



REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Thursday, December 10, 2015, 12 - 8 PM

Location: The Conference of Churches, 224 Farmington Avenue, Hartford

Subject: Open Planning Studio #6

1. Meeting Schedule and Attendance

The Open Planning Studio (OPS) took place on Thursday, December 10, 2015 from 12 to 8 PM. The meeting consisted of an open house where members of the public could obtain information and talk with project staff about the I-84 corridor and study process. There were informational boards set up around the room and a computer station that allowed participants to see a three dimensional (3-D) simulation of the corridor with select alternatives. Individuals from the public were able to either watch and join members of the project team in a charrette-style design process or view a self-guided PowerPoint presentation on the project.

Thirteen members of the public signed in at the meeting. One Public Advisory Committee (PAC) member attended the meeting.

2. Boards

Several boards were placed around the perimeter of the room. They included:

1. I-84 Study Area Map
2. I-84 Hartford Fast Facts (an infographic)
3. Program Overview (a flowchart of the overall project schedule)
4. Draft: Alternatives Assessment
5. Mainline Alternatives: Vertical Alignment
6. Mainline Alternatives: Horizontal Alignment
7. Mobility: Bicycle and Pedestrian Analysis
8. Potential Building Impacts
9. Construction Considerations
10. Options that Perform Well (7 options / boards)
11. Broad Street rendering
12. Sisson Avenue rendering
13. Asylum Avenue rendering
14. Capitol Avenue renderings
15. Preliminary Traffic Analysis (4 alternatives / boards)

3. Meeting Overview and Discussion

Guests of the OPS were free to walk around the room and view a number of boards on display, engage with a self-guided PowerPoint presentation, take a 3-D tour of different alternatives with a member of the project team, or join project team members in a charrette-style design process.

Those who participated in the charrette discussed bicycle and pedestrian conditions under the project, including such topics as: the East Coast Greenway, Asylum Street / Avenue bike lanes, Bushnell Park West (a proposed avenue to the west of Bushnell Park included in Alternatives 3 and 4), the existing Union Station rail viaduct, CT*fastrak*, and the future Hartford Yard Goats' baseball stadium. Printed maps of the project area were overlaid with tracing paper for guests and project team members to visually analyze streetscapes and travel corridors.

Late in the day and as a result of some members from the public expressing concerns with the problems at the existing I-84/I-91 interchange, Rich Armstrong, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), introduced impromptu a diagram illustrating the potential route of a bypass around downtown Hartford, rerouting I-84 along the existing rail line north of Union Station and comprising a new I-84 / I-91 interchange and passage across the Connecticut River. OPS attendees were pleased with this rerouting of I-84 idea, noting the opportunities for reconnecting downtown Hartford, a greenway along the path of the existing I-84 corridor, and improved bicycle, pedestrian, and transit routes across the Connecticut River. One attendee stated that he liked the bypass option, but cautioned the project team when releasing it to the general public. He said that many members of the Clay-Arsenal neighborhood might see the rerouting of the highway closer to their communities as a barrier similar to that made between the Frog Hollow and Asylum Hill neighborhoods when I-84 was first constructed in the 1960s. He pointed out that any improvements made to bicycle, pedestrian, and transit conditions must be shown to extend north of the highway bypass into the Clay-Arsenal, Upper Albany, and Northeast neighborhoods. He also said that the bypass would likely impact the Comcast Xfinity Theatre, and that the theater would be better relocated to Coltsville or the South Meadows.

R. Armstrong noted that the rerouting of I-84 concept is but one of how the problems along I-84 to the east of the I-84 Hartford Project might be addressed. Other options would also be explored as part of a new study. Armstrong said that he expected a press release would soon be issued announcing the new study as a parallel study to the I-84 Hartford Project, pending approval by the State Bond Commission.

4. Written Comments

Need bypasses around city! Esp. from 84 headed east to 91 north.