

## Report of Meeting

**Date and Time: Wednesday, October 1, 2014, 5:30 PM**

**Location: FHI, 416 Asylum Street, Hartford**

**Subject: Bicycle/Pedestrian/Transit Working Group #1**

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
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### 1. Introduction

The meeting started at approximately 5:45 p.m. The meeting started with everyone introducing themselves. Rich Armstrong asked how attendees became involved with the working group.

- Lance Goldberg is on the I-84 Hartford Project email list and has been interested in the project for a while. At the first I-84 Hartford Project public meeting in June, he asked to become a member of the PAC. He was encouraged to join the working group.
  - Justin Eichenlaub has been interested in freeway projects for a while. Francisco Gomes reached out to him about joining the group.
  - Chris Brown, was involved with **CTfastrak** outreach and participated in the Hartford 2000 / Hub of Hartford.
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## **2. I-84 Hartford Project Background**

Michael Morehouse gave a PowerPoint presentation/overview of the project, which included the following points:

- Location of the project/project area
- Project mission
- History of I-84 in Hartford
- Why the I-84 Hartford Project is needed
- Community challenges, such as connectivity between neighborhoods
- Other related projects taking place in Hartford, such as Dash and **CTfastrak**
- An overview of the project schedule; the project is entering the environmental phase

Rich Armstrong explained some of the complexities of the I-84 Hartford Project, including how to finance the project. He also described previous outreach efforts by the project team. These efforts have included stakeholder meetings, the formation of the Public Advisory Committee, and hosting a public meeting.

He said the project is entering the scoping and alternatives phase.

Mike Morehouse gave an overview of first working group – Purpose and Need - and other new working groups that were recently formed.

## **3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

Francisco Gomes discussed the trends of bicyclists and pedestrians in the project area, including demand and ridership in the area, current bike networks, lanes and trails in the city. There are a lot of opportunities for improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians in Hartford.

He gave the results of a bike-ped count study conducted on September 10, 2014 at 12 locations in the project area from 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. He said the largest numbers of bicyclists were spotted at Capitol Avenue at Park Terrace, Capitol Avenue and Broad Street. There is a desire for improvements to bicycle paths in the city.

The city also has sidewalk deficiencies. Farmington Avenue near Asylum (the Trident area) was noted as having a higher count than other locations in the city.

## **4. Conceptual Planning Work Session**

Meeting attendees were asked to participate in an activity where they had to identify problem areas in the project area for bicyclists, pedestrians and bus travelers on a map.

- Justin Eichenlaub said getting a dedicated bike path that curves into the city from the southwest end of Hartford would be a neat way to get people to downtown. He also suggested having a bike path along the I-84 corridor and into the city, similar to the West Side Highway in Manhattan. Greenery would be desirable as well.

- Sandra Fry said the replacement of the viaduct gives an opportunity to put in a multi-use trail. She recommended the trail run near Hartford High School and the Park River. That's an essential piece of the proposed East Coast Greenway.
- Lance Goldberg recommended a Hartford "Highline" and repurposing the highway and making it a greenway/walkway. He said it wouldn't have to be maintained excessively because only bikes and pedestrians would be using it.
- Chris Brown said Hartford's street grid needs to be fixed. More connections from the north to the south ends of the city need to be added. From Laurel Street to the park (Pope Park) there are very few streets that are not connected to the highway (via ramps), which discourages bicycle use. Connecting Parkville, Wellington and Olive Streets to Brookfield would improve street connections. He said designers will have to be creative about how to best use the limited space within the I-84 corridor.
- Mike Sanders suggested rebuilding the street grid with a more friendly appearance.
- Mike Morehouse said one possibility could be building viaducts high enough to encourage sunlight underneath the viaduct, which is more visually appealing.
- Chris Brown said any elevated highway that comes out of this project is going to be a failure. Rich Armstrong said the project team is looking at options for lowering the viaduct.
- Justin Eichenlaub said getting rid of all the parking lots in the project area would be a big improvement.
- Sandra Fry said the pathway through Bushnell Park is something to be conscious of. It connects neighborhoods, and she doesn't want to lose it. She also recommended adding bicycle lanes to Capitol Avenue from Park Terrace to Laurel Street, improving sidewalks in the corridor, adding pedestrian street lighting, and increasing local street shoulders to four feet on each side.

##### **5. Making improvements for bus transit**

- Sandra Fry said there are too many bus stops on Capitol Avenue. The cycles of the signals are too long and coordinated progression along arterials is poor.
- Chris Brown said there are inequities in bus stops per direction. On some streets, there are longer distances in between stops on one side versus the other.
- Justin Eichenlaub said it would be great to connect Trinity College to the city. He is worried about Flatbush Avenue and New Britain Avenue stations in terms of pedestrian access.
- Overall, there need to be more connected routes, services and modes in the corridor.

##### **6. Alternatives Discussion**

Rich Armstrong said the project team is evaluating alternatives and their impacts.

###### **Railroad**

Mike Morehouse said the project team is waiting to hear from Rail Alternatives study to find out if the existing railroad tracks can be moved north of the highway. I-84 was built as a viaduct to avoid impacting the railroad.

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Chris Brown asked what might happen to Union Station. Mike Sanders said the station could be upgraded or relocated.

### Tunnel

Chris Brown asked if a tunnel was being considered.

Casey Hardin said the challenge is figuring out where the tunnel would connect to the city. The tunnel alternative does not have to rely on moving the railroad.

Rich Armstrong said the project team does not know how the project will be funded yet; the tunnel is a more expensive alternative, but it will be investigated.

### Traffic Trends: Current and Future

Justin Eichenlaub asked what happens if more is built than what is needed.

Rich Armstrong said the project team is predicting very modest traffic growth in the corridor, based on forecasted traffic data. When planning the type of structure to build, the project team will have to consider what the traffic trends might be 25 years from now. Any new highway structure is expected to last for the next 75 to 100 years. It's difficult to predict future trends.

Chris Brown said his immediate concern is "passengerless" vehicles - many vehicles are traveling with only one person in them. He asked how to improve human density in the vehicles that are already traveling in the corridor. He also asked what the split of commercial traffic versus non-commercial traffic.

Casey Hardin said around 5 percent of daily traffic is commercial - truckers plan around peak times on the highway. They try to travel during off peak times.

Mike Morehouse asked attendees to recommend others working group members they thought would be good additions to the group.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.