

Report of Meeting

Date and Time: Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 5:30 PM

Location: FHI, 416 Asylum Street, Hartford

Subject: Bicycle/Pedestrian/Transit Working Group #2

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Sandra Fry	Bike Walk CT	860-561-1201	sfry@ghtd.org
Lance Goldberg	West Hartford citizen	860-233-7729	GoldbergL@fpsct.org
Chris Brown	Bike Walk CT, Frog Hollow NRZ	860-560-9299	interstatement@gmail.com
Justin Eichenlaub	TransportHartford.org	650-815-9144	eichenlaub@gmail.com
Rich Armstrong	CTDOT	860-594-3191	Richard.Armstrong@ct.gov
Lia Yim	CRCOG	860-522-2217 x224	byim@crcog.org
Casey Hardin	TranSystems Corporation (TSC)	860-417-4557	crhardin@transystems.com
Francisco Gomes	FHI	860-256-4916	fgomes@fhiplan.com
Mike Morehouse	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI)	860-256-4912	mmorehouse@fhiplan.com
Stacy Graham-Hunt	FHI	860-256-4911	sgraham-hunt@fhiplan.com

1. Introduction

The meeting started with Mr. Francisco Gomes giving a recap of the first meeting, which took place on October 1, 2014. He reviewed the group's ideas and comments regarding transit issues as well as bicycle/pedestrian issues.

Ms. Sandra Fry asked that a correction be made to the October 1, 2014 meeting notes. (The reference to the Pope Park pathway should be corrected to refer to the pathway between Bushnell Park and the LOB. The asphalt path in Bushnell Park could be replaced.)

2. Scoping

Mr. Michael Morehouse gave an overview of the scoping process. He explained what scoping is, how long the process lasts and that a public scoping meeting would be held on January 21, 2015 for the I-84 Hartford Project. Scoping is a critical milestone early in the environmental review process and provides an opportunity for agencies and the public to help shape the study process and its outcomes. The scoping process will lead to an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives.

3. NEPA

Mr. Rich Armstrong gave an overview of the NEPA process.

Mr. Lance Goldberg asked if there were any updates on the rail alternatives project.

Mr. Armstrong explained that the rail study was going on concurrently with the I-84 Hartford Project. Once the project team gets the results from the rail project, it will likely incorporate their findings into the I-84 Hartford Project. The rail alternatives project is expected to be completed in early spring 2015.

4. Review of Alternatives

Mr. Casey Hardin gave an overview of four alternatives for the I-84 Hartford Project.

1. No Build -This alternative would essentially maintain the bridges in their current alignment and geometry.

Group members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

Q. Mr. Lance Goldberg: Under this alternative, how long will the existing structures last?

A. Mr. Rich Armstrong: The work will involve frequent and significant repairs to keep the highway in good repair into the future. For purposes of comparing the alternatives, we'll look at the structure work that would be needed over the course of the next 20-25 years, because the year 2040 is the baseline year in which all of the alternatives are measured.

Mr. Casey Hardin: All of the repairs would not be completed in one construction project. It would be done in sequence according to what needs to be repaired first.

Mr. Casey Hardin: All of the repairs would not be completed in one construction project. It would be done in sequence according to what needs to be repaired first.

C. Ms. Sandra Fry: Repair the drains on the highway that drip onto the sidewalks along Sigourney Street.

Q. Mr. Justin Eichenlaub: Is there a plan to put bike lanes on Capitol Avenue?

A. Ms. Sandra Fry said she would be attending a meeting on Monday to discuss the possibility of putting bike lanes on a few streets in Hartford. There may be city funds available, but only for design.

C. Ms. Sandra Fry: State of CT employees park on Park Street and Putnam Street and the two-hour limit is never enforced. A residential parking permit plan is being considered.

Alternative 2: Rebuilt elevated highway - This alternative would rebuild the bridges and consider improvements to such features as shoulders, ramps, and other geometrical features.

C. Ms. Sandra Fry: I thought this alternative meant making elevated highway taller. I didn't realize there was an at-grade piece.

A. Project team: This alternative minimizes the amount of new structure, lowering the highway where possible. Bridges will still be required over the railroad and the required clearance is 22.5 feet. This

would make the highway slightly higher than it is today. The highway could be lowered west of the railroad crossing, at approximately Sigourney Street. Lowering some of the highway may present an opportunity to provide new or improved local street connections.

Q. Ms. Sandra Fry: Laurel Street and Sigourney Street wouldn't have to be as high as they are today?

A. Mr. Casey Hardin: They probably still would be because they have to get over the railroad.

The group reviewed the map to get a better understanding of the alternative.

C. Mr. Chris Brown: Hawthorn Street and Laurel Streets are trouble areas. If West Boulevard connected to Hawthorn Street, that would be a tremendous change and improvement.

A. Ms. Sandra Fry: "It could mess up Hawthorn if elevation was changed."

C. Ms. Sandra Fry: If you picture where there are ramps today, it's not pleasant where they are.

Q. Mr. Justin Eichenlaub: As public transportation improves, can we assume that Aetna will need fewer parking spaces?

A. Mr. Rich Armstrong: Aetna currently has proactive incentives for its employees to use public transportation.

Alternative 3: Relocates the railroad / Lowered Highway - This alternative would rebuild the highway at a lower grade. The railroad would need to be relocated to the north in order for this alternative to be feasible.

Q. Mr. Lance Goldberg: Will the station be like New Haven's train station, where you walk out to the track?

Q. Mr. Lance Goldberg: If the highway is going to be at-grade, is it possible to put a bike path alongside the highway.

A. Mr. Casey Hardin: possibly.

Q. Mr. Chris Brown: Is it possible to have a multi-use path on the northern side of the corridor?

A. Mr. Michael Morehouse: A busway and RR tracks are there now, so it is uncertain how much can fit in the constrained space.

Q. Ms. Sandra Fry: Is Sigourney still elevated over Capitol Avenue?

A. Mr. Casey Hardin: Yes.

C. Ms. Sandra Fry: I am interested in getting rid of the grade separation at Park Terrace – anything that improves the grid.

Mr. Lance Goldberg: Is this alternative a reasonable suggestion money-wise?

A. Mr. Armstrong gave a cost estimation of each alternative and said the source of funding for the project is still unknown.

C. Ms. Sandra Fry: This project should not carry the cost of the rail project.

Alternative #4: Tunneler Highway - This alternative would rebuild the highway below grade.

Q. Mr. Chris Brown: What if we put the Park River in an aqueduct?

The group discussed a pump station and the Park River Conduit, and how it is unlikely we can pump the river to a higher elevation.

C. Mr. Chris Brown: If somehow we ended up with a day-lighted river and you built a smaller conduit to carry the Park River, prime property could be developed.

Q. Mr. Justin Eichenlaub: Can land right sales be factored into the financing of this project? Or economic development?

Mr. Rich Armstrong: These factors can be used in a pros/cons analysis, but the project has to be paid for up front.

Mr. Lance Goldberg: How much did the Big Dig in Boston cost?

Mr. Mike Morehouse: \$13- 14 Billion

Ms. Sandra Fry: Has inflation been included in the cost estimates?

Mr. Casey Hardin: Yes.