



# Route 7/15 NORWALK

## NEWSLETTER FALL 2019

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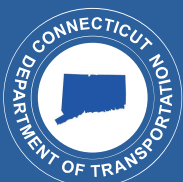
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The Project Team invites you to a **Public Information Meeting** on **Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 7:00 PM** at the **Norwalk City Hall Community Room, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT.** CTDOT staff and the consultant team will be available between **6:30 PM and 7:00 PM** to answer questions, with an informational presentation at 7:00 PM.



## Two Alternatives Selected for Environmental Review

In 2018, the Project Team and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) completed a Level 1 Screening of various alternatives for the Norwalk Route 7/15 Project. Those alternatives that did not meet the Project's Purpose and Need were eliminated from further consideration.

At the Level 1 Screening stage, the alternatives needed to address several criteria.

- First, roadway linkages: Would the alternative provide all connections between Route 7, the Merritt Parkway, and Main Avenue?
- Second, mobility improvements: Would the alternative improve mobility for all users (motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists) at project interchange areas?
- Third, safety considerations: Would the alternative improve safety in the vicinity of Interchanges 39 and 40?

Four alternatives met the Purpose and Need: Alt. 12A, Alt. 20B, Alt. 21D and Alt. 26.

The Project Team, with the help of the

PAC, took the four alternatives from the Level 1 Screening into the Level 2 Screening. These four alternatives were evaluated further based on factors such as integrating the roadway improvements into the environment, impacts to the Norwalk River, archaeological resources, costs, and other potential impacts (see table below). During this process, the Project Team and the PAC reduced the number of alternatives to a "reasonable range of alternatives" that will be assessed in the environmental document. (See PAC #7 and PAC #8 meeting minutes at [www.7-15norwalk.com/materials.php](http://www.7-15norwalk.com/materials.php) for more info.)

**The two remaining alternatives are 21D and 26.** Both alternatives complete the missing connections between Route 7, Main Avenue, and the Merritt Parkway, but in very different ways. Alternative 21D allows for free flow of traffic for the connection between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway while Alternative 26 would introduce traffic signals on Route 7 to make some of the necessary connections.

Criteria	Alt 12A	Alt 20B	Alt 21D	Alt 26
A) Compatible with Regional Initiatives	Green	Red	Green	Red
B) Construction Costs	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green
C) Maintenance Costs	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green
D) Integrating Project Roadways into Environment / Neighborhood Context	Red	Red	Red	Yellow
E) Elevated Ramps	Black	Green	Green	Green
F) Potential Impacts to Norwalk River	Red	Red	Red	Yellow
G) Proximity of New Ramps / Roadways to Neighborhoods	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
H) Construction Duration / Impacts to Public	Red	Red	Red	Yellow
I) Direct Archaeological Resources Impacts	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red

In the Level 2 Screening, four build alternatives were graded on various criteria as follows: green (Meets Goal), yellow (Moderately Meets Goal), red (Does Not Sufficiently Meet Goal), or black (Fatal Flaw).

# Two Alternatives Remain



## 3D Model Gives a New Perspective

A 3D model has been prepared to help the Project Team, the PAC and the public better visualize the various alternatives, understand their similarities and differences, gauge their impacts, and envision the driver's experience for each.

It's difficult to make those judgments based only on maps and diagrams. To facilitate that effort, the Project Team created a series of models that show the project area as it would look with the different alternatives. The interactive 3D models allow the user to view the project area from different altitudes and angles, allowing for a more comprehensive picture of each alternative.

The model allows viewers to toggle between the alternatives, as well as to the project area as it exists today. During a PAC meeting in April, the committee members were able to see these models, looking at different project areas as they exist now and how they might exist in the future. The PAC members expressed that the models were helpful in allowing them to better understand the different alternatives.



*The 3D model allows viewers to see the different build alternatives from various angles and how they differ from the existing.*

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The 3D model can be viewed at [www.7-15norwalk.com/virtualtour](http://www.7-15norwalk.com/virtualtour)

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## Build Alternatives Improve Bike/Ped Amenities

Interchange improvements between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway will provide an opportunity to improve the bicycle and pedestrian amenities along Main Avenue and Glover Avenue. Currently, Main Avenue has no bike lanes and has narrow shoulders and sidewalks, making bicycle and pedestrian travel along the roadway difficult.

The Project Team participated in a site walk to get a first-hand view of the bicycle and pedestrian concerns and connections, and has met with the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) and the Norwalk Bike/Walk Commission.

Both alternatives currently under consideration have the potential to provide the same level of bike and pedestrian amenities along Creeping Hemlock Drive, Glover Avenue and Main Avenue.

The goal is to facilitate connection to the planned bike lane improvements on Glover Avenue where the new Merritt

7 train station is being constructed. Such improvements may include wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes and increased pedestrian amenities at the intersections. The Project Team will continue to refine the designs and have additional meetings with stakeholders.



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Both alternatives currently under consideration have the potential to provide the **same level of bike and pedestrian amenities.**

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# Project Updates

## PAC Meetings

In April, the PAC met to view the new 3D model, which gave the PAC members a better sense of what the alternatives would look like to drivers and the differences between them. The 3D model can be viewed on the project website at <http://7-15norwalk.com/virtualtour>.

In June, the Project Team met with the PAC to begin the Level 2 screening. During this meeting, the group defined the screening criteria and reviewed how the alternatives will be measured against the criteria.

Finally, in July, the PAC met again to complete the Level 2 Screening, deciding on two alternatives to move into the environmental evaluation and documentation process.

## Section 106 Meeting

In May, the Project Team also met with the Section 106 Consulting Parties to review the above- and below-ground cultural resources in the project area. The Project Team presented the Consulting Parties with an overview of the Public Report Phase I and II Cultural Resource Surveys. Representatives from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Connecticut Historical Trust, and the Merritt Parkway Conservancy attended the meeting. The report is currently being revised based on the feedback received at that meeting.

## Project Schedule



## Public Meeting

This fall, the Project Team plans to hold a Public Information Meeting to provide updates on the project and to review the Alternatives 21D and 26.



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*Public input is encouraged* throughout the process! Presentations from the PAC meetings are posted to the project website ([www.7-15norwalk.com](http://www.7-15norwalk.com)).

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