



Report of Meeting

Present: See attached sign-in sheets.

Meeting Purpose: This meeting was held to provide an update to the PAC members on the current status of the project. The last meeting was held on May 8th, 2019, and the CTDOT wanted to bring new PAC members up to speed regarding the history of the project and the previously presented alternatives, as well as to communicate with all PAC members the CTDOT's preferred alternative, which was submitted to FHWA as part of the draft Environmental Assessment, ahead of holding a public hearing.

Meeting Discussion:

Mr. Barrows initiated the meeting presentation promptly at 4:13pm. During the presentation, Mr. Barrows introduced the new project team, discussed the history of the project, explained the purpose and need of the project, presented the alternatives included in the Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE), a comparison between the alternatives and how each met/did not meet the purpose and need of the project, and presented the CTDOT's preferred alternative. Mr. Barrows also touched on some of the concerns brought up by the PAC via email/previous meetings, and the CTDOT's considerations. Following this, Mr. Barrows discussed the current timeline of the project and where CTDOT is currently at. Lastly, Mr. Barrows opened the floor for a Q&A session at 4:23pm.

For specific information regarding the meeting presentation please refer to the presentation slides attached.

Key Issues Discussed:

During the Q&A session, members of the PAC and the Bridge Street Neighborhood expressed their concerns regarding the project and the CTDOT's preferred alternative. Below is a list of the main comments:

- Traffic Concerns
 - Heavy truck traffic: multiple PAC members and residents voiced strong concerns about the truck traffic in the surrounding neighborhood, requesting design measures to restrict truck use of the structure.
 - The project team acknowledged the concern and noted it would be investigated as design progresses.



- Pedestrian safety: several members and residents emphasized danger to children as well as pedestrians crossing the road, requests were made to provide crosswalk improvements and other safety features.
 - Safety features will be included in the design, the project team will consider crosswalk locations, signage, and pedestrian facility improvements.
- Traffic volume and studies: several members and residents voiced concern regarding the year of the traffic study and the need for an updated count.
 - The project team will request an updated traffic study ahead of the public hearing.
- Environmental & Quality of life concerns
 - Air Quality: several members and residents noted concerns about the worsening local air pollution due to increased traffic.
 - The project team noted no lanes were being added and that the queue lanes were to improve safety, additionally, emissions are caused by idling, but this would be looked into as part of the final design.
 - Aesthetic & Landscaping: members and residents noted the need for replanting of trees, particularly evergreens, to help improve air quality. Members mentioned the value of Route 136 being a designated Scenic Road and questioned how the alternative selection process takes this into consideration.
 - Aesthetic improvements, including landscaping will be included *within the project limits*, in addition, the scenic review process will take place later in the design, as currently the EA/EIE is in its draft form.
- Design & Structural concerns
 - Bridge vertical clearance: multiple members and residents brought up concerns regarding the higher vertical clearance proposed in CTDOT's preferred on-alignment replacement alternative noting it would invite more trucks to come. Some attendees requested information regarding the design exception process to maintain the existing vertical clearance. Installing a sacrificial clearance beam at the approaches of the structure was offered as an option. There was some discussion over a lower superstructure vs. marine clearance.
 - Considering the CTDOT's preferred replacement alternative includes constructing an entirely new truss bridge, the project team noted maintaining the existing vertical clearance was not allowed per current



design standards and would put fracture critical members in jeopardy of impact damage that could lead to catastrophic failure. All comments were noted, in addition to consideration of keeping the existing truss as ornamental.

- Navigation channel: concerns were brought up regarding narrowing the navigation channel if the bridge is widened (rehabilitation alternative).
 - The project team clarified that with the rehabilitation alternative, the channel would be narrowed due to the bridge widening, which is being carefully considered. This would not be an issue with the on-alignment replacement alternative.
- Navigation channel: One member noted the design parameters should take into consideration the maritime access provided by the saga and match it with the new span on bridge street.
 - The project team noted this would be taken into consideration during the design, no update available at the moment.
- Emergency Vehicle access: the project team noted the design will accommodate emergency vehicles, including future EV's as the town expressed, they were looking to update their fleet. Design exceptions for vertical clearance and other design criteria that impact emergency vehicles/response are not favorable and generally not acceptable. It was noted that coordination with public safety would be ongoing.
- Communication
 - A request for the project timeline and filing deadlines was made, for which the team agreed to prepare and share a timeline once we received a response for the draft EA/EIE.
 - A request for meeting minutes and traffic data was made, the project team noted minutes, and presentation would be shared on the website, they also noted traffic counts from the 1991 could be pulled.
 - There were several questions regarding the design exception process, for which the project team noted they would send documentation for exceptions via email. They also noted that the current stage is for comment collection and that the design exception request usually takes place later in the design process.
 - A member brought up Section 106 concerns and asked about Meaningful Mitigation options.
 - The project team gave a brief explanation of the Section 106 process and how they will develop mitigation options, this was further



discussed at the Section 106 Meeting which was held separately later that night.

- Concerns were brought up about coordination with new developments and local impacts
 - The project team noted they are aware of the new residential construction, and they are working with the town to perform a corridor study, however, they also noted because of where this new development is at in the process the current EA/EIE draft did not include said developments.

Next Steps:

The CTDOT will continue to make progress with the project, as noted during the presentation. Once FHWA finishes its review of the draft EA/EIE, performs legal sufficiency review and approves for circulation, the CTDOT will hold a public hearing along with a 45-day comment period. CTDOT will advertise the details of the public hearing via a press-release, newspaper publishing's, and on the CTDOT website. All attendees will also receive an email notification.

Questions and comments can be sent throughout the process, directly to the CTDOT via:

*James R. Barrows II, P.E.
Transportation Supervising Engineer
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06111
Phone: (860) 594-3192
E-mail: James.Barrows@ct.gov*



Sign-in Sheet

May 15th, 2025



First	Last	Title	Organization	Email	PAC Member?	Alt .
John	Suggs	Member	Preserve Westport	JohnSuggs@gmail.com		X
Matthew	Mandell	Executive Director & President	Westport RTM/Westport Chamber of Commerce	Matthew@westportwestonchamber.com	X	
Valerie	Jacobs	Co-Chairman	Save Westport Now	ValerieSeilingJacobs@gmail.com	X	
Jim	DeStefano	Resident	DeStefano & Chamberlain, Inc.	Jimd@dcstructural.com	X	
David Mark	Brown	Resident	Bridge Street Neighborhood	Davidmarcbrown@hotmail.com		
Michelle	Perillie	Director	Town of Westport Planning and Zoning	mperillie@westportct.gov	X	
Paul	Lebowitz	Chari, Planning and Zoning Commission	Town of Westport P&Z Commission	Paul4pandz@gmail.com	X	
Werner	Liepolt	Member	Bridge Street Neighborhood	Wliepolt@mac.com	X	
Lawrence	Weisman		Coalition for Westport	lpweisman@gmail.com		X
Bob	Caporale	Member	Imperial Landing Homeowner's Association	bobcaporale@gmail.com	X	
Jim	Mullen	Resident	Bridge Street Neighborhood	Jimd.mullen@gmail.com		
Robbie	Guimond	Owner	Bridgebrook Marina	RobbieGuimond@gmail.com	X	
John	Sirmons	Resident	Bridge Street Neighborhood	jsirmons@optonline.net		
Barry	Lytton	Vice Chair	Shellfish Co.	BarryLytton@gmail.com		
Emily	Kaufman	Resident	Bridge Street Neighborhood	Kaufman.emily@gmail.com		
Shannon	Taylor	Resident	Bridge Street Neighborhood	Shannonrenaetaylor@gmail.com		
Mihaela	Ungureanu	CEO	Saugatuck Rowing Club	mungureanu@saugatuckrowing.com	X	
Ronald	Corwin	Member	Coalition for Westport	ron@roncorwin.com		X
Maggie	Dallal	Resident	Bridge Street Neighborhood	maggie.dallal@gmail.com		



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