



Project Name: Westport Rail Station Parking Study

Client: Western Connecticut Council of Governments

RBA Project #Y4437

MEETING SUMMARY

Date: 4/29/16

Time: 10:30 am

Location: Westport Town Hall

Attendees:

Name	Agency/Firm	Contact Information
Jim Marpe	Westport First Selectman	jmarpe@westportct.gov
Dewey Loselle	Westport Operations Director	dloselle@westportct.gov
Anna Bergeron	CTDOT Intermodal Planning	anna.Bergeron@ct.gov
Roxane Fromson	CTDOT Field Coordination	roxane.fromson@ct.gov
Martin Fox	Westport Transit District	foxswct@gmail.com
Foti Koskinas	Westport Police Chief	fkosinas@westportct.gov
Sam Arciola	Westport Police Deputy Chief	sarciola@westportct.gov
Jennifer Johnson	RTM	jbarrjohnson@gmail.com
Peter Gold	Chair RTM Transit Committee	Pgoldrtm3@gmail.com
Craig Bordiere (on phone)	CTDOT – Rail	craig.bordiere@ct.gov
Sue Prosi	WestCOG	sprosi@westcog.org
Victor Minerva	RBA	vminerva@rbagroup.org
Neil Desai	RBA	ndesai@rbagroup.com

PROGRESS MEETING

The purpose of this meeting as identified in the attached agenda (which was distributed prior to the meeting), was to provide a brief discussion of the analysis report, detail recent and planned improvements by the Westport Police Department (Westport PD), present the draft recommendations, and then discuss next steps and deliverables

1. Brief Discussion of Analysis Report

RBA presented a brief summary of the analysis report focusing on the key findings which included the results of the intercept survey and traffic analysis, as well as the development of the initial key strategies and how they were grouped according to type of improvement (parking improvement (PI), parking management improvement (PM), and mobility improvement (M) and by phase (short, mid, or long term).

2. Recent and Planned Improvements by the Westport Police Department

RBA then provided an update on recent and planned improvements by the Westport Police Department which included:

- Increases to the commuter parking supply
 - Expanding Lot #7 (reacquiring leases of private lots east of current lot) – Adding 25 to 30 spaces. Plans to add staircase from expanded Lot #7 down to Riverside Avenue (PI 8)
 - Converting 22 hourly spaces in lot adjacent to Franklin Street to daily spaces (PM 11)
 - Adding 33 spaces at Green's Farms Station
- Improvements to Lot #1 (PI 7, M 2, and M6)
 - Access management & circulation
 - Pathways and staircase
 - Landscaping & drainage
- Charging a fee (\$35) to people on the waitlist (PM 9)

Comments and feedback on these three improvements from the STC included the following:

- The Westport PD indicated that the gain in spaces in expanding Lot #7 is actually between 50 and 60 which is fairly significant.
- The Westport PD indicated that the \$20 of the wait list fee goes to the management company while \$15 goes to the railroad parking account. It is a onetime fee only charged to new people added to the waitlist.
- The Westport PD also reported that they are charging for a second car to be added to the permit. The fee for two cars is \$425 as opposed to \$325. This is an added convenience for permit holders and an increase in revenue. Westport PD reports no reduction of permits, no shift from two permit holders in a household to one with two vehicles. WestCOG indicated that some towns allow multiple cars per permit, ranging from two to four.

3 – Presentation of Draft Recommendations

RBA then presented the draft recommendations to the STC broken down by phase (short, mid, and long). The recommendations and subsequent discussion are documented below (which includes a number of other issues not related to the presented recommendations).

Short Term Strategies

- Continue with Current Management Structure (PM 1). The Westport PD confirmed the need for a succession plan, especially with the retirement of their records clerk on June 1.
- Increase annual & daily parking fees closer to market rate (PM 7). RBA recommended an incremental increase on the permit fees to \$340 and \$6 for daily fees which are the median rates for stations in the area. There are stations that charge more in the region (e.g. SONO charges \$1,164/year, \$12/24 hours. Stamford is \$1,170/yr., \$10/24 hours).
- Pedestrian & vehicle accommodations to improve operations and safety (M 3, M 4, M 5). Dewey Loselle (Westport Operations Director) indicated that the Town has applied for a road safety audit but not in the Saugatuck area.
- Promote Carpooling (M 9). Peter Gold (RTM Transit Committee Chair) indicated that shuttles should be promoted as well as carpooling. The report will be revised to promote transportation demand management (TDM) and its benefits which includes ridesharing, transit, guaranteed ride home and other strategies.
- Establish dedicated bus pick-up and drop-off area (M 11). No discussion.
- Examine changing Signal Timing at Riverside Avenue & Bridge Street. Readjust entrances/exits at Dunkin Donuts by allowing only right turns on the north side of the lot (M 14). No discussion.
- Add wayfinding signs at appropriate locations (M 15). No discussion.
- Consider using capital improvement funds for transit & bike/ped improvements (M 16). No discussion.
- Monitor & review CTDOT existing and future plans (M 17 and M 18). No discussion.
- Implement a pay station and pay by phone system (PM 8). The Westport PD has implemented pay by cell. They are also adding a new feature to address complaints by daily users. As of July 1, 2016 daily users can have a “wallet” where you put in \$200 or have your credit card on file with an option for automatic deduction. Greenwich and Norwalk have pay by cell in place, and Stamford is launching the capability this month. CTDOT asked the question - is there way to get user data using this reader? Westport PD indicated yes.
- Open up unused permit spaces (especially in Lot #8) to daily users before 10:00am (PM 12). The Westport PD indicated that they actively monitor monthly parking and open up empty monthly spaces to daily parkers each day.
- Develop an Operating and Financial Plan (PM 15). WestCOG and CTDOT indicated that the study would develop a format for these reports.

Mid Term Strategies

- Revise Lease Agreements (PM 6). No discussion.
- Implement Smart Parking System (PM 13). No discussion.

Long Term Strategies

- Build Structured Parking (PI 6). WestCOG noted that while CTDOT is not looking to fund rail parking, they are looking for the private sector (through private/public partnerships) to assist in providing additional parking within ¼ of stations. At Merritt 7 on the Danbury Branch, the state is funding high level platforms, an elevator, improved parking with better drainage and lighting, and better connections between the station and nearby office developments.
- Complete Street Improvements (M 12, M 13, M 7, and M 8). Peter Gold (RTM Transit Committee Chair) asked if shared streets are safe and do they work. RBA indicated they would provide information on this in the Recommendations Report. Peter Gold (RTM Transit Committee Chair) asked if RBA looked at improving connections from Green's Farms Station to Green's Farms Academy (GFA) for students. Westport PD indicated that there is a path and a sidewalk that already connects the station to the school, and that New Creek Road has poles with lights, but nothing around the bridge. GFA also offers shuttle service during bad weather. CTDOT stated that this issue could be looked at with a SRTS study.
- Outsource parking management to private contractor (PM 5). Peter Gold (RTM Transit Committee Chair) asked if RBA looked at combining the Westport Transit District (WTD) with Railroad Parking to operate parking. (This was not considered in the study to date.) In terms of where this has been done in CT, WestCOG indicated that Hartford Transit District (HTD) operates Union Station and associated parking. Not mentioned at the meeting is that Milford Transit District manages rail parking. The Greater Hartford and Milford Transit Districts operate transit services. However while there may be synergies in working together, this type of administration/governance is not typical in Connecticut and hasn't been resolved at the statewide level.
- Develop future TOD Plan (PI 2, PI 3, PI 4, PI 5). CTDOT stated that the potential redevelopment of the block across from the station must be looked at. Dewey Loselle (Operations Manager) indicated that several plans are currently being developed for the block and they are including items like the impact to utilities and the inclusion of an interior courtyard. The First Selectman also stated that PI 4 redevelop Luciano Park as surface parking should be rephrased. The narrative will be revised for the final report.

Other Issues Discussed

- Overselling permits. Westport PD stated that while they do oversell permits it does contribute to some confusion as to how it occurs. People don't understand that if 400 people don't renew, it doesn't mean that that the Town issues 400 new permits immediately. Instead the WPD monitors the situation on a month to month basis (especially in the summer when things demand is lower), and then begins issuing a certain number of permits each month.

4. Discussion of Next Steps and Anticipated Deliverables

RBA then discussed the next deliverable which will be Technical Memorandum #4 – Recommendations. This memo will provide a more detailed description of the

recommendations presented at this meeting. The target date for completing the final version of this memorandum is two months from the date of this meeting.

A discussion then ensued about phase 2 of this study and what it could entail. The key points of which are detailed below:

- Dewey Loselle (Operations Manager) brought up the fact that the Town applied for a TOD grant and that a lot of phase 2 is included in the grant. RBA responded that phase 2 can start immediately while winning the TOD grant is uncertain at this point. If Westport is selected for the TOD Grant, it can be modified to focus more on design. In addition, there are a number of items that can serve as a precursor for the TOD grant work including public engagement (none of which was done in study Phase 1) including a visual preference survey, and examining land use and zoning within a ½ mile of Saugatuck Station to determine which parcels are candidates for potential development and what are the limitations.
- CTDOT and Peter Gold (RTM Committee Chair) indicated that phase 2 should look at multi-modal connections to Saugatuck Station including the proposed BRT service along Route 1 (and connections to WTD shuttle Routes).
- WestCOG indicated that the upcoming Norwalk Transit District comprehensive service review will be looking at existing, needed and future transit routes. Peter Gold (RTM Committee Chair) stated that any future structured parking at Saugatuck should include a traffic analysis that details the impact on local roads. RBA and WestCOG advised that a traffic impact assessment of study development options would be part of the study scope.

WESTPORT RAIL STATION PARKING STUDY

PROGRESS MEETING – APRIL 29, 2016 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Brief Discussion of Analysis Report
2. Recent and Planned Improvements by the Westport Police Department
3. Presentation of Draft Recommendations
4. Discussion of Next Steps and Anticipated Deliverables
 - Technical Memorandum #3 – Preferred Alternatives (recommendations)
 - Draft and Final Reports
 - Schedule
 - Phase 2 study scope possibilities