

Transportation Technical Advisory Group
April 8, 2014
Meeting Minutes

- TTAG:** Mr. Jeremy Ginsberg, Darien; Mr. James Michel, Greenwich; Mr. Mike Yeosock, Norwalk; Mr. Mani Poola, Stamford; Ms. Daphne White, Wilton; Mr. Louis Schulman, Norwalk Transit District; Jennifer Johnson, Westport Transit District; Ms. Roxane Fromson, CTDOT; Mr. Peter Calcaterra, CTDOT
- SWRPA:** Mr. Alex Karman; Mr. Gregg Breton; Mr. Craig Lader; Dr. Floyd Lapp; Ms. Sue Prosi; Mr. Robert Sachnin; Mr. Ryan Hall
- Other:** Ms. Susan Sweitzer, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency

At 10:01 a.m. Ms. Sue Prosi called the meeting to order. The meeting was held at Darien Town Hall, Room 119.

1. TTAG Meeting Minutes: January 13, 2014

The meeting minutes were approved as written following a motion by Mr. Poola and a second by James Michel. The motion approved unanimously. Ms. Daphne White, Mr. Louis Schulman, and Mr. Mike Yeosock abstained from the motion because they did not attend the January TTAG meeting.

2. Public Involvement

There were no members of the public present.

3. Transportation Improvement Program

3a. FFY2012-2014 TIP Amendments*

Ms. Prosi confirmed that there were no current TIP Amendments, based on correspondence with CTDOT. She explained that the TIP would be left on the MPO agenda in the event critical amendments surfaced prior to the April 22, 2014 MPO meeting.

3b. Draft FFY2015-2018 TIP

Ms. Prosi provided the status and schedule for the TIP update to FFY2015-2018. The draft FFY2014-2018 STIP was sent out to the TTAG for review and comment. SWRPA and Norwalk Transit District provided comments to CTDOT. The next milestone in TIP development is the Air Quality Conformity Interagency Conformity consultation which is scheduled for April 22, 2014. CTDOT, USDOT, DEEP, USEPA and regional participate in the consultation.

4. Tiger 5 Applications

Ms. Susan Sweitzer gave a presentation on the Norwalk TIGER 5 application for funding West Avenue Corridor Improvements. The project is an attempt to create a more integrated use of the corridor that focuses on pedestrian and bicycle enhancements along West Avenue. The key piece of the proposal is an urban circulator meant to increase transportation options in the corridor. Ms. Sweitzer expressed that the

project has a better chance of receiving federal funding because development in the area had increased the need for additional public transit options.

Dr. Floyd Lapp had questions on the frequency of the proposed circular. Ms. Sweitzer responded that the frequency of service is still a work in progress but will remain flexible for the foreseeable future in order to meet the increased demand that is expected with the influx of real estate development nearby. Ms. Prosi asked about a potential cost-benefit analysis and how the proposed circulator would be financially sustainable. As to the sustainability of the project, Ms. Sweitzer advised that the circulator would be able to build a stable ridership of commuters as more developments in Norwalk came online. Additionally, the circulator level of service will remain flexible in order to meet present and future demand. Ms. Sweitzer will provide the benefit cost analysis and additional documentation for MPO consideration.

By consensus the TTAG recommends that the MPO support the application and provide a letter of support for the application.

5. South Western Region TOD Project Scan

Ms. Sweitzer provided an update on Norwalk's Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI). The city is currently in the process of Matthews-Lockwood park enhancements enhancing a public park in order to make it more appealing to nearby residents. This SCI project will help to connect two census tracts with very different demographics. The proposed costs for the park upgrades will be approximately \$300,000 for each upgrade. Work is expected to begin July 1st.

Ms. Sweitzer next gave a brief presentation on the pedestrian access and wayfinding improvements under the SCI. These changes will include intersection, sidewalk, and bicycle access improvements in order to enhance the transportation network for non-motorized users. A great deal of attention will go into reconfiguring 13 intersections along West Avenue. This work will be funded via an enhancement grant. The project will create a comprehensive bike network by connecting new bike routes in Norwalk to trails outside the city. The city of Norwalk is still in the running for a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods grant from HUD which would be used for upgrades to the neighborhood of Washington Village.

Mr. Karman followed with a short briefing on the potential for additional TOD in Stamford, Glenbrook, and Springdale. An analysis is currently underway to study the potential for additional TOD because the train stations in these areas serve a high number of walk up customers and a relatively low number of park and ride customers. The project study is expected to be complete in June. Preliminary results reveal that the potential market for additional TOD in these areas may be limited.

Finally, Mr. Lader gave a presentation on a potential TOD strategy for a proposed branch line station that would serve East Main Street in Stamford. The proposed station has the potential to help to relieve crowding at the Stamford Transit Center, improve accessibility in east Stamford, and act as a catalyst to develop a functional community center. Mr. Lader explained that a market analysis found a strong demand for TOD in the area. The current proposal for any future station will include a ten year phased implementation strategy that will require a number of nearby upgrades of infrastructure including the Stamford Transitway and the East Main Street Rail Bridge.

6. STP-Urban and LOTCIP

The TTAG spent a short period of time going over CTDOT's March 2014 STP-Urban program report. At a future date, the STP working group will meet to discuss and review STP Urban and LOTCIP project status and funding needs, new applications, the LOTCIP 3% set aside, and procurement of consultant services for regional review of LOTCIP project design.

7. SWRPA Activities and Studies

7a. Transportation Planning Work Program FY2014-2015

Ms. Prosi noted that the South Western Region transportation planning program will have a one year contract covering FY 2014-2015. SWRPA will use this period to transition into its new role as it merges with the Housatonic Valley Region. The TTAG is invited to identify transportation planning needs for possible inclusion into the work program.

7b. Regional Performance Incentive Grant GIS Services Status Report

Mr. Karman briefed TTAG on the Regional GIS Services grant and the DPW AVL component. Currently 6 municipalities have expressed interest in acquiring the AVL devices. Ms. Johnson asked if the AVL technology could be integrated into Norwalk's transit services which is being developed. Mr. Karman responded that while this may be technically feasible, any crossover will be more difficult to implement given that the software used in Norwalk may not be compatible with AVL devices used by the state and other municipalities.

7c. DEMHS Region Evacuation Plan Status Report

This item was tabled for a later date.

8. South Western and Housatonic Valley Regions Merger Status Report

Dr. Lapp spoke optimistically about the merger between South Western and Housatonic Valley Regions. By early autumn, it is expected that the required 60% threshold will be met to allow for the formation of WCCOG.

9. Legislative Update

This item was not discussed.

10. CTDOT Strategic Plan Update – Transform CT

Mr. Calcaterra gave a presentation on the statewide long range transportation plan (LRTP) which will be contain both a 50 year unconstrained and 20 year constrained vision for transportation in the state of Connecticut. So far, the state is proposing new initiatives in smart growth, economic development, and energy conservation. The planning process will also include public outreach that will rely heavily on the use of social media as well as traditional methods. Furthermore, the state hired a consultant to study the economic impacts of proposed investments throughout the state. The draft plan is expected to be released by early 2015. Current priorities for the plan include congestion on I-95, safety improvements to the New Haven Line, expansion of the Danbury Branch Line, Route 7 improvements, and exploring TOD opportunities throughout the state. Ms. Prosi suggested that given the recent Metro-North difficulties, the plan should seek to address the reliability and performance issues along with state of good repair. Dr. Lapp and Ms. Prosi also spoke about reaching out to traditionally underrepresented groups for the planning process, and Mr. Alex Karman complimented CTDOT for the creative approaches being used for TransformCT. There will be a presentation to the MPO in the near future.

11. New Business

11a. Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Prosi referenced the upcoming meetings and events, including the April 24th MPO, May 6th TTAG, and May 22nd MPO meetings.

11b. USDOT Certification Review of South Western Transportation Planning

According to the most recent update, all principal arterials will now be considered part of the Federal Highway system and must apply to federal standards. By and large this will not mean many changes unless there is a new roadway under construction or extensive construction on existing roadways. Ms. Fromson commented that designating a highway a 'marine highway' can provide the roadway with a higher priority for funding. Mr. Karman distributed a memo on functional classification and provided town representatives with a functional classification map for their towns.

11c. CTDOT Project Closeout Procedure

Ms. Prosi updated TTAG on the procedure for requesting close out from CTDOT. A list of required information to include in a close out request can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=1841&Q=538016>

11d. UCONN Safety Circuit Rider

The Connecticut Safety circuit Rider program is designed to provide safety-related information, training, and direct technical assistance to agencies responsible for local roadway safety. The program is available, at no cost to all municipalities in Connecticut. Ms. Prosi stressed the importance of the program given that MAP-21 has added a great deal of emphasis on safety.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by: Ryan Hall, Sue Prosi, Craig Lader
Minutes approved as revised by TTAG: May 6, 2014

Handouts:

- *Functional Classification memo*
- *TransformCT flyer and contact information*