

REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Tuesday June 14, 2022, from 4 – 5 PM

Location: Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting Platform

Subject: Listening Session #2

1. Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS / PHONE
ATTENDEES		
Richard Corzo		
Joe D		
Eileen		
Eileen's mother		

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		
Nilesh Patel	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)	Nilesh.patel@ct.gov
Krishalyn Macrohon	CTDOT	Krishalyn.Macrohon@ct.gov
CONSULTANT TEAM		
Sharat Kalluri	CDM Smith	kallurisk@cdmsmith.com
Melissa Santley	CDM Smith	santleyml@cdmsmith.com
Jeanine Armstrong Gouin	SLR Consulting	jgouin@slrconsulting.com
Rick Black	SLR Consulting	rblack@slrconsulting.com
Joe Rubino	SLR Consulting	jrubino@slrconsulting.com
Marcy Miller	FHI Studio	mmiller@fhistudio.com

2. Discussion

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) hosted a public listening session for the I-84 Danbury Project. The meeting occurred on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, from 4 – 5 PM via the Microsoft Teams virtual meeting platform. Sharat Kalluri, of CDM Smith, welcomed the attendees to the meeting and introduced the project team members.

S. Kalluri reviewed the agenda for the session. He stated that he planned to give a 10–15-minute presentation to the attendees. He would cover the study limits, why improvements are needed, the project draft purpose, concepts, screening, and next steps. He would then open the meeting to comments and questions from the attendees.

S. Kalluri displayed a map of the study limits which generally span from the New York – Connecticut state line through Interchange 8 of Interstate 84 (I-84). He stated that the aging I-84 corridor experiences severe congestion, about one crash per day, and has poor access to downtown and Danbury Hospital.

S. Kalluri next stated the draft purpose developed for the study. “The purpose of the I-84 Danbury Project is to reduce congestion and improve the mobility of people and goods in the I-84 corridor in greater Danbury.” He added that congestion is characterized by slower speeds, and mobility is the ability to move people and goods. He noted that safety, while not specifically called out, would be addressed through congestion and mobility improvements. For example, if congestion is

improved through elimination of weaving, there will be fewer sideswipes and related crashes. He discussed how the project purpose will be used in the concept development and evaluation process. He added that if a concept fulfills the purpose, it moves forward in the screening process. If it does not fulfill the purpose, it is eliminated.

S. Kalluri provided an overview of the concepts and how to navigate through them on the concepts webpage at www.i84danbury.com/concepts/. He stated that the concepts are generally categorized into mainline and interchange concepts for the various sections (west, center, and east) of the corridor.

S. Kalluri next stated the study phase will be completed in mid-2023. The recommendations will range from simple to complex. Concepts may be combined with other concepts and reevaluated. Simple project could be implemented within five years. More complex projects would likely take 10+ years to implement.

S. Kalluri concluded the presentation by suggesting several means to provide feedback to the project team. This included visiting the website and leaving feedback, calling the project hotline, following the project on social media, and talking to project team members at the pop-up events.

3. Discussion

Richard Corzo stated that he is interested in hearing more about Concept 6. S. Kalluri reviewed Concept 6 stating that it aims to improve vehicular travel conditions near Interchanges 3 and 4. He noted that the I-84 eastbound traffic will be prohibited from exiting at Interchange 4 onto Lake Avenue. This concept would pull the traffic off onto a new off-ramp to Segar Street. It is recommended to advance through the screening process because it meets the project purpose.

Joe D. voiced concern about the low railroad bridge clearance over West Street. He also suggested removing the traffic signal at the intersection of Park Avenue and Segar Street and realigning Segar Street with the Route 7 northbound off-ramp. S. Kalluri answered that the project team is aware of the issue on the railroad bridge clearance over West Street and it was raised by HARTransit. He indicated that the railroad bridge is not part of the project scope. However, he stated that the observation regarding Segar Street and the realignment of the Route 7 northbound off-ramp is a good comment and the project team will consider them as the concept advances.

R. Corzo asked why Concept 7, the tunnel concept, is not advancing. Jeanine Armstrong Gouin, of SLR Consulting, answered that a tunnel would present constructability issue and would need to relocate the water treatment facility, which provides the primary drinking water supply in Danbury. It also would significantly impact several neighborhoods.

Eileen questioned whether sound barriers are being considered. J. Gouin answered that because the project is only in the study phase now, the project team has not considered noise barriers yet. She added that the team has completed a baseline noise analysis of existing conditions. Once recommended concepts move into the environmental analysis phase, the team will assess each for noise impacts and potentially recommend barriers. Eileen followed up if noise barriers have been included on other projects. Nilesh Patel, of CTDOT, answered that a noise study would include a recommendation for need during the environmental assessment phase.

Eileen commented that drivers are carpooling less frequently because of COVID. S. Kalluri responded that traffic volumes are back up since the decline on Spring 2020, but drivers are also spreading their trips throughout the day. Eileen also stated that improvements on Route 7 could alleviate traffic at Interchanges 3 and 4.

R. Corzo asked for more information on concepts that could improve access to Danbury Hospital. S. Kalluri answered that Concepts 2, 3, 11, and 13 looked at improving the access to Danbury Hospital. Concept 2 involves the construction of eastbound and westbound collector-distributor (CD) roads. Concept 3 would provide interchange improvements at Tamarack Avenue. Concept 11 is similar to Concept 2 and involves a CD road in the center section of the I-84 corridor. Concept 13 would provide interchange improvements at Great Plain Road. Concepts 2, 3, and 13 are advancing, while Concept 11 is not advancing.

Joe D. asked if it makes sense to put ramps on Rockwell Road, rather than Great Plain Road. S. Kalluri answered that ramps onto Rockwell Road would be too close to the Route 7 ramps.

S. Kalluri discussed some of the bus and rail options that are considered in Concept 4. These options would complement any highway options. Joe D. asked if there will be an electrified rail service to the South Norwalk Metro North station. S. Kalluri answered the line is not electrified due to less demand and was uncertain if it would be electrified in the future. Regarding the Danbury-Brewster Rail Feasibility Study, S. Kalluri was not certain if the study has been released to the public. Eileen added that she typically prefers to ride the Metro-North Harlem Line on weekends to New York.

N. Patel discussed that an implementation plan will be developed as part of the current study. This implementation plan will provide recommendations that range from simple (early-action) to long-term projects. The less complex projects may be built within five years. Others can take more than 10 years to design and construct.

Eileen asked how the project team has been communicating with the public. She suggested communicating construction updates to the public via Channel 8 News and Waze. Marcy Miller, of FHI Studio, stated that in addition to these listening sessions, the project team meets regularly with a Project Advisory Committee, has increase presence in social media, regularly updates the website, writes news articles and newsletters, and is holding a series of pop up events this summer in Danbury.