



PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC) MEETING #2

Meeting Summary

Date: May 23, 2017

Norwalk City Hall Community Room

Time: 6:30pm

1. Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Organization
PAC Members		
Mike	Yeosock	City of Norwalk
Christopher	Wigren	Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
Jo-Anne	Horvath	Creeping Hemlock/Cranbury Neighborhood
Peter	Viteretto	Connecticut Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects
Timothy	Densky	Empire Realty Trust
David	Waters	Harbor Point/Building and Land Technology
David	Fiore	Marcus Partners/Merritt 7
JoAnn	McGrath	Marcus Partners/Merritt 7
Jill	Smyth	Merritt Parkway Conservancy
Alan	Kibbe	Norwalk Association of Homeowners (NASH)
Nancy	Rosett	Norwalk Bike Task Force/Merritt Parkway Trail Alliance
Tod	Bryant	Norwalk Preservation Trust
Britt	Liotta	Norwalk Transit District
Charlie	Taney	Norwalk Valley River Trail
Joanne	Ferrera	Silvermine Community
Connecticut Department of Transportation Staff		
Rich	Armstrong	CTDOT
Andy	Fesenmeyer	CTDOT
Jenn	Sweeney	CTDOT
Project Consultant Team		
Meg	Harper	Architectural and Historic Services (AHS)
Ross	Harper	Architectural and Historic Services (AHS)
Stacey	Vairo	Architectural and Historic Services (AHS)
Mike	Fisher	BL Companies
Kim	Lesay	BL Companies
Stephanie	Brooks	FHI
Ken	Livingston	FHI
John	Eberle	Stantec
Chris	Mojica	Stantec
Brian	O'Donnell	Stantec
Gary	Sorge	Stantec
Mike	Dion	VN Engineers



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2. Welcome

Andy Fesenmeyer, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), welcomed everyone to the 2nd Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project.

3. Meeting Overview

Andy Fesenmeyer reviewed the meeting's agenda items, which will be covered using PowerPoint presentation slides:

1. Review of PAC meeting #1
2. Overview of traffic conditions
3. Safety issues and review
4. Bicycle and pedestrian overview
5. Discussion of Draft Purpose and Need
6. Context/Visual Assessments
7. Review of initial design visualization
8. Next steps

4. Review of PAC Meeting #1

Andy F. presented a brief overview of the topics covered at the first PAC meeting.

5. Overview of traffic conditions

Andy F. introduced Chris Mojica who provided a brief overview of the Project's existing traffic conditions and initial traffic analysis.

Questions and discussion within the traffic presentation included:

Q: What about through traffic on Main Avenue? How many cars are using Main Avenue to connect between the Merritt Parkway and Route 7?

A: About 10 percent of vehicles in peak periods are making the connection between the Merritt Parkway and Route 7 using Main Avenue.

Q: As for the traffic that is getting off Route 7 at Exit 2, what percentage goes on Merritt Parkway or Main Avenue, if not getting off at Exit 2 on Route 7 where are they going from there?

A: They are going to office complexes via Grist Mill Road. More people are getting off at Exit 2, only about 5% using Grist Mill Road to double back to office complexes.

Suggestion: Would like to see how many people going to Grist Mill, how many going west, etc.

6. Safety issues

Chris M. continued to present on safety and crash data. Chris compared the project area crashes to other locations along the Parkway highlighting the significant amount of crashes at this location.



7. Bicycle and pedestrian overview

Ken L. provide an overview of bicycle and pedestrian conditions and existing usage within the project area. He highlighted both existing and proposed bicycle connections from the 2012 Norwalk Pedestrian and Bikeway Plan, and the limited existing pedestrian amenities along Main Avenue.

Q: When considering bike/ped counts, do you take potentials into your projections, such as how much higher counts would be if there were more infrastructure/facilities available?

A: Yes, and note that there are a lot more people out there than it seems. For potential or latent demand, the project team will assess existing and future land use, key employment areas and destinations, demographic changes and comparisons to other communities. Currently there are limited bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the project area which inevitably reduces the actual number of pedestrians and bicyclists in the area.

8. Discussion of Draft Purpose and Need

John E. introduced the process to develop the Draft Purpose and Need and the importance of having one that serves as the basis for evaluating project alternatives. The PAC was provided the Draft Purpose and Need for review in their meeting invitation.

John asked the PAC to review the Draft Purpose and Need and provide feedback in the coming weeks. In addition, he suggested that if there was interest in the group, a separate sub-committee could be formed to review and assist in formulating edits to the Purpose and Need statement. Interested representatives were directed to contact Andy Fesenmeyer.

9. Context/Visual Assessments

In response to discussions at the first PAC meeting, Gary S. provided an update on the Context/Visual Assessment work that is being undertaken. Gary presented a series of historical photographs that may help to guide the landscaping and design treatments for the project. There will be continued discussions and analysis as the project moves forward. The critical element will be to restore and enhance Parkway characteristics where feasible.

10. Review of initial design visualization

John E. presented an animation video of the existing conditions simulation (3-D digital model) of the project area. This is a work in progress. In the coming months, the simulations and ability for individuals to explore the simulations will be posted to the project website. PAC members will be notified when available.

11. Next Steps

Andy F. presented a brief overview of upcoming work tasks for the project team over the next few months, highlighting PAC meeting #3 in late September followed by a Public Scoping Meeting in October.



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The following discussion ensued:

Comments/Questions

Comment: Would like to address traffic and safety issues on Main Avenue; as an example: often works with Extended Stay America, and because the street outside feels so unsafe, visitors ask if a bus can be routed to pick up people at the hotel because there are no crosswalks to cross the street.

Comment: Would like to see bicycle/pedestrian issues addressed along Main Avenue; very dangerous conditions.

Comment: Interested in landscapes and aesthetics, improve the Parkway's 25-year-old master plan.

Q: Do the simulation models have the capacity to show at ground level?

A: Yes, a person will be able to view at any angle and view a variety of perspectives from locations throughout the project area. There will be a set of pre-developed simulations a person can watch directly from the project website and a link provided to a web service that will allow users to drive and "fly" around the project area.

- The team will coordinate a summer meeting focused on historic and cultural resources. We will work with Tod Bryant at Norwalk Preservation Trust

Q: Do any of the existing peak afternoon/evening traffic conditions take into account the police officers at Glover Avenue/Main Avenue that control the signal?

A: No, and any alternative should eliminate the need for manual signal operations at Glover Avenue. The traffic model assumes signals have been optimized and are synchronized throughout the project area to work in the best manner possible without the need for manual control or a police officer directing traffic.

Comment: Fascinating how the area is being used and where traffic is going; the presentation was well done and appreciate the amount that the committee can engage and work with the tools that the Project Team is presenting.

Comment: Would like to see more connectivity between various routes meeting up with the interchange. People coming from Silvermine and Perry Avenue: how much traffic comes from Grist Mill area to get to Merritt Parkway and what would help move traffic from Grist Mill to connector?

Response: Team noted that this additional data will be addressed in further information that will be part of a package that will be sent to PAC. The package, which will include more specific Origin & Destination tables and graphics, will be provided to the PAC in the upcoming month or two.

Comment: When comparing alternatives, it is important to look at adjusting the timing of traffic lights during off-peak hours to increase safety and reduce pollution; there will always be congestion during peak hours, but we can reduce delay/travel times during off-peak by adjusting signal timing.



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Comment: As geometry is developed, would like to ensure that landscape is maintained with as little disruption as possible. Focus on street trees on Main Avenue to soften scale.

Q: Is the scoping meeting in October for the public?

A: Yes, it is kicking-off a more formal public process. Please encourage neighborhoods, stakeholder groups and others that you represent attend this scoping meeting. Additionally, as PAC members please bring any feedback you hear to the next PAC meeting.

Comment: The Villages on Main Avenue has been approved. Trucks will not be allowed to make a left turn; will they have to go up to Grist Mill?

Response: This will need to be considered as alternative gets developed.