

# Report of Meeting

Date and Time: Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Subject: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #3

## 1. Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESSf
<b>PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>		
Angelo Bochanis	People Friendly Stamford	<a href="mailto:angelob1999@hotmail.com">angelob1999@hotmail.com</a>
Luke Buttenwieser	City of Stamford	<a href="mailto:LButtenwieser@StamfordCT.gov">LButtenwieser@StamfordCT.gov</a>
Heather Cavanagh	Stamford Chamber of Commerce	<a href="mailto:hcavanagh@stamfordchamber.com">hcavanagh@stamfordchamber.com</a>
Lyle Fishell	Cove Neighborhood Association	<a href="mailto:fishellarchitecture@yahoo.com">fishellarchitecture@yahoo.com</a>
David Kooris	Stamford Downtown	<a href="mailto:david@stamford-downtown.com">david@stamford-downtown.com</a>
Phil Magalnick	Stamford Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Council	<a href="mailto:IDEASforADA@StamfordCT.gov">IDEASforADA@StamfordCT.gov</a>
Aaron Miller	Stamford Mayor's Office	<a href="mailto:Amiller1@stamfordct.gov">Amiller1@stamfordct.gov</a>
Mike Moore	Stamford Downtown	<a href="mailto:moore@stamford-downtown.com">moore@stamford-downtown.com</a>
Jeff Newman	Empire State Realty Trust	<a href="mailto:JNewman@esrtreit.com">JNewman@esrtreit.com</a>
Aris Ristau	UConn Stamford	<a href="mailto:aristide.ristau@uconn.edu">aristide.ristau@uconn.edu</a>
Marc Schneider	Glenbrook Neighborhood Association	<a href="mailto:Marc721131@att.net">Marc721131@att.net</a>
Alec Slatky	American Automobile Association (AAA)	<a href="mailto:aslatky@aaanortheast.com">aslatky@aaanortheast.com</a>
Francis Pickering	Western Connecticut Council of Governments	<a href="mailto:fpickering@westcog.org">fpickering@westcog.org</a>
Zaljko Kuzmanovic	Charter Communications	
<b>DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Jonathan Dean	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)	<a href="mailto:jonathan.dean@ct.gov">jonathan.dean@ct.gov</a>
Joe Belrose	CTDOT	<a href="mailto:Joe.Belrose@ct.gov">Joe.Belrose@ct.gov</a>
Nilesh Patel	CTDOT	<a href="mailto:nilesh.patel@ct.gov">nilesh.patel@ct.gov</a>
Carlo Leone	CTDOT	<a href="mailto:carlo.leone@ct.gov">carlo.leone@ct.gov</a>
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<b>CONSULTANT TEAM</b>		
Emily Valentino	Stantec	<a href="mailto:emily.valentino@stantec.com">emily.valentino@stantec.com</a>
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Marcy Miller	FHI Studio	<a href="mailto:mmiller@fhistudio.com">mmiller@fhistudio.com</a>
Kevin Rivera	FHI Studio	<a href="mailto:krivera@fhistudio.com">krivera@fhistudio.com</a>

## 2. Welcome & Introductions

Jonathan Dean, of CTDOT, thanked everyone for attending the third 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 slides during the meeting. He also provided an overview of the different organizations in Stamford being represented in the PAC. He finished the introduction by providing the agenda, which included:

- 1) Study Update
- 2) Draft Preliminary Purpose & Need Review
- 3) Universe of Alternatives
- 4) Conceptual Mainline Solutions
- 5) Local Roadways Approach
- 6) Next Steps/ Study Schedule
- 7) Discussion
- 8) Adjourn

Emily Valentino, of Stantec, described the activities that the project team has worked on since the September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting.

## 3. Presentation

Emily Valentino, Najmeh Jami, and Ralph DeNisco, of Stantec gave the technical portion of the presentation. They discussed the following key points:

- Draft Preliminary Purpose & Need Review
- Universe of Alternatives
- Options such as No Build, Transportation Demand Management, Transportation System Management, Mass Transit, and Improve Existing Corridor
- Modify or replace existing bridges (Bridge 00032)
- Reconstruct portions of the I-95 corridor in Stamford
- Modify the existing I-95 configuration
- Conceptual mainline solutions
- Local roadways approach

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

## 4. Discussion

Phil Magalnick, of Stamford ADA Advisory Council, expressed concern that plantings of street trees along local roads could encroach on the pedestrian right-of-way. J. Dean answered that the appropriate placement of trees to ensure accessibility will be considered during the design process.

Angelo Bochanis, of People Friendly Stamford, asked about the impacts of the reconfiguration of southbound on-ramps on North State Street as well as the option for widening the southbound on-ramp on Washington Boulevard to two lanes. A. Bochanis expressed opposition to this option given the current dangers of crossing Washington Boulevard. J. Dean answered that these are only examples being considered. Any improvements would require more thorough analysis. E. Valentino stated that this option has not been studied from a traffic perspective and the final analysis results will identify impacts.

Francis Pickering, of Western Connecticut Council of Governments, suggested the study team look at other designs for split merges and diverges, including designs from the United Kingdom that have been implemented to address backups and more seamless merging. F. Pickering also asked the project team to consider the vehicle mix on I-95, specifically the number and percentage of freight vehicles driving through Stamford. E. Valentino stated that the project team is considering the vehicle mix. J. Dean thanked F. Pickering for sharing the publication in split merges and diverges and stated that the project team is interested in incorporating innovative solutions that fit the context, restrictions on right-of-way, and development for the area.

F. Pickering asked if consideration will be given to creating a more connected local road network, similar to work completed on the I-84 Waterbury MixMaster project. J. Dean answered that there needs to be a balance between facilitating connections within the city to reduce trips on the highway and finding ways to keep commuters from diverting onto local streets to avoid congestion on the mainline.

A. Bochanis referenced CTDOT's plans to reduce noise by using "quiet pavement" on I-95 in Greenwich and asked if that could be a consideration in Stamford as well. J. Dean said that the Department is resurfacing I-95 in Greenwich with a pavement mix that is different from what has been used in the past; however, it's being used primarily for its performance. While it does have some properties that decrease noise, the benefits are limited and it is not recognized as a noise abatement measure. Depending on the results in Greenwich, it may be used elsewhere in the state. It is not certain, however, that it will be used in this project at this point. Noise impacts will be looked in more detail as part of the environmental documentation process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in a later phase of any projects resulting from the PEL.

Marc Schneider, of Glenbrook Neighborhood Association, asked for clarification on potential changes to the Exit 9 ramps. J. Dean explained any interchange reconfiguration would need to be looked at more in-depth to ensure traffic on Route 1 is not negatively impacted by any changes.

Lyle Fishell, of Cove Neighborhood Association, expressed concerns about traffic backups on Seaside Avenue near the Exit 9 ramp. He said that the presented reconfiguration could exacerbate the backups. J. Dean thanked Lyle for providing a local perspective and said that there will continue to be further analysis given the complexity of the interchange.

Heather Cavanagh, of Stamford Chamber of Commerce, asked about emergency operations communications and alerts related to highway shutdowns, given a recent incident in Stamford where I-95's on ramps and off ramps were closed. J. Dean answered that variable messaging is a tool that the DOT's emergency operations system uses. Nilesch Patel, of CTDOT, added that the Bridgeport Operations Center is in contact with state police, and state police should be in contact with local enforcement to help post messages. Note: CTDOT provided the link <https://ctroads.org/> to H. Cavanaugh.

H. Cavanagh commented that consolidation of ramps near Elm Street would help reduce congestion. She added that Stamford's future growth and development must be considered in the PEL study. N. Patel, of CTDOT, answered that the project team has a regular meeting with City officials, including those involved with economic development, to stay informed on all potential future developments that could impact the study area.

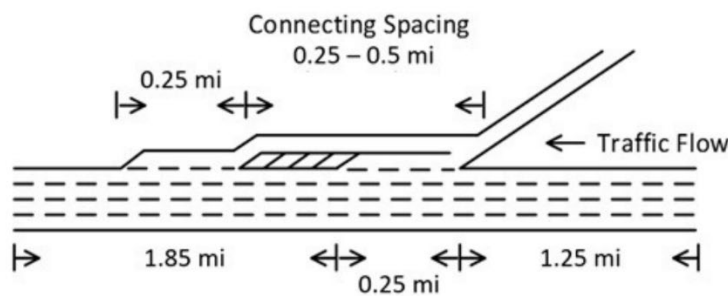
P. Magalnick requested an ADA accessibility contact at CTDOT that he could reach out to during construction to ensure ADA standards are being met. J. Dean emphasized that any construction from this study is long-term. He stated that CTDOT does have an ADA coordinator that he would provide to Mr. Magalnick. Note: CTDOT provided the Departments's ADA Coordination Unit contact information to P. Magalnick after the meeting should he identify any ADA issues on State-owned roads.

**5. Written Comments in Chat**

- F. Pickering comment:  
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/operations/20008/20008.pdf>
- David Kooris, of Stamford Downtown, comment: I'm sorry that I have to leave at 11:45 but I look forward to providing feedback to the team between now and our next meeting. Will this ppt be shared or available online?

J. Belrose response: We look forward to hearing your feedback, David. The slides will be shared online after the meeting. Thank you for attending!

- F. Pickering comment:



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**Figure 1. Illustration. Split merge design on an acceleration lane.**

**6. Adjournment**

M. Miller closed the meeting at 12:20 PM.