



## Route 7-15 Norwalk

### **Extension of Exit 40B of the Merritt Parkway Southbound in Norwalk**

CTDOT Project 0102-0368 has started construction. This project includes safety improvements, resurfacing, landscape enhancements and bridge improvements on the Merritt Parkway (Route 15) in the City of Norwalk and Town of Westport, between Exits 40 and 41.

To address the public and neighborhood concerns during a Public Information Meeting held in the fall of 2019 over the safety of Exit 40B southbound onto Creeping Hemlock Drive, this project includes the extension and improvement of its deceleration lane. This requires extending the side slope of the exit, which also required the extension of the existing box culvert at Creeping Hemlock Drive. This work requires removal of some vegetation between the exit lane and Creeping Hemlock Drive. A review of the landscape in this area shows that much of the vegetation is invasive or of poor quality, and that removing the minimum amount of vegetation would not improve its condition. Instead, removal of additional vegetation in the area will occur, along with a restorative planting plan. This planting installation will consist of trees, shrubs, and seeding consistent with the Landscape Master Plan for the Merritt Parkway.

Invasive species removal work is currently underway across the project, and removal of invasive and other vegetation is expected to occur in this area starting the week of August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Roadway and culvert work will continue through the end of this year and into the Spring of 2022. Upon completion of the roadway and culvert work, re-planting of the area is expected to occur in the Spring of 2022.

The Department is currently in the process of evaluating the need and its ability to install guiderail, and/or non-access fencing along Creeping Hemlock Drive in this area for safety purposes.

As we continue coordination with the local community, it is important to note that a future project, the Route 7/15 interchange, will likely reconfigure this area and impact some of these plantings. That project will also have an extensive landscape plan and will address any of the disturbed areas.

For more project information and to sign up for email alerts, please visit <https://merrittparkwaynorwalk.com/>