



## REPORT OF MEETING

**Date and Time: Tuesday, June 14, 2016, 2:00 PM**

**Location: Arroyo Recreation Center, 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford**

**Subject: Urban Design Working Group #5**

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### 1. Meeting Location

The meeting was held in the community room of the Arroyo Recreation Center.

### 2. Presentation / Discussion

Mitch Glass, of Goody Clancy, welcomed the attendees to the discussion. He presented the urban design slides from the Public Advisory Committee meeting. He noted that this was an

opportunity for the working group attendees to ask questions and get into the details of the designs presented.

Jackie Mandyck stated that she had concerns that the traffic on the new Bushnell Park West Road will be too heavy. Nick Mandler, of TSC, stated that the road is projected to operate at an acceptable level of service and noted that the reconfigured ramps at Sisson Avenue will relieve some of the traffic in the eastern portion of the corridor. This is because I-84 eastbound traffic destined for Capitol Avenue will now also have the Laurel Street off-ramp as a convenient option. Rich Armstrong, of CTDOT, stated that the project team can provide the expected volumes for the new Bushnell Park West road.

Toni Gold voiced concern that an otherwise attractive new boulevard [Bushnell Park West] would have ramps on it. She questioned if this could be a good place for a roundabout instead. T. Ryan stated that the expected volumes are too high for a single lane roundabout. T. Gold responded that then the volumes should also be too high for a boulevard. T. Ryan answered that the boulevard can be designed to feel like a comfortable space to travel on. For example, adding a wide center landscaped median can make it an attractive place to be.

There was a question whether pedestrian crossings will be including on the new boulevard, and if so, where would they be. M. Glass answered that yes, safe pedestrian and bicycle travel would be critical to make this a good road. The boulevard will include sidewalks, trees, and lighting on both sides and the conditions may be ideal for creating a cycle-track on the east side of the road.

There was a suggestion to build a new garage near the ramps at Bushnell Park West and add one-way access into/out of the garage from/to the ramp. This could encourage drivers to park here instead of other garages in the area, such as the Legislative Office Building garage. R. Armstrong responded that this is a good suggestion, however, there will still be desire for parking at the Legislative Office Building garage. M. Glass added that it is very important to consider both the land uses and the infrastructure for potential development facing Bushnell Park at this high visibility corner.

J. Mandyck asked if the granite wall in Bushnell Park will be removed. T. Ryan answered that the new Bushnell Park West boulevard would be on the west side of the wall, thus avoiding it. He added that the wall is a historic feature and the team is still learning whether there will be other impacts to it. T. Gold asked if the wall can actually be removed. R. Armstrong answered that it has not yet been determined if impacts to the wall will even be allowed. T. Gold added that she supports taking down the wall if it can open up access to Bushnell Park. J. Mandyck suggested building a multi-use greenway next to or on top of the wall. M. Glass answered that the primary greenway would be in the east/west direction to connect neighborhoods to Bushnell Park and to carry the East Coast Greenway but that a greenway on top of or next to the rail viaduct could potentially add a small link to the north and Union Station. He added that keeping the wall could have negative effects on economic development by maintaining a barrier to the park.

An attendee questioned how this project would impact the I-91 interchange. T. Ryan answered that the I-84 Hartford Project does not include any modifications to the I-91 interchange. The study area ends before the tunnel. He added that that Department is looking at the feasibility of improving the I-84/I-91 interchange in another study. Lynn Ferrari asked about the I-84/I-91 Interchange Study and where the old I-84, converted to a boulevard, would branch off from the relocated I-84. T. Ryan provided some overview details about the study and said the boulevard would branch off from the highway after the Bushnell Park.

There was a question whether the Griffin Line track can be improved as part of this project, assuming the Lowered Alternative is selected. Dave Stahnke, of TSC, answered that the team

is working closely with the railroad, and their criteria will be factored into any rail modifications. He added that they currently have one track only in the area near the station. They are looking to get three tracks total in this area.

There was a question about the building depicted over the highway. M. Glass said it represented a parking garage (with some commercial development lining the garage and facing Asylum Street) that would serve the multi-modal mixed-use center.

An attendee questioned if Capitol View apartments would be impacted. Other attendees asked if Knox Farm and Capitol Records would be impacted. M. Glass answered that many of these properties would be impacted under the Lowered Highway Alternatives. D. Stahnke added that the team has met with most of the potentially impacted property owners.

There was discussion on the multi-use greenway concepts. M. Glass stated that this greenway corridor is envisioned to be world class design. He presented a series of renderings from Flower Street looking north towards the highway that showed how access to an elevated greenway could be achieved and how the greenway itself would fully screen a lowered highway alternative. This would be done with a solid wall between the greenway columns with extensive landscape at the ground level. He added that the barrier and trees could make the highway disappear if you were standing to the south at ground level.

Mike Morehouse, of Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc., discussed the complete street treatments being considered. He highlighted where bicycle lanes and bike boxes may be appropriate. Jennifer Cassidy asked about the projected traffic and bicycle volumes on some of the roads, noting that many of these streets don't even exist now. Specifically, she asked what the volumes are expected to be on Hawthorne Street. M. Morehouse answered that he did not have this information on-hand but TSC can provide it to her. She asked if there are plans to turn South Marshall Street into a two-way street. The residents have approached the City about converting it, but the City stated that it is not feasible because the intersection at South Marshall Road and Hawthorne Street is too tight. M. Morehouse answered that there currently is no plan to convert South Marshall Street to a two-way street, but the intersection is getting rebuilt so the City would have an opportunity to reconsider a two-way operation on South Marshall Road.

M. Morehouse discussed potential bicycle improvements to Capitol Avenue. Albert Gary asked if Capitol Avenue will still have one travel lane in each direction. M. Morehouse answered that it will continue to have one travel lane in each direction except at the intersections.

L. Ferrari questioned whether there will be on-street parking on the new Hawthorne Street / West Boulevard connection. M. Morehouse answered that this will depend on the development that is planned. He showed and described what the boulevard could look like with on-street parking, bulb-outs, and bike lanes.

L. Ferrari asked if the team had considered reverse angle in parking. M. Morehouse answered that this type of parking works well on one-way streets, and other circumstances. The team will consider it, but is not at that level of design yet.

There was a question on when the project would begin construction. R. Armstrong answered that construction could begin as soon as 2021.