

Report of Meeting

Date and Time: Tuesday, September 26th, 2023, 1:00 PM – 2:20 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Subject: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #2

1. Attendees

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS |
|---|---|--|
| PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS | | |
| Terry Adams | South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) | tadams@stamfordct.gov |
| Angelo Bochanis | People Friendly Stamford | angelob1999@hotmail.com |
| Luke Buttenwieser | City of Stamford | LButtenwieser@StamfordCT.gov |
| Lyle Fishell | Cove Neighborhood Association | fishellarchitecture@yahoo.com |
| Todd Fontanella | Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) | tfontanella@westcog.org |
| David Kooris | Stamford Downtown | kooris@stamford-downtown.com |
| Zeljko Kuzmanovic | Charter Communications | |
| Laura Jordan | Stamford Health | LJordan1@stamhealth.org |
| Phil Magalnick | Stamford Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Council | IDEASforADA@StamfordCT.gov |
| Aaron Miller | Stamford Mayor's Office | Amiller1@stamfordct.gov |
| Judy Norinsky | Historic Neighborhood Preservation | judynorinsky@gmail.com |
| Jennifer Orlikoff | UConn Stamford | Jennifer.orlikoff@uconn.edu |
| Frank Petise | City of Stamford | fpetise@stamfordct.gov |
| Aris Ristau | UConn Stamford | aristide.ristau@uconn.edu |
| Marc Schneider | Glenbrook Neighborhood Association | Marc721131@att.net |
| Mike Stake | Mill River Park Collaborative | cynthia.l.bowser30@gmail.com |
| Jennifer Young | Charter Communications | Jennifer.R.Young@charter.com |
| DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | | |
| Jonathan Dean | Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) | jonathan.dean@ct.gov |
| Joe Belrose | CTDOT | Joe.Belrose@ct.gov |
| Nilesh Patel | CTDOT | nilesh.patel@ct.gov |
| Scott Roberts | CTDOT | Scott.roberts@ct.gov |
| Lynn Murphy | CTDOT | Lynn.murphy@ct.gov |
| CONSULTANT TEAM | | |
| Ralph DeNisco | Stantec | Ralph.denisco@stantec.com |
| Emily Valentino | Stantec | emily.valentino@stantec.com |
| Ted Devens | Stantec | Ted.devens@stantec.com |
| Andrew Lessard | Stantec | Andrew.lessard@stantec.com |
| Emily Raque | Stantec | Emily.raque@stantec.com |
| Najmeh Jami | Stantec | najmeh.jami@stantec.com |
| Mike Paiewonsky | Stantec | michael.paiewonsky@stantec.com |
| Craig Yannes | Tighe & Bond | cdyannes@tighebond.com |
| Marcy Miller | FHI Studio | mmiller@fhistudio.com |
| Kevin Rivera | FHI Studio | krivera@fhistudio.com |

2. Welcome & Introductions

Jonathan Dean, of CTDOT, thanked everyone for attending the second Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the I-95 Stamford Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study. He began by communicating how the attendees can participate in the virtual meeting. J. Dean introduced the project team from the Department as well as the consultants, including those who would present during the meeting. He asked each PAC member to introduce himself / herself and welcomed the two new members from Stamford Heath and Historic Neighborhood Preservation. He then provided an overview of the agenda, which included:

- 1) Welcome & Introductions
- 2) Needs and Deficiencies Analysis
- 3) Purpose & Need
- 4) Next Steps / Study Schedule
- 5) Discussion
- 6) Adjourn

J. Dean described the activities that the project team has worked on since the June 26th, 2023 meeting. He then welcomed the consultant team to give the technical portion of the presentation.

3. Presentation

Andrew Lessard, Emily Valentino, and Mike Paiewonsky of Stantec, gave the technical portion of the presentation. They discussed the following key points:

- Study limits.
- Bridge elements overview and inspection process.
- Bridge 00032 (I-95 over MetroNorth Railroad [MNRR] and Myrtle Avenue) and 00036 (Blatchley Road over I-95) deficiencies.
- I-95 mainline deficiencies related to geometry, travel time, level-of-service (LOS), and crashes.
- Local road deficiencies related to transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel, LOS, and crashes.
- Draft Purpose and Need development.
- Study vision and goals.

Marcy Miller, of FHI Studio, discussed the next steps and study schedule before J. Dean lead the discussion period. A downloadable PDF of the presentation is posted at <https://www.i95stamford.com/pac>.

4. Discussion

Angelo Bochanis, of People Friendly Stamford, asked if the auxiliary lane near Interchanges 6 and 7 is part of this study. E. Valentino answered that it is not part of this study.

David Kooris, of Downtown Stamford, said that many who would like to get on the Atlantic Street ramp in the morning get on at North State Street because the Atlantic Street ramp is backed up. He asked if the model would consider how the highway, ramps, and local roads are interrelated. E. Valentino answered that all are being considered in the model because of the impact they have on each other.

When E. Valentino discussed bicycle and pedestrian deficiencies on local roads, D. Kooris suggested that, in addition to inadequate of lighting, the lack of a buffer between the traffic lanes and narrow sidewalks adds to the vulnerability of the pedestrians.

Phil Magalnick, of the Stamford ADA Advisory Council, said the pedestrians that need to walk from the Stamford Transportation Center north on Washington Boulevard experience harrowing conditions. He asked if this area is part of the study. E. Valentino answered that it is in the study area.

Marc Schneider, of Glenbrook Neighborhood Association, expressed concerns about confusing signage on the southbound Exit 9 ramp. He acknowledged that the No Turn on Red sign is on the left side of the lane when it should be on the right side. He discussed concerns about signage on Cortland Avenue as well. He also suggested raised crosswalks to improve safety. E. Valentino answered that signage and wayfinding improvements will be considered as an option to reduce congestion and improve mobility.

Zeljko Kuzmanovic, of Charter Communications, asked if this study is being coordinated with other local studies. E. Valentino answered that this is happening, particularly with the Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan and other municipal efforts.

A. Bochanis asked if this study would consider protected bike lanes, especially under the large bridges, noting the dark conditions and high traffic speeds as an unwelcoming environment for cyclists under the Elm Street bridge. E. Valentino said the team will consider this and many other safety options.

Luke Bittenwieser, of the City of Stamford, asked for more clarification about LOS on highways versus local roads. E. Valentino said that highway LOS is ranked by density. Local road LOS is ranked by delay.

D. Kooris asked if there should be a comma between equity and mobility in the vision and goals, with them being two separate items. M. Paiewonsky clarified that the intent is for it to be one item called "mobility equity." Related to the Draft Purpose and Need, D. Kooris expressed concerns that alternatives could advance through the study that meet the primary Purpose on the highway while not addressing local roadway issues. He asked if there is a primary Purpose statement that can account for not degrading local road mobility. M. Paiewonsky said that this is addressed in the next slide, which includes other desirable outcomes. Nilesh Patel, of CTDOT, and J. Dean both described the alternative analysis process, noting that the impacts to local roads would be evaluated during the screening process.

A. Bochanis echoed D. Kooris's concerns, wishing these, and the environment, were in the primary purposes. He referenced the auxiliary lane he brought up before, noting that it has impacts on the adjacent communities, which are mostly environmental justice communities.

Judy Norinsky, of Historic Neighborhood Preservation, asked if traffic calming measures will be incorporated into this study. L. Bittenwieser answered that the City is currently conducting a Road Safety Audit on Washington Boulevard. There is not a recommendation for a pedestrian bridge, but there are several traffic calming measures that are recommended and already underway.

M. Schneider asked the team to consider the mode users differently. What does each proposal mean for each type of user? He said this information is important.

A. Bochanis stated that People Friendly Stamford is against the proposed reduction in MNRR service. He asked if the Department decreases rail service, will the impacts on I-95 be incorporated into the traffic model. J. Dean described the scenario planning tool that is being considered for the study and would provide a framework to consider the effects of a multitude of external factors on the study.

5. Written Comments in Chat

M. Schneider offered the following comments in the chat:

- Exit 9 Southbound exit, turning right onto Courtland Avenue. Confusing signage for "No Right Turn on Red" followed by Ped Crossing on Courtland Ave.



- FYI...Entrance to I-95 Southbound at Exit 9 from Courtland Ave in morning & afternoon (rush hour) shows considerable traffic backup on Courtland Ave up to Hamilton Ave., sometimes even beyond the intersection at Hamilton & Courtland.
- Please note that my comments should not be thought of as advocating for more auto capacity at the lack of consideration for other forms of transportation. Stamford historically has had poor public transportation, bike and pedestrian alternatives. We should develop better alternatives than "you need to have a car to get around town."
- We should consider a trolley/bus system and dedicated bike lanes.

6. **Adjournment**

M. Miller closed the meeting at 2:20 PM.