



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Monday, July 16, 2017, 5 PM

Location: The Chrysalis Center, 255 Homestead Avenue, Hartford

Subject: Local Street Connectivity Working Session Follow Up

Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS and MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC		
Robert Painter	Hub of Hartford	painterbob4250@yahoo.com
Toni Gold	West End Civic Association	toniagold@gmail.com
Bernie Michel	AHNA	bermichel@snet.net
Tony Cherolis	Center for Latino Progress	tony_cherolis@ctprf.org
Hank Hoffman	The Hartford	Hank.hoffman@thehartford.com
Paul Fleming	The Hartford	Paul.fleming@thehartford.com
Jackie McKinney	ArtSpace Residents Association	Jdmckinney07@gmail.com
Mike Riley		cttruck@aol.com
Frank Hagaman	Hartford Preservation Alliance	frank@hartfordpreservation.org
Jennifer Cassidy	Business for Downtown Hartford	j.cassidy@snet.net
Nick Addamo		nick.addamo@gmail.com
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CITY OF HARTFORD		
Sandy Fry	City of Hartford	sfry@ghtd.org

CONSULTANT TEAM		
Dave Stahnke	TranSystems Corporation	dkstahnke@transystems.com
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Nick Mandler	TranSystems Corporation	ncmandler@transystems.com
Ron Sacchi	TranSystems Corporation	rgsacchi@transystems.com
Mike Morehouse	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.	mmorehouse@fhiplan.com
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Debbie Hoffman	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.	dhoffman@fhiplan.com

1. Meeting Purpose and Format

A follow up meeting to the fall working sessions was held to present information to Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members and other interested members of the public on continued progress on the local road network and connections for the Lowered Highway Alternative. The event lasted for approximately 90 minutes.

2. Background Presentation

Andy Fesenmeyer, of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), introduced himself as a newer member of the project team and provided background on his history at CTDOT. He indicated that he has a similar approach to projects as Rich Armstrong, the CTDOT Principal Engineer responsible for the I-84 Hartford project until his retirement in April 2018, who he had worked with for more than 20 years. While CTDOT will be refilling R. Armstrong's position, A. Fesenmeyer will remain the I-84 Hartford Project Manager. He then turned the session over to Casey Hardin, of TranSystems Corporation (TSC).

C. Hardin discussed the meeting purpose, emphasizing that it is to address the local roads and their potential connections associated with the Lowered Highway Alternative. He added that while he understood that the recent Hartford Courant article on potential CT *fastrak* alignments might raise many questions, these should be addressed at another time and that this meeting will focus on the local roads discussion.

C. Hardin provided a brief overview of the each of the two fall working sessions. He provided a summary of the Level 1, 2, and 3 screening processes, noting the products of each. Since the fall working sessions, the project team has been focusing its efforts on the analysis and screening of the elements evaluated in the Level 3 screening process. These include: Lowered Highway Alternative eastern interchange configurations, local road connections, station siting, as well as the CT *fastrak* alignment into downtown.

C. Hardin discussed the tools and assumptions of the traffic analysis. He described the Lowered Highway Alternative and its ability to create new local roads and redundancy in the network. He highlighted these new local connections, including the Garden Street and Farmington Avenue extensions. He described the concept of traffic dispersion whereby new traffic off a ramp gradually disperses at each consecutive intersection. He added that the I-84 is a freeway, and the goal is to reduce its use as a local road and redirect local traffic to an improved local road network. To conclude the background presentation, C. Hardin recapped the best performing western interchange option and the best performing eastern interchange option.

3. Discussion

Mike Morehouse, of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. introduced himself and said that he would facilitate the discussion moving forward. He asked the attendees to raise their hand and take the discussion in the direction of their choice.

Tony Cherolis asked what the Project Team's assumptions are for projecting mode share in the model considered the new bike share program and uncertain CT *fastrak* expansion. Specifically, do the projections look at increases to these other modes? C. Hardin answered that the current model does not predict mode share well, but the Project Team is currently developing a new model that will do a better job at this. It is expected to be available for use in about six months' time.

Jennifer Cassidy asked if the Sisson Avenue ramps will go away. C. Hardin said that they will be reconfigured to touch down on Capitol Avenue and Laurel Street. Another attendee asked how many cars use the Sisson Avenue ramps per day. Nick Mandler, of TSC, answered that approximately 20,000 cars use the ramps per day. J. Cassidy asked how a motorist would get from the eastbound highway to St. Francis Hospital in the Lowered Highway Alternative. C. Hardin answered that he/she would likely get off and turn left at Laurel Street, turn right on Hawthorn Street, and then turn left onto Sigourney Street. J. Cassidy asked if the signage would support this. C. Hardin answered that while the team is a long way from planning signage, it would likely direct drivers to follow those roads with a higher functional classification.

J. Cassidy stated that she is concerned about traffic on local roads from the eastern interchange ramps. C. Hardin presented a series of slides that show the "splits" of traffic to and from the ramps on the local road network. He added that many motorists destined for Capitol Avenue and the state offices would likely get off at Laurel Street and travel eastbound on Capitol Avenue to their destination. Sandy Fry questioned where I-84 eastbound drivers from downtown will get on the highway. N. Mandler answered that these drivers are forecasted to use the Morgan Street ramps. When asked, C. Hardin confirmed that the I-91 / Trumbull Street off ramps will not be modified.

M. Morehouse cited some of the unknowns with traffic modeling. One is that the traffic will vary with unforeseen development. In addition, the mode shift could be higher than expected because of bike share and transit improvements. Pat Padlo, of TSC, added that the new model will better accommodate on-street parking and better predict traffic movements at intersections. M. Morehouse acknowledged that it is important to try to divert traffic away from local roads with calming tools.

Jackie McKinney voice strong dislike for the bike lanes on Broad Street, citing her fear of hitting a cyclist as reason for using the highway for short trips. C. Hardin answered there are some local roads, often new connections, with proposed protected bike lanes.

Toni Gold questioned the seven percent growth assumption through 2040, adding that using this high of a percentage may induce demand. C. Hardin, stated that the assumption is 0.3 -0.4 percent per year and it was agreed upon with the Capitol Region Council of Governments.

M. Morehouse added that the proposed Lowered Highway Alternative will not technically add capacity to the highway. If the streets are designed as proposed, mode shift could be even greater.

Mike Riley added that this interstate highway project has turned solely into an urban renewal project. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) would not approve it without added capacity because it does not do anything to solve the highway's congestion. C. Hardin answered that there will be improvements to level-of-service, not from added capacity, but from operational improvements including but not limited to ramp eliminations and design changes, added shoulders, geometry design changes, and elimination of weave maneuvers. He added that the I-84 / I-91 Interchange Study, the source for much congestion, is advancing on its own timeline. Mike Morehouse added that FHWA wants to preserve the highway as a

highway, and the configuration of the highway and the improvements to the local street network should redirect local trips off the highway to the local roads further improving service on the interstate.

An attendee questioned whether the improved highway will have more shoulder space for crash pull outs. C. Hardin answered that a minimum of 10 feet is appropriated for shoulders. A considerable amount of congestion can be alleviated by being able to clear crashes to adequate shoulders. The project team will be evaluating providing wider (12 foot) shoulders as the design advances.

When asked how the Project Team created its mode share assumptions, P. Padlo described that the transit survey results are factored into this calculation. T. Cherolis added that 50 percent of households in Clay Arsenal, and 42 percent of households in Upper Albany, do not have access to motor vehicles.

Frank Hagaman asked about using the rail viaduct as a use for CT *fastrak*. C. Hardin asked him to save questions related to CT *fastrak* until the completion of the local roads discussion. J. Cassidy questioned whether at CT *fastrak* station would remain on Hawthorn Street. C. Hardin answered that the Project Team does not know yet where this station will be located.

An attendee commented that free parking (in union contracts) for state employees should be eliminated.

An attendee asked to see visuals for bike lanes on local roads. C. Hardin showed a cross section for Capitol Avenue. Sandy Fry stated that she did not believe the width represented in the section was available without property impacts. C. Hardin replied that the Project Team would revisit this cross section but that these cross sections were meant to be generally illustrative of the design intent at a conceptual level and would be examined more closely in design.

Mary Cockram stated a need to consider the safety of those using Lime Bikes. C. Hardin answered that the Project Team is committed to recommending safe environment for cyclists and motorists.

An attendee asked about the latest planning for the Trident area. C. Hardin answered that many concepts were considered, with five in detail. These include the 1) Roundabout, 2) Western Shift, 3) Farmington Avenue Extension, 4) Discontinuous Broad Street, and 5) Improved Trident. The roundabout has been dismissed due to its size and potentially confusing geometry that would not be conducive for good bike and pedestrian accommodation. The western shift has been dismissed due to the additional impacts to the parking garage. The remaining concepts will be further evaluated. Regarding the Improved Trident option, he added that the new connection made with the Garden Street Extension removes enough volume from the Trident to allow signalization improvements to successfully manage traffic.

C. Hardin added that buses and trucks traveling east on Farmington Avenue, destined for Asylum Street, may be encouraged to turn left on Asylum Place and then right on Asylum Avenue rather than using the short block of Broad Street to make the same connection to Asylum Avenue.

Bernie Michel asked whether the signal technology would be upgraded as part of the project. C. Hardin answered that any new or reconstructed roads would receive new signals, though it is undetermined (and still early) how these would tie into the existing system.

J. McKinney voiced concern for the Discontinuous Broad Street option. C. Hardin acknowledged that this is a fair point and that is why the Improved Trident option is now under

analysis again. An attendee questioned whether the roundabout would be too big. C. Hardin answered that it was indeed a total of 19 lanes entering and exiting the roundabout, and it was deemed unreasonable in the Level 3 screening analysis.

There was a question on where the bike lane and snow from plows would go on Sigourney Street. C. Hardin answered that the bridge would be reconstructed and is projected to be wider. Another attendee asked how far north the two-way cycle track goes. C. Hardin answered that CTDOT plans intend to carry the two-way cycle track to Farmington Avenue.

J. McKinney asked if there were updates to the Garden Street analysis. C. Hardin answered that not much has changed since the March 2018 Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association Board Meeting. He added that the Project Team does not see closing the road as necessary for the I-84 Hartford Project, but the City of Hartford could decide that it wants to do that separately.

An attendee commented that traffic on Spruce Street has become congested when trains are arriving since the startup of Hartford Line service. C. Hardin responded that CTDOT will be collecting additional traffic data to make sure roads can handle this new traffic. The I-84 analysis currently assumes a minimum of 30 'Kiss and Ride' spaces on Spruce Street, which now only has 10. J. Cassidy added that that parking lot on Spruce Street has been full at times as well.