

DANBURY AND NEW FAIRFIELD

CORRIDOR STUDY



NOTES

Public Meeting

January 21, 2021

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Project Team Attendees:

Todd Fontanella, Kristin Hadjstylianos (Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG))

Marcy Miller, Rory Fitzgerald, and Parker Sorenson, Dan Hageman (Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.)

Attendees: 19

1. Welcome and Overview of Agenda

Marcy Miller reviewed the project objectives and deliverables and went over the meeting agenda which included:

1. Welcome and Speaker Introduction
2. Overview of Study Purpose, Schedule, and Goals
3. Draft Traffic Recommendations
4. Site Visit Recap
5. Potential Trail Recommendations
6. Next Steps
7. Discussion

2. Presentation

M. Miller introduced the virtual workshop and gave a brief overview of the meeting format, describing the ways in which participants could provide feedback during the workshop. She said that the virtual workshop recording will be posted on WestCOG's website and will be translated into Spanish and Portuguese. M. Miller introduced the Project Team, explaining that WestCOG

is guiding the Study in partnership with the City of Danbury and Town of New Fairfield. Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc. (FHI) is conducting the technical analysis, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is sponsoring the Study.

M. Miller provided a general overview of the Study, reviewing project objectives, community engagement process, and deliverables. She explained that two virtual public workshops were held over the summer, and Existing Conditions Report was presented in late Spring, and that the Final Recommendations Report will be submitted in early March. The goal of this virtual meeting is to gather feedback from the public on the draft recommendations for the Study.

Parker Sorenson presented an overview of draft transportation recommendations. Recommendations included signal optimization at intersections, pedestrian improvements such as crosswalks and additional sidewalks, and left turn lanes to name a few.

Dan Hageman provided an overview of the field visit to the Margery Reservoir property which was conducted in October 2020. The goal of the field visit was to access existing conditions of the property and review environmental constraints such as wetlands and slopes. D. Hageman provided a summary of the various permitting and environmental considerations that would be required should a trail through the reservoir property be constructed. Rory Fitzgerald provided an overview of the three trail concepts that were considered. These included a sidepath located within the Route 37 right-of-way, a trail through the woods within reservoir property, and a hybrid concept that combined both the sidepath and trail concept. The goal of this concept was to avoid steep slopes and wetlands as much as possible while still providing a trail network. The hybrid concept is the one deemed most feasible by the Project Team and has received a favorable review thus far from members of the TAC. Questions were asked throughout the presentation and afterwards. These are presented below.

3. Questions and Answers

The following highlights discussion and questions that were addressed during and after the presentation:

Amanda: Does the New Fairfield construction bid that went out include the southbound left turn lane?

Answer: P. Sorenson: No, this will only include the traffic signals and boxes, etc. But, CTDOT would like to install these in a way that does not preclude this recommendation from being included.

James Kloos: How are you measuring traffic flow for post COVID-19? As folks are working remotely and traffic during rush hour is much less now than say 2 years from now?

Answer: P. Sorenson: The data we are using is from December 2019, so pre-COVID-19. Overall, we are finding that state traffic is returning to normal pre-COVID-19.

Amanda: I could have sworn that when the Barnum Road intersection was originally planned, there was supposed to be dedicated left turn lane. I've heard other people say the same thing - was this ever part of the plan?

Answer: P. Sorenson: I will look into this for inclusion into the meeting summary. *Post Meeting Follow Up: In a project presentation dated May 16, 2017, the project plans did not include a left-turn lane from Route 37 northbound to Barnum Road.*

Peter: How wide would the trail be?

Answer: M. Miller: The trail would be 10 feet wide in all concepts.

James Kloos: Is the historic stonework on Colonial Road?

Answer: D. Hageman: No, it is on the reservoir property, located near Colonial Road.

James Kloos: Could wooden bridges be used to cross wetland areas?

Answer: D. Hageman: Yes, they could be constructed from wood, but the communities would have to weigh the future maintenance costs. There would be less environmental impacts that way, but maintenance cost tradeoffs.

Eric S.: You will have maintenance issues no matter what the trail is made of. We need this multiuse trail! Bicycles and pedestrians need this access along Route 37.

Michael Kiviat: Are there any plans for a stoplight at the Saw Mill Rd intersection? Will there be widening considering for turning onto Saw Mill Rd southbound?

Answer: P. Sorenson: There are no plans for a stop light at that location currently. Intersections must meet several warrants to qualify for a signal, which can be difficult to meet, especially with those low side street traffic volumes.

Theo: How many attendees are on this call?

Answer: M. Miller: There are 19 attendees at this virtual meeting.

Peter: Concept 3 seems like the most practical.

James Kloos: I prefer the trail to be close to the reservoir since traffic noise is an issue.