

REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Wednesday, August 9, 2023, 12:30 – 1:30 PM

Location: Microsoft Team Virtual Meeting

Subject: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #14

1. Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
Barry Abrams	Juniper Ridge Tax District	abramsb@hotmail.com
Tom Altermatt	City of Danbury	t.altermatt@danbury-ct.gov
Barbara Barosa	Western CT Stake University	barbara.barosa@putnamcountyny.gov
Sharon Calitro	City of Danbury	s.calitro@danbury-ct.gov
Matt Cassavechia	Danbury Hospital	Matthew.cassavechia@nuvancehealth.org
Scott Dale	Town of Brookfield	
Greg Dembowski	Town of Brookfield	gdembowski@brookfieldct.gov
John Gentile	Danbury Commission for Persons with disAbilities	jngsr1550@aol.com
Veera Karukonda	City of Danbury	v.karukonda@danbury-ct.gov
Ali Mohseni	New York Metropolitan Transportation Council	Ali.Mohseni@dot.ny.gov
Shay Nagarsheth	City of Danbury	s.nagarsheth@danbury-ct.gov
Francis Pickering	Western Connecticut Council of Governments	fpickering@westcog.org
P.J. Prunty	Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce	pj@danburychamber.com
James Root	Sierra Club, Connecticut Chapter	manoether@yahoo.com
Chris Roscia	CTWeather	chrisr@ctweather.com
Perry Salvagne	Get Downtown	prsalvagne@gmail.com
Rick Schreiner	Housatonic Area Regional Transit	ricks@hartransit.com
Vincent Tamagna	Putnam County	Vincent.tamagna@putnamcountyny.gov

OTHER ATTENDEES		
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		
Jennifer Carrier	Federal Highway Administration	jennifer.carrier@dot.gov
Julio Rivera	Federal Highway Administration	Julio.Rivera@dot.gov
Krishalyn Macrohon	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)	krishalyn.macrohon@ct.gov
Kevin Burnham	CTDOT	kevin.burnham@ct.gov
Mike Calabrese	CTDOT	michael.calabrese@ct.gov
Nilesh Patel	CTDOT	nilesh.patel@ct.gov
Lynn Murphy	CTDOT	lynn.murphy@ct.gov
Karen Isherwood	CTDOT	Karen.isherwood@ct.gov
CONSULTANT TEAM		
Sharat Kalluri	CDM Smith	kallurisk@cdmsmith.com
Melissa Santley	CDM Smith	santleym1@cdmsmith.com
Trent Toler	SLR Consulting	ttoler@slrconsulting.com
Joe Rubino	SLR Consulting	jrubino@slrconsulting.com

2. [Welcome](#)

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) hosted its 14th Project Advisory Committee meeting (PAC) for the I-84 Danbury Project on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, from 12:30 – 1:30 PM. The meeting was virtual via Microsoft Teams. Marcy Miller, of FHI Studio, welcomed attendees to the PAC meeting and provided an overview of the Microsoft Teams virtual meeting platform. She handed the presentation to Krishalyn Macrohon, of CTDOT. K. Macrohon reviewed the agenda and relayed that the purpose of the meeting was to give the PAC an update as well as discuss the potential early action / breakout projects. She added that the team would present next steps and leave ample time for discussion and questions from the PAC.

K. Macrohon presented several items that the project team has been working on since the previous PAC meeting on March 9, 2023. She said that since that date, the project team has identified the reasonable range of alternatives and is now reviewing the potential breakout projects. In addition, the analysis of all 26 concepts is complete and posted on the project website. She stated that the team continues to update social media and work on the draft PEL report.

3. [Presentation](#)

Sharat Kalluri, of CDM Smith, provided a brief overview on the screening of the 26 concepts. He added that the screening process was previously discussed in prior PAC meetings. This meeting's focus is the potential breakout projects. The potential breakout projects include: Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) – Dynamic Lane Use (DLU), Intersection Improvements at Main Street and Downs Street by Interchange 5, and Interchange 8 Improvements – US Route 6 / Newtown Road. These breakout projects are deemed to have independent utility and could be implemented quickly.

[Transportation Systems Management and Operations \(TSMO\) – Dynamic Lane Use \(DLU\)](#)

S. Kalluri introduced the first breakout project, TSMO. TSMO is a set of multimodal strategies which help maximize use of existing and planned transportation infrastructure. The advantage is that it can be implemented quickly. He next defined Dynamic Lane Use (DLU) – a TSMO strategy which opens or closes a travel lane based on traffic conditions of the highway.

S. Kalluri stated that the I-84 project limit of Dynamic Lane Use would be east of Lake Ave to Route 7 at Interchange 7. The exact location has not been defined. He provided examples of DLU in Michigan with their Flex Route operation. The use of variable message signs is deployed in the state of Michigan's Flex Route and allows for real-time communication of any changes to traffic operations on the Flex Route such as opening of left shoulder to traffic, advance warning of lane closures, and the ability to change speed limits based on highway conditions.

S. Kalluri showed the conceptual design of DLU and its transition to the existing conditions, and provided a driver's perspective travelling on DLU. He then presented the benefits of DLU. He explained that DLU can reduce peak hour delays and improve capacity during operational. He added that some states have seen safety benefits from their implementation. DLU will be constructed within the existing right-of-way with limited impacts. And DLU can be implemented in

a short timeframe. He stated that the next steps to move ahead with DLU are to coordinate with Federal Highway Administration, local emergency services, community and stakeholders, and to commence the environmental review and design. All of these tasks could begin this year. The team expects the construction completion between 2027 and 2028.

Main Street, North Street, and Downs Street Intersection

S. Kalluri stated that this intersection has been discussed in previous PAC meetings. Existing conditions at this intersection include poor traffic operations during the peak period traffic, poor sight lines on Main Street from the north of this intersection, and significant crashes, mainly angled collision, caused by lane changing or crossing of traffic and congestion. He noted that the proposed intersection improvements are still being evaluated due to the limited right-of-way available. S. Kalluri said that one potential solution is to change Downs Street to a one-way road. The project team is also assessing ways to improve sightlines on Main Street and its overall traffic operations. Nilesch Patel, of CTDOT, spoke about the project process, noting that the project needs to be initiated to start the design phase process and public outreach. The construction would not occur for a few years at this intersection. While breakout projects will provide some benefits to the corridor, he assured that the process of addressing the project needs – congestion and mobility – will continue as these breakout projects are being implemented.

Interchange 8 Improvements

S. Kalluri oriented the PAC around the Exit 8 interchange and Route 6. A notable area in this section is Newtown Road that is mainly commercial retail stores. The current layout of the interchange causes a circuitous route, which creates additional traffic. The west bound off ramp creates significant crossover traffic into the area. The new interchange layouts would eliminate the need to circulate Newtown Road by moving the current east bound on ramp further to the east to allow for traffic from Payne Road to access the ramp to I-84 East. The new layout would also introduce an additional eastbound on ramp to serve Route 6 traffic from Bethel such as Target. S. Kalluri discussed moving the I-84 westbound off ramp further west. The team is also introducing a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) at east bound off ramp, west bound on ramp, Newtown Road and Route 6 intersection. The DDI can significantly reduce circuitous movements in this area.

Next Steps

K. Macrohon discussed the project's next steps. The two breakout projects (DLU and Interchange 8) presented in the PAC are new to Connecticut. These projects will need additional coordination and outreach to help the public and stakeholders understand the new systems and their benefits to the traveling public and Danbury residents. She said that the project website will be updated in the fall 2023 with new concept and concept combinations pages. The draft PEL report is anticipated to be completed in fall 2023. A public information meeting will occur this winter.

4. Discussion

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) – Dynamic Lane Use (DLU)

Barry Abrams, of Juniper Ridge Tax District, asked for more information on the merge of Route 7 south bound traffic with to I-84 west bound at Interchange 7 as traffic backs up as far as Exit 11 of Route 7 south bound during rush hour. S. Kalluri answered that there will be a total of four lanes at this merge, two from Route 7 south bound on-ramp and two from I-84 west bound. B. Abrams

stated that he did not believe that this would suffice as there is currently no merge on I-84 with Route 7 south bound, and so this would confuse the drivers. Scott Dale, of the Town of Brookfield, added that the congestion begins at the ramp, northeast beyond the DLU limits and believed that DLU improvements are insufficient to address the traffic back up on Route 7 south bound. He indicated that incorporating Concept 10 will complement the improvements of DLU.

John Gentile, of Danbury Commission for Persons with disAbilities, voiced his concern that the project needs to address the sharp curves and grades in the corridor for DLU to maximize its benefits. Chris Roscia, of CTWeather, agreed with Mr. Gentile and expressed reservations on its safety and enforcement, particularly when it is not in operation. He also stated concerns about truck drivers and their impacts to the safety of all drivers . N. Patel explained that their concerns to sightline, safety and enforcement are considered in the planning phase to safely implement DLU. He also stressed that this project is still early in the process. The process would require further coordination to address all concerns from the public and stakeholders. and would perform additional evaluation on its capacity benefits. He noted that extensive education will be the key component to inform the public of this new strategy. C. Roscia followed up if technology will be deployed to implement and enforce DLU effectively. N. Patel assured that technology will be used such as Incidental Camera Management to monitor the traffic operation in the corridor (i.e. vehicle breakdowns).

Main Street, North Street, and Downs Street Intersection

James Root, of the Sierra Club, asked on introducing traffic calming measures to improve pedestrian safety and overall comfort at this intersection. S. Kalluri answered that many of the details, such as reducing crossing distances, will be finalized during the design process. However, he added that some congestion in the peak period may still occur, particularly on Main Street, as this intersection provides direct access to downtown Danbury. The team will be looking to balance pedestrian safety and comfort with moving traffic through the intersection.

J. Gentile said that the section of North Street is very narrow and should be made wider to ease the traffic flow as it causes a bottleneck. S. Kalluri acknowledged his comment and commended for his a good observation.

Interchange 8 Improvements

When prompted, several attendees said they support the DDI concept and that it could work in this area.

General Question

J. Root asked if there will be an in-person PAC meeting again and the future public meeting be in-person. N. Patel answered that the public meeting will likely be in-person. While there is not a PAC meeting planned at this time, the team will consider having one if it makes sense. When asked on PAC members' preference to in person and virtual meetings, C. Roscia replied that he likes both platforms of meetings. The virtual meetings are convenient, but he does appreciate in-person meetings because the conversation is more involved. M. Miller has stated that the team has heard this from several PAC members and will continue to alternate between the two types of meeting.

M. Miller encouraged the PAC members to visit the project website to review the meeting video and look for the upcoming project newsletter.