



**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Division of Highway Design**

MEETING MINUTES

Project No.: 151-331
 Project Name: Reconstruction of Interstate 84/CT Route 8 Interchange (the Project)
 Date of Meeting: April 29, 2022 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
 Location of Meeting: Zoom Teleconference
 Subject of Meeting: New Mix PAC Meeting No. 3B

Attendees:

PAC Members	
Name	Organization
David Simpson	City of Waterbury Department of Public Works
Clifford Brammer III	City of Waterbury Planning Department
Robert Nerney	City of Waterbury Planning Department
Maria Vaccarelli	CTtransit Waterbury
Martin Begnal	Friends of Riverside Cemetery
Brian Peterson	Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Julia Rogers	Housatonic Valley Association
Mark Nielsen	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
Ken Stanco	Office of the Mayor
Stephanie Valickis	Saint Mary's Hospital
Kevin Taylor	Waterbury Bridge to Success
Thomas Hyde	Waterbury Development Corporation
Joseph McGrath	Waterbury Economic Development
Joseph Violette	Waterbury Regional Chamber
Arthur Denze Sr.	Waterbury Neighborhood Council
Martin Spring	Waterville Community Club
Tomas Olivo Valentin	Working Cities Challenge

Project Team	
Name	Organization
Michael Calabrese	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Nilesh Patel	CTDOT
Scott Roberts	CTDOT
Jonathan Dean	CTDOT
Joe Belrose	CTDOT
Carlo Leone	CTDOT
Kevin Fleming	CTDOT
Kevin Carifa	CTDOT
Consultant Team	
Jacob Argiro	HNTB
David Schweitzer	HNTB
Christopher Fagan	HNTB
Naomi Hodges	HNTB
Katie Theis	HNTB

Distribution: All Attendees

1. Meeting Purpose

The New Mix Project Team (Project Team) recapped key elements of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting No. 3A and introduced the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study's Universe of Alternatives (UOA) Replacement Alternatives' features.

2. New Mix PEL Study Project Advisory Committee Meeting Presentation

A. Project Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3B Summary

- a. Review of PAC Meeting No. 3A including the PEL Study's process, existing conditions review, and urban design preliminary approach.
- b. Introduced the UOA's Replacement Alternatives' features including the alignment options for Interstate-84 (I-84) and Route 8, system connections, and local connectivity features.
- c. General questions and discussion.

B. Questions and Comments on the Presentation and New Mix

The following questions and comments were received during the PAC Meeting No. 3B presentation.

- Martin Spring (Waterville Community Club, President) expressed concerns regarding potential high costs to taxpayers and the time needed for construction that could be associated with a tunneling alternative. Mr. Spring asked that the Project Team focus on alternatives that would be efficient, low cost, and have relatively faster construction times, including potentially investigating solar highway technologies. David Schweitzer (HNTB, Deputy Project Manager) responded that the Project Team would take Mr. Spring's concerns and comments into consideration.
- Martin Begnal (Friends of Riverside Cemetery, President) asked if changes to the alignment of Route 8 would necessitate improvements to occur to I-84 and conversely, would changes to the alignment of I-84 necessitate improvements to Route 8. Mr. Schweitzer confirmed that changes to either alignment would likely necessitate changes to the system connections between the two mainlines.
- Julia Rogers (Housatonic Valley Association, Senior Land Protection Manager) asked if the UOA would be presented to the public and if there would be a public hearing regarding the New Mix Project. Naomi Hodges (HNTB, Environmental Lead) responded that the first public information meeting is anticipated to occur within the summer and that the UOA will be presented to the public at a future meeting. Screening decisions regarding any alternative would not be finalized until the public have had the opportunity to comment and provide input.
- Mark Nielsen (NVCOG, Director of Planning/Assistant Director) provided a perspective on the frontage road elements with regard to the Replacement Alternatives' local connectivity features. Mr. Nielsen stated his opinion that if frontage roads were to encourage additional use of local road network, the increased traffic volumes could overburden the local streets and surrounding neighborhoods, even though the improvements would potentially benefit through traffic along I-84 and Route 8. Mr.

Nielsen asked that the Project Team avoid creating greater congestion and traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods and the local road network. Ms. Hodges responded that impacts of certain concepts would be assessed and analyzed through the screening process, with more detailed analysis to come within Level 2 of the screening process. Ms. Hodges added that the Project Team would take Mr. Nielsen's concerns into consideration when the screening process begins.

- Robert Nerney (City Planning Department, City Planner) agreed with Mr. Nielsen's concerns. Mr. Nerney stated that the City of Waterbury (the City) would not view a concept that would overburden or adversely increase traffic on local roads as favorable. Mr. Schweitzer responded that the Project Team has considered frontage roads that would align parallel to, and in close proximity with I-84 and Route 8, as the Project Team acknowledges the corridor has limited space. The Project Team has identified enhancing connectivity of areas within the City as a goal for the Project, and views creating and improving both east/west and north/south connections as a means to achieve this goal. As 35% of vehicles on the interchange utilize it for intracity travel, the Project Team has considered improvements to the local road network that could enhance connectivity within Waterbury. Mr. Schweitzer emphasized that the Project Team is cognizant of the concerns of Mr. Nerney and Mr. Nielsen, and that these concerns would be taken into consideration as the PEL Study progresses. Ms. Hodges added that the Project Team has also viewed improvements to the local network as potential means to reduce congestion, which could aid with improving air quality and other environmental factors within the PEL Study Area and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Mr. Begnal expressed concerns regarding the speed limit on Riverside Street should it become a frontage road. Mr. Begnal stated that the bridge abutments by the entrance of Riverside Cemetery are visual obstructions which make it difficult and dangerous for visitors to enter or leave the property. Mr. Begnal added that the Friends of Riverside Cemetery see moving Route 8 east of the Naugatuck River and I-84 more southerly as an ideal alternative for the cemetery. Mr. Schweitzer responded, clarifying that a road becoming or being a frontage road does not necessarily mean that the road's speed limit would become greater than non-frontage roads. Mr. Schweitzer affirmed that Mr. Begnal's concerns and sentiments would be documented by the Project Team.
- Mr. Begnal asked if moving the alignment of Route 8 east and the alignment of I-84 south was a viable alternative at this point in time. Mr. Schweitzer noted that the screening of alternatives had not yet begun and encouraged Mr. Begnal and all PAC members to review the materials they would be receiving post-meeting. These materials contain descriptions and conceptual graphics of the UOA. All PAC members were encouraged to provide feedback and input to the Project Team at the next PAC meeting or via email. Ms. Hodges reiterated that the screening of the UOA will require analysis of each alternative's constructability and ability to meet the Projects' purpose, needs, goals and objectives, while also being cognizant of the City's and the surrounding communities' goals, objectives, and plans. Only through the screening process will the Project Team be able to determine a Range of Reasonable Alternatives through the dismissal of unfeasible or fatally flawed alternatives.

- Brian Peterson (Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church) stated he believes roads such as Reidville Drive and South Leonard Street could potentially be improved in the future. Mr. Schweitzer noted the Project Team has discussed potential advantages to improving these roadways, and thus the Project Team could consider them as locations for local roadway improvements in the future.
- Mr. Begnal asked what steps the Project Team would be taking next. Ms. Hodges noted the Project Team would be preliminarily screening the UOA against Level 1 screening criteria, where Conceptual Alternatives determined to be fatally flawed or unfeasible would be screened out. Chris Fagan (HNTB, Project Engineer) added that the decisions and screening at each of the levels would be based on objective criteria and rules that PAC members would help define. Mr. Schweitzer reiterated that members of the PAC are encouraged to review the UOA description packet and provide input for the Project Team to review and consider.
- Mr. Begnal asked if the first public information meeting's presentation would include similar content to what PAC members had seen at PAC Meeting 3B. Ms. Hodges responded that the first public information meeting would present the content from PAC Milestone 1 and PAC Milestone 2 while the content from PAC Milestone 3 is anticipated to be presented at the second public information meeting. Members of the public will have the opportunity to provide input on the same elements of the PEL Study that PAC members have. All comments and input will be documented for incorporation into the PEL Study. The Level 1 Screening results will not be finalized without first gaining input from the public.
- Mr. Begnal noted that both he and Ms. Rogers had informed attendees of the Waterbury Neighborhood Council's meeting about the PAC meetings and the New Mix Project. Ms. Hodges thanked Mr. Begnal and Ms. Rogers, noting that the Project Team desires the public's engagement and is seeking the public's perspective and input. Ms. Hodges added that the PAC is informing the public process and therefore the information and materials presented to the PAC will likely be further refined based on the acquired information and PAC member input. The refined information will then be disseminated for public review and presentation. Ms. Hodges reiterated that information regarding the New Mix Project is public information and the PEL Study's documents, PAC reports of meeting, PAC meeting recordings, and more can be accessed by anyone who wishes to do so on the New Mix Project webpage. Communications will be forthcoming to alert the public of the first public information meeting when it is officially scheduled.
- Ms. Rogers asked if PAC members could receive a general schedule look ahead for future PAC meetings. Ms. Hodges responded that the Project Team could provide an anticipated schedule, however the PAC meeting topics and schedule fluctuates as it is dependent on the information covered and discussions that occur during each PAC meeting.
- Mr. Spring asked if meetings for the public would be in-person and suggested the Project Team consider local high schools as viable locations for in-person meetings. Scott Roberts (CTDOT, Project Manager) responded that the CTDOT is continuing to monitor the ongoing pandemic and whether in-person meetings could be conducted safely. Mr.

Roberts added that presently, the CTDOT is not holding in-person meetings, but sees the potential for hybrid meetings at a future time when they are deemed safe. Nilesch Patel (CTDOT, Principal Engineer) asked that if PAC members need help or had ideas for disseminating information regarding the upcoming public information meetings to reach out to the Project Team.

- Mr. Begnal asked when the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966's Section 106 review process would take place. Ms. Hodges responded that the formal Section 106 process would occur during the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process which will occur after the completion of the PEL Study.
- Arthur Denze Sr. (Waterbury Neighborhood Council, President) noted members of the Waterbury Neighborhood Council have expressed concerns regarding the acquisition of land for this project and the potential impacts to private homes, businesses, and the existing service ramps into and out of Waterbury from the Mixmaster. Ms. Hodges responded that these factors are considered within the PEL process and explored in further detail during the NEPA process.
- Mr. Peterson stated that there may be members of the public who do not have access to Zoom and may feel left out of the public process if they cannot access the meeting. Mr. Peterson suggested that neighborhood councils could host or stream the public information meeting where those neighborhood groups typically meet. Mr. Patel responded that anyone wishing to join the virtual public meetings will have a call-in option. Ms. Hodges added that the Project Team is exploring the option of distributing .pdf files of the public meeting presentations. Participants without Zoom access would be able to follow along using these files thus making these meetings more accessible.

Ms. Hodges reminded PAC members that they are encouraged to send the Project Team any questions, comments, or ideas they may have upon reviewing the UOA description packet. Ms. Hodges also notified PAC members that the Project Team had extended the comment period for both the draft *Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement* report and the *Analysis, Needs, and Deficiencies Report* to May 16, 2022 to allow PAC members more time to provide their input on the draft PEL documents. The Project Team then thanked all PAC members for their attendance and contributions throughout the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.