



PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC) MEETING #7

Meeting Summary

Date: June 20, 2019

Merritt 7 - City Hall Community Room

Time: 6:30pm

Attendance

PAC Members	
Jim carter	Norwalk Valley Trail
JoAnn McGrath	Marcus Properties
Jo-Anne Horvath	Creeping Hemlock Neighborhood
Alan Kibbe	Norwalk Association of Silvermine Homeowners
Nancy Rosett	Norwalk Bike Walk Commission
Jeff Ram	Empire State Realty Trust, Inc.
Peter Viteretto	CT ASLA
Wes Haynes	Merritt Parkway Conservancy
Connecticut Department of Transportation and FHWA Staff	
Yolanda Antoniak	CTDOT
Andy Fesenmeyer	CTDOT
Project Consultant Team	
Marcy Mille	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Paul Stanton	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
John Eberle	Stantec
Chris Mojica	Stantec
Gary Sorge	Stantec
General Public	

1. Welcome

Andy Fesenmeyer, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), welcomed everyone to the 7th Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project. He stated that this meeting would be different from the previous meeting whereby the project team would be looking for considerable input from the PAC on the Level 2 Screening Criteria. The goal is to achieve a reasonable range of alternatives at the end of the meeting.

2. Meeting Overview

Andy F. reviewed the meeting's agenda items:

- Introductions



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- General Updates
 - Review of PAC #6
 - Section 106 Process
- Level 1 Screening
- Level 2 Screening
- Schedule / Next Steps

3. General Updates

After introductions, Andy F. provided updates on two recent meetings. First, he provided a recap of PAC Meeting #6. He stated that the group viewed model videos and RDV model of the remaining alternatives. The project team emailed the PAC the virtual tour videos on June 10, 2019. In addition, Andy F. provided a recap of the Section 106 May 2019 meeting, noting that the report is being revised and will be sent to the PAC once it is complete.

4. Level 1 Screening

John Eberle, of Stantec Consulting Services Incorporated, reviewed the Level 1 Screening. He stated that 28 alternatives were assessed against the Purpose and Need. Four alternatives met the Purpose and Need: 12A, 20B, 21D, 26, and the No Build Alternative.

5. Level 2 Screening

John E. next introduced the Level 2 Screening process. He stated that the four alternatives would start on a clean slate and be assessed against new Level 2 Screening criteria. The first goal of this meeting is to review, identify, and discuss the Level 2 Screening criteria. The goal of the Level 2 Screening is not to pick a preferred alternate, but rather to get to a reasonable range of alternatives to assess. A reasonable range of alternatives is typically two alternatives, perhaps three. The PAC would first discuss the criteria and then the metrics. If time allows, the PAC will review all four alternatives against the criteria and metrics.

John E. discussed how the project team has revisited the criteria from 2008 to create the Level 2 Screening criteria. He noted that the projected identified 2008 criteria were filtered out if they:

- Were previously screened in Level 1
- Are to be covered in the EA/EIE, and
- Are likely to be the same for each alternative.

Four remaining criteria included neighborhood impacts, tree clearing, natural barriers, and reduction to project scope. John E. suggested that these four be carried forward into the Level 2 Screening analysis.

Criteria Review

Criterion A: Compatible with Regional Initiatives

John E. stated that this criterion considers the region's desires and initiatives for travel between municipalities. It is a binary (i.e. yes or no answer) metric. Nancy Rosett, of Norwalk Bike Walk Commission, asked if the project team could better describe or provide an example of a regional initiative. Andy F. responded that, from a regional perspective, there is desire for a corridor to be free-flow. Alternatives should aim to serve travelers moving through the region, not stopping at local destinations.

Alan Kibbe questioned if these connections should be an alternative to I-95 during a crash or incident. Andy F. commented that it should.

An attendee asked if WestCOG was represented at the meeting and if they are planning to prioritize the regional connectivity of Route 7. John E. answered that a representative from WestCOG was not in attendance but the project team and PAC could ask them about their regional perspective and any official stance on what is a "regional" initiative. He added this is a broad assessment and it is important to consider this holistically.

Criterion B: Construction Costs

John E. stated that this criterion considers the magnitude of construction costs of each alternative. the Nancy R. asked why there was no middle metric. Andy F. answered that the project team has not completed detailed cost estimates at this time.

Criterion C: Maintenance Costs

John E. stated that this criterion considers the magnitude of maintenance costs of each alternative. Peter Viteretto, of Silvermine Community Association, and others questioned whether landscape maintenance, sign



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maintenance, and guardrail maintenance costs are included in this criterion. John E. stated that they are not included at this time because they likely would not be deciding factors. For the same reason, stormwater is not included in this Level 2 Screening. Gary Sorge, of Stantec, added that many of these factors are design factors, planned much later in the engineering and design process. These alternatives are very conceptual now.

An attendee questioned whether the concrete barrier would be added through Exits 39 and 40 as part of the current work, and whether these barriers would be impacted as part of this project. Andy F. stated that he did not know, but he would find out from others at CTDOT.

Criterion D: Integrating Project Roadways into Environment / Neighborhood Context

John E. stated that this item considers the simplicity / compactness of each alternative. Alan K. commented that this criterion mirrors construction costs. John E. agreed (in this case) but added that it is important to separate this item because there could be situations where they are different.

There was discussion whether simple and compact alternatives are more likely to be given the highest ranking (green). John E. acknowledged that there are negative connotations with larger, more complex projects. Residents and travelers are more aware (e.g. seeing, hearing) of these larger projects. An attendee asked whether views would be considered in this criterion. Paul Stanton, of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. stated that viewsheds will be considered in the environmental analysis. Andy F. reiterated that the Level 2 Screening should be a simple, overview analysis.

Gary S. added that perhaps the highest ranking for any build alternative may be yellow in this category. John E. stated that the PAC may want to consider and discuss this criterion and metrics a bit more at the next meeting.

Criterion E: Elevated Ramps

John E. stated that the construction of elevated ramps was a major issue in 2008. Thus, the existence of elevated ramps in any alternative should be considered a fatal flaw. An attendee questioned whether the PAC and project team could eliminate 12A at this time, because it has this fatal flaw. John E. stated that this alternative would likely be eliminated as part of the Level 2 Screening, but the PAC and project team needed to go through the process.

Criterion F: Potential Impacts to the Norwalk River

John E. stated that this criterion considers the potential impact or bridges that will be constructed over the Norwalk River. Peter V. asked if stormwater impacts would be considered as part of this criterion. John E. answered that they are not considered in the Level 2 Screening because the design (much of which is not completed yet) can greatly minimize stormwater impacts.

Criterion G: Proximity of New Ramps / Roadways to Neighborhoods

Andy F. stated that the project team used to only consider the impacts to the Silvermine neighborhood. Now, the project team is looking at impacts to three quadrants around the intersection. When asked, Andy F. stated that the project team will have the model available to show this to the PAC and public.

Criterion H: Construction Duration / Impacts to Public

John E. stated that this criterion considers the magnitude of construction length and impacts to the public of each alternative. There were no comments from the PAC on this criterion.

Criterion I: Direct Archaeological Resources Impacts

John E. stated that this criterion is included because it is a differentiator. The Section 106 Report was recently sent to the PAC. There were no comments from the PAC on this criterion.

6. General Comments

Peter V asked if the PAC could have the general volumes of linear footage of roadway. John E. answered that the project team will have quantitative information and will provide this information along with the models. Gary S. added that this data will also include areas of greenspace.

7. Schedule/Next Steps

Andy F. stated that the project team would like to host one more PAC meeting to review outstanding comments or discussion on the evaluation criteria. He also said that PAC would be tasked with rating the alternatives



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against the criteria. Finally, the project team would present the upcoming environmental documentation process and schedule at that meeting. The project team would like to host this meeting in mid-July and would contact the PAC about availability on a select number of dates.

John E. reiterated that this process's purpose is not to get to a preferred alternative but rather to a reasonable range of alternative which can then be assessed as part of the National Environmental Policy Act / Connecticut Environmental Policy Act processes.