

REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Tuesday January 29, 2019, 12:30 PM

Location: Danbury Police Department, 375 Main Street, Danbury, CT

Subject: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #1

1. Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
Barry Abrams	Juniper Ridge Tax District	abramsb@hotmail.com
Kevin Barry	Danbury Housing Authority	k.barry@danbury-ct.gov
Sharon Calitro	City of Danbury	s.calitro@danbury-ct.gov
Matthew Cassavechia	Danbury Hospital	Matthew.Cassavechia@wchn.org
Annie M. Dance	Danbury Commission for Persons with Disabilities	AMcCarthyDance@gmail.com
Greg Dembowski	Town of Brookfield	gdembowski@brookfieldct.gov
Benjamin Doto	West Terrace Neighborhood	ben@dotocivil.com
Paul Estefan	City of Danbury / Danbury Airport	p.estefan@danbury-ct.gov
Sandy Fusco	Putnam County	sandra.fusco@putnamcountyny.gov
John Gentile	Danbury Commission for Persons with Disabilities	jmgstr1550@aol.com
Kristyn Gorton	CTrides	kristyn.gorton@CTrides.com
Kristin Hadjstylianos	Western Connecticut Council of Governments	khadjstylianos@westcog.org
Jennifer Herz	Boehringer-Ingelheim	jennifer.herz@boehringer-ingelheim.com
Fred Hurley	Town of Newtown	fred.hurley@newtown-ct.gov
Matt Knickerbocker	Town of Bethel	firstselectman@bethel-ct.gov
Paige Lawrence	CTrides	paige.lawrence@ctrides.com
Noreen Mangan	League of Woman Voters	noreenmangan423@gmail.com
Rudy Marconi	Town of Ridgefield	selectman@ridgefieldct.org
David McCollum	Town of Bethel	mccollumd@bethel-ct.gov
Abdul Mohamed	City of Danbury Traffic	A.Mohamed@danbury-ct.gov
Ali Mohseni	New York Metropolitan Transportation Council	Ali.Mohseni@dot.ny.gov
Lieutenant Chris Bartolotta	Connecticut State Police	christopher.bartolotta@ct.gov
Lisa Morrissey	Danbury Health & Human Services	l.morrissey@danbury-ct.gov
Roger Palanzo	Danbury Business Advocacy	ra.palanzo@danbury-ct.gov
Betsy Paynter	CityCenter Danbury	betsy@citycenterdanbury.com
Katie Pearson	Danbury Library	kpearson@danburylibrary.org
Francis Pickering	Western Connecticut Council of Governments	fpickering@westcog.org
P.J. Prunty	Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce	pj@danburychamber.com
Jay Purcell	Town of Brookfield	jpurcell@brookfieldct.gov
Ernesto Rodriguez	Spring Street Neighborhood	estordgz@yahoo.com
James Root	Sierra Club, Connecticut Chapter	manoether@yahoo.com
Perry Salvagne	Get Downtown	prsalvagne@gmail.com
Frank Salvatore Jr.	Sterling Woods	
Rick Schreiner	Housatonic Area Regional Transit	ricks@hartransit.com
Joseph Sculley	Motor Transport Association of Connecticut	joe@mtac.us
Alec Slatky	AAA	aslatky@aaanortheast.com
Kathleen Snow	Danbury Public Schools	johnkathysnow@gmail.com
Paul Steinmetz	Western Connecticut State University	steinmetzp@wcsu.edu
Ralph Tedesco	Town of Brookfield	rtedesco@brookfieldct.gov
Matt Whitney	Housatonic Railroad	m.whitney@hrrc.com

OTHER ATTENDEES		
NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
John Tully	Putnam County Highway	John.Tully@putnamcountyny.gov
Tom Altermatt	City of Danbury Engineering	t.altermatt@danbury-ct.gov
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		
Yolanda Antoniak	Connecticut Department of Transportation	yolanda.antoniak@ct.gov
Andy Fesenmeyer	Connecticut Department of Transportation	andy.fesenmeyer@ct.gov
Michael Calabrese	Connecticut Department of Transportation	michael.calabrese@ct.gov
Tom Doyle	Connecticut Department of Transportation	thomas.doyle@ct.gov
Mark McMillan	Connecticut Department of Transportation	mark.mcmillan@ct.gov
Lynn Murphy	Connecticut Department of Transportation	lynn.murphy@ct.gov
CONSULTANT TEAM		
Sharat Kalluri	CDM Smith	kallurisk@cdmsmith.com
Dave Sousa	CDM Smith	sousad@cdmsmith.com
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Debbie Hoffman	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.	dhoffman@fhiplan.com

2. [Welcome](#)

Dave Sousa, of CDM Smith, thanked everyone for attending the first Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the I-84 Danbury Project. He discussed several housekeeping items and invited PAC members to help themselves to lunch if they had not already done so. He asked attendees to please let him know if they had any problems finding an available parking space.

Mike Calabrese, Principal Engineer for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Major Highways Section, gave introductions and thanked everyone for being on the PAC. He then handed the meeting over to Andy Fesenmeyer of CTDOT to begin the presentation.

3. [Presentation and Discussion](#)

A. Fesenmeyer stated that the project team greatly appreciates the attendees volunteering their time to participate on the PAC. He stated that the project team will hold about three PAC meetings per year and asked the attendees if the mid-day meeting time generally worked for them. Most indicated that they prefer the mid-day meeting time, though about five to seven attendees indicated that they preferred a late-afternoon or evening meeting time. A. Fesenmeyer responded that the project team will investigate having some meetings in the evening instead of the middle of the day.

Noreen Mangan, of the League of Women Voters, asked if attendees could teleconference into the meeting. A. Fesenmeyer responded that the project team generally prefers that people attend in person so that the meetings can be interactive. Yolanda Antoniak, of CTDOT, added that all presentations and meeting summaries will be posted to the project website shortly after each meeting. If a member cannot attend a meeting, they can download the materials from the project website or contact a member of the project team to have a copy mailed to them.

A. Fesenmeyer reviewed the agenda for the meeting. He conveyed that this first meeting would serve as an introduction to the project and provide an overview of the project development process. A. Fesenmeyer introduced and discussed the roles of key members of the project team including himself as the CTDOT Project Manager, M. Calabrese, as the Principal Engineer and Y. Antoniak as the Project Engineer, Sharat

Kalluri as the Consultant Project Manager, D. Sousa as the Public Involvement Lead, and Jeanine Armstrong Gouin as the Environmental Analysis and Documentation Lead.

A. Fesenmeyer described the representation of the PAC, including several agencies, City of Danbury departments, and neighborhood groups. He added that finding representation from neighborhood groups was originally a challenge, but several groups have become involved in recent weeks. He asked the PAC to notify the project team if a key group or agency was missing from the PAC composition. He next asked the attendees to introduce themselves.

A. Fesenmeyer then described the PAC members' roles and responsibilities. He stated that the PAC is an advisory body to CTDOT and to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He noted that the project team wants to learn about the residents' and stakeholders' experiences in the corridor and opinions on the study analyses. D. Sousa added that comment cards were placed in front of each seat, available to attendees, should they prefer to write their comment down. The completed cards could be submitted via the comment box or given to a member of the project team. A. Fesenmeyer closed his portion of the presentation by discussing the procedures for the meetings, noting that meetings will begin and end on time. With regards to notebooks, PAC members were asked to bring their notebooks to each meeting, and the project team will distribute future meeting handouts at each meeting.

Y. Antoniak next provided an overview of the I-84 Danbury Project. She discussed, in general terms, the need for the project citing the corridor's congestion, high crash numbers (about one per day), poor geometry, and aging infrastructure. She oriented the audience to a map highlighting where some of these issues occur. She also presented facts and figures about the corridor, noting that 30 to 40 percent of the traffic on the highway is local traffic. She noted that truck traffic comprises approximately seven percent of peak hour traffic and 12 percent of off-peak hour traffic and described many of the factors, such as the number and proximity of right- and left-hand ramps, that contribute to the weaving of cars between lanes.

Alec Slatky, of AAA, asked if the local traffic is getting on and off solely in the project area. S. Kalluri answered yes and that traffic using Exit 2 is not included in that estimate.

Rudy Marconi, of the Town of Ridgefield, questioned why the study area does not extend to the New York state line. Another attendee stated that some westbound drivers get off before the state line and I-684 to avoid the congested interchange. A. Fesenmeyer answered that a study conducted during the mid-2000s, recommended that the greatest need in the I-84 corridor between the New York state line and Waterbury is between Exits 3 and 8. It was also determined that the project has independent utility which means that it can be a separate project without adversely impacting the highway outside its project limits. In addition, the project team is coordinating with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) and New York State Department of Transportation concerning traffic data and upcoming projects.

Barry Abrams, of the Juniper Ridge Tax District, asked whether the project team will consider improving ramps as well as the highway mainline. S. Kalluri responded that the project will consider improvements to ramps, though he indicated that many of the crashes occur because of the mainline geometry.

An attendee questioned whether the recent work at Exit 5 is part of the I-84 Danbury Project. A. Fesenmeyer answered that the Exit 5 work is a separate, short-term improvement.

J. Armstrong Gouin next presented information on the project development process. She noted that federal and state funded projects are governed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA), respectively. NEPA (enacted in 1969) is applicable to federally funding projects, and CEPA (enacted in 1972) is Connecticut's companion to NEPA for state-funded projects.

She outlined the main tenets of NEPA and CEPA. First, the project team must demonstrate the purpose and need for the project. The project team next evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives, considering the impacts to natural, built, and socio-economic resources in the environment. Ultimately, the project team strives to avoid impacts. If impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimized. If impacts cannot be minimized, mitigation may be warranted. Each "build" alternative will be compared against a "no-build" alternative. The no-build alternative does not equate to "do nothing at all." Rather, the no-build includes normal, ongoing maintenance and other work that CTDOT expects to complete in the corridor to keep the highway in a safe operating condition.

NEPA and CEPA embrace strong public involvement and a formalized public review process. This includes producing a public-friendly document that non-technical persons can understand. If a build alternative is approved by state and federal decisionmakers, appropriate environmental permits must also be obtained before construction can begin.

B. Abrams asked where the I-84 Danbury Project is in the project development process. J. Armstrong Gouin answered that the process has not formally begun yet, though the team has started to analyze many of the existing resources in the corridor. She added that much of this information will be presented to the PAC at future meetings.

S. Kalluri next presented the project schedule, stating that the project was initiated in August of 2016. The completion of the environmental documentation is expected in the early 2020s. Preliminary and final design of a build alternative, if one is chosen, could begin shortly thereafter. Public outreach events and meetings will occur throughout the project development process.

S. Kalluri said that the project team recently completed a Needs and Deficiencies Report. It will be posted to the project website and will be the main topic of the second PAC meeting that will be held this spring.

An attendee inquired about the resources available to the I-84 Danbury Project. A. Fesenmeyer responded that this project is funded through the completion of the environmental documentation phase (i.e. NEPA and CEPA documents). After that, the state will need to dedicate funding for preliminary and final design. He added that CTDOT has appropriately staffed this project with CTDOT and consultant personnel.

B. Abrams questioned the value of a PAC meeting on the project's purpose and need, citing this is already known. J. Armstrong Gouin responded that the project team has held preliminary internal workshops on this topic and have developed an early draft of the project's purpose and need statement. However, the project team will not finalize the purpose and need statement until both the PAC members and the public have had an opportunity to review and provide input. The final project purpose and need statement will be finalized following the formal scoping process.

Introducing content for the next PAC meeting, S. Kalluri closed the presentation by showing a sample video of the traffic analysis model. The video displayed the congestion that currently exists in various portions

of the I-84 corridor in Danbury. S. Kalluri described some of the causes of this congestion. He added that the modeling information validates many conditions that travelers experience in the corridor and will set the baseline for future traffic analysis.

B. Abrams asked if there is a law that the project must have a PAC. A. Fesenmeyer stated that while there is no law requiring a PAC, PACs have added great value to other projects in the state. They are key to getting input from the residents, neighbors and other key stakeholders early in the project as various concepts are developed.

An attendee questioned the best way to contribute design ideas, such as the importance of signal synchronization. D. Sousa suggested staying involved by attending meetings, submitting comment cards, visiting the website, and sending emails to the project team.

The meeting concluded at 2 p.m.

4. Written Comments Submitted on Cards at Meeting

Three cards were submitted at the meeting. A summary of their content follows:

1. The PAC could benefit from an FHWA representative and an MTA Metro-North Railroad representative.
2. How is traffic behavior modeled in simulation (account for speeding, slow merge speeds, un signaled lane changes)?

Does project intend to prioritize one use over another? Google Maps/Waze users are not distributed to anticipate traffic demand- only identifying fastest route!

Cycling improvements will suffer if snow/shoulder treatment isn't considered.

NYS DOT vs CT DOT method to merge slow traffic lane eastbound past Exit 8 (i.e. lane drop where cars merge left vs. lane drop where cars merge right).

3. Have the congestion mitigation efforts included light rail service nearby, i.e. establishing light rail service to/from MTA Metro-North Railroad stations?

What about FHWA representation at the meetings?