps”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>Formed Stakeholder Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reached consensus on new alternative 21C</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Due to lack of funding, project put on hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Project receives funding and is re-initiated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Advisory Committee (PAC) formed 2016

- Go through the project development process with the Project Team
- Serves as an advisory body to project team
  - Includes subcommittees
- Provides "local insight"
- Serves as a link to the local community
- Provides input on:
  - Key issues
  - Purpose and Need Statement
  - Alternatives
  - Screening Analysis
# PAC Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (CTASLA)</th>
<th>Marcus Partners/ Merritt 7</th>
<th>Norwalk Transit District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BikeWalkCT</td>
<td>Merritt Parkway Conservancy</td>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Norwalk</td>
<td>Merritt Parkway Trail Alliance</td>
<td>Silvermine Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Norwalk Association of Silvermine Homeowners (NASH)</td>
<td>Silvermine Community Association Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creeping Hemlock/Cranbury Neighborhood</td>
<td>Norwalk Bike Walk Commission</td>
<td>Sound Cyclists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT Commuter Council</td>
<td>Norwalk Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Town of Wilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT Trust for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Norwalk Land Trust</td>
<td>Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire State Realty Trust, Inc</td>
<td>Norwalk Preservation Trust</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Norwalk Hispanic Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Point / Building and Land Technology (BLT)</td>
<td>Norwalk River Watershed/HarborWatch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PAC Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting #</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 1</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Introduction to the Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 2</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Purpose and Need Discussion and Introduction of Traffic Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 3</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Project Alternatives and Upcoming Public Scoping Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 4</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Needs and Deficiency Report and Revised Purpose and Need Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 5</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Alternatives Assessment Screening Overview/Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 6</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Level 1 Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 7</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Level 2 Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC # 8</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Completed Level 2 Screening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Needs and Deficiencies Report

Project-wide Deficiencies
- Substandard geometry
- Insufficient capacity
- Crash history

Route 7/15 Interchange Deficiencies
- Incomplete connections
- Congestion on Route 7 onto Merritt Parkway southbound

Main Avenue/Route 15 Interchange Deficiencies
- Poor ramp geometries
- Lack of bike/ped facilities (Main Ave)
Purpose and Need Statement

Developed with input from:

- Project Advisory Committee
- Government agencies
- The public
Purpose and Need Statement

Defines problem and guides alternative development

1. Improve **system linkage** between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway
2. Improve the **mobility** for all users at the Merritt Parkway’s Main Avenue and Route 7 Interchanges
3. Improve **safety** in the vicinity of these interchanges
Scoping and Public Information Meeting

- October 17, 2017
- Oral/written comments received
- Key Concerns
  - Addition of traffic signals on Route 7; possible noise/congestion
  - Completing the Route 7/Merritt Parkway connections
  - Environmental, water resources, landscape/aesthetics
  - Funding
- Scoping Meeting Summary Report available on website (www.7-15norwalk.com)
28 Alternatives Initially Considered
Screening Process

Spring – Fall 2018
Level 1 Screening:
Purpose & Need

Spring – Summer 2019
Level 2 Screening:
Other criteria

FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

FINAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EVALUATION
Level 1 Screening
Reviewed 28 alternatives

Ability to Meet Purpose and Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Meets P&amp;N</th>
<th>Moderately Meets P&amp;N</th>
<th>Does Not Meet P&amp;N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roadway System Linkage</td>
<td>Connections are made in all directions to/from Route 7 and Merritt Parkway</td>
<td>N/A.</td>
<td>Connections are not made in all directions to/from Route 7 and Merritt Parkway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Vehicular connections are provided between Main Avenue and Route 7 and all connections are maintained between Merritt Parkway and Creeping Hemlock Drive. Local road network improvements are apparent.</td>
<td>Vehicular connections are provided between Main Avenue and Route 7 but not all connections are maintained between Merritt Parkway and Creeping Hemlock Drive. Local road network improvements may or may not be apparent.</td>
<td>Vehicular connections are not provided between Main Avenue and Route 7 and/or no connections are maintained between Merritt Parkway and Creeping Hemlock Drive. The local road network is not improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Considerations</td>
<td>No apparent geometric deficiencies (e.g., inadequate distances, tight ramps) are identified.</td>
<td>Some apparent geometric deficiencies such as short weaving distances between ramps are maintained or adjacent on- and/or off-ramps are proposed</td>
<td>Many apparent geometric deficiencies such as short weaving distances, inadequate acceleration/deceleration lanes, etc. are proposed or past assessments specifically denoted safety concerns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How was the Ability to Meet Purpose and Need Determined?

- Meets P&N
- Moderately Meets P&N
- Does Not Meet P&N
- More Analysis Needed
## Level 1 Screening: Purpose and Need

Four alternatives met Purpose and Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose and Need Criteria</th>
<th>NO-BUILD</th>
<th>ALT. 12A</th>
<th>ALT. 20B</th>
<th>ALT. 21D</th>
<th>ALT. 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roadway System Linkage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linkage between Route 7 and Merritt Parkway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve mobility for all users (motorists,</td>
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<td>pedestrians, and cyclists) at project</td>
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<tr>
<td>interchange areas*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety Considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety in vicinity of Interchanges 39 and</td>
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<td>40**</td>
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# Level 2 Screening: Other Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Alt 12A</th>
<th>Alt 20B</th>
<th>Alt 21D</th>
<th>Alt 26</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Compatible with Regional Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>B) Construction Costs</td>
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<td>C) Maintenance Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>D) Integrating Project Roadways into Environment / Neighborhood Context</td>
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<td>E) Elevated Ramps</td>
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<td>F) Potential Impacts to Norwalk River</td>
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<td>G) Proximity of New Ramps / Roadways to Neighborhoods</td>
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<td>H) Construction Duration / Impacts to Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>I) Direct Archaeological Resources Impacts</td>
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</table>
Remaining Alternatives

Alternative 21 D

Alternative 26
Alternative 21D
Alternative 26
Environmental Documentation Process
NEPA / CEPA Process

Project Initiation and Early Coordination
- Develop Purpose and Need
- Data Collection

Conduct Public Scoping

Alternatives Analysis and Commence Impact Analyses

Refine Project Purpose and Need Statement

Prepare Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation

Conduct Public Hearing

Construction

Final Design and Permitting

Prepare Finding of No Significant Impact / CEPA Record of Decision

Respond to Comments/Edit Document

Scoping Phase

Data Collection and Documentation Process

Review Phase

Finalization Phase
Alternative Analysis within NEPA/CEPA includes …

- Range of reasonable alternatives from Level 2 Screening and,
- No-Action/No-Build Alternative-

The No-Action/No-Build Alternative is used as a benchmark to measure the environmental impacts of build alternatives
Environmental Considerations - Natural Environment

- General Ecology and Endangered Species
- Navigable Waters
- Surface Waters
- Wetlands
- Flood Plains
- Groundwater
- Farmland Protection/Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Environmental Considerations - Built Environment

- Land Use, Zoning, And Local and Regional Plan Of Conservation And Development
- Consistency with State Conservation And Development Plan
- Social and Economic Considerations
- Environmental Justice
- Traffic
- Bicycles And Pedestrians
- Right Of Way/Land Acquisitions
- Noise
- Community Services And Private Utilities
Environmental Considerations- Built Environment (cont.)

- Community Cohesion
- Cultural Resources
- Scenic Parkway
- Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)
- Hazardous Materials
- Energy Analysis
- Construction Impacts
- Climate Change/Resilience
Section 106 Consultation Process

Initiate Process

Identify Historic Resources
- Landscape
- Bridges
- Districts
- Properties

Assess Effects

Resolve Effects

PAC Involvement and Consulting Parties
Process to identify preferred alternative

Document Preparation

• For each alternative
  • Conduct impact assessment for resource category
  • Identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate resource impacts if necessary
  • Compare benefits and impacts
• FHWA and CTDOT recommend a preferred alternative
Process to select preferred alternative

Document Review
- CTDOT announces availability of EA/EIE for review
- Public comment period and public hearing (minimum 45 days)

Document Completion
- Consider comments and, as needed, revise EA/EIE based on comments
- FHWA and CTDOT will select a Preferred Alternative and issue a Finding of No Significant Impact/Record of Decision
Schedule
THANK YOU!
Questions?