



Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday, March 7, 2023
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Place: Branford Fire Headquarters
45 North Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

Re: CTDOT Project No.: 0175-1608
Route 146 Corridor Management Plan
Corridor Working Group Meeting #2

Project No.: 42441.08

ATTENDEES:

Corridor Working Group Members in Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Patrick Zapatka	CTDOT
David Elder	CTDOT
Rob Bell	CTDOT
Bill Sigmund	CT DEEP
Janice Plaziak	Town of Guilford Town Engineer
Allan Dodge	CTDOT
Michael Calabrese	CTDOT
Laura Francis	SCRCOG
Barbara Ricozzi	Branford Resident
Bob Yaro	Guilford Resident
John Hoeffler	Town of Branford Town Engineer
David Rood	Branford Historical Society
Karyl Lee Hall	Guilford Scenic Roads Advisory Committee

Corridor Working Group Members Not Able to Attend:

Name	Affiliation
Catherine Labadia	CT State Historic Preservation Office
Jaime Stein	Guilford Town Planner
Sandy Fry	CT Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board
Harry Smith	Branford Town Planner

Other Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Joe Balskus	VHB
Daniel Amstutz	VHB

NOTES:

- › Rob Bell briefly opened the meeting, thanked all attendees for coming, and noted that the Corridor Working Group will work together to develop the Corridor Management Plan (CMP).
- › Members of the Working Group went around the room and introduced themselves. It was noted that David Rood is now representing the Branford Historical Society, and the Town Planners of Guilford and Branford have been added to the Working Group, though neither were able to make it to the meeting today. Karyl Lee Hall is also replacing Shirley Girioni as a representative of the Guilford Scenic Roads Advisory Committee.
- › Joe Balskus and Daniel Amstutz gave a brief overview of what was covered in the first Working Group meeting on January 24. This included some background on Route 146 and the previous CMP from 1996 and more recent Corridor Study effort, the goals of this new CMP process, the overall outline of the process, roles/responsibilities of the working group, and project schedule.
- › Daniel Amstutz then presented a high-level overview of the Updated Existing Conditions information for Route 146 that is part of the project's scope. VHB has collected new field data and information on roadside development; safety data; data on traffic volumes, speeds, and vehicle classification; land use updates; historic and cultural updates; inland/coastal wetlands information; and new information related to state and federal scenic highway programs.
- › Corridor Working Group (CWG) members asked questions throughout the presentation.
- › A question was asked if one of the goals of the CMP is to set up for a national Scenic Byway designation.
 - This is not an initial goal of the project but can be if the CWG would like to move it in that direction. Route 146 is already designated as a state scenic road. There are only two roads in Connecticut that are national scenic byways: CT 169 in northeast Connecticut and the Merritt Parkway. CWG members discussed questions around marketing and interpretation, which were not initially planned to be part of the project framework. Although there are concerns about bringing too much traffic to Route 146, the Town centers of Guilford and Branford may benefit from greater economic activity.
- › The CWG discussed the Shoreline Greenway and how it fits into the Route 146 CMP.
 - It was noted that the routing of the Shoreline Greenway through Guilford was highly controversial when it was proposed several years ago. It was noted that there is a new Executive Director for the Greenway non-profit who is approaching this differently. Parts of the Greenway are under construction or design in other parts of the region. Bell suggested updating the text to say "Plans" instead of "Planned" to recognize that these are proposed plans and not approved for further implementation along Route 146.
- › Janice Plaziak noted that a subdivision of several houses has been proposed along Route 146 in Guilford just west of the Crabbing Bridge, on the north side of the road (3 lots but has a huge frontage)
- › CTDOT staff noted that repaving of Route 146 in Guilford from Sachems Head Road to Route 1 is planned to take place this year. The group discussed narrowing travel lanes to be less than 11' as part of that project, which would need to be agreed to by CTDOT, but it is currently not supported by police and fire departments in Guilford.
- › Speeding along Route 146 was discussed. Speed limits are higher in Guilford than they are in Branford. A speed study was not planned for this project but it could be incorporated into it if desired. It was noted that speed is a safety issue that should be addressed.

- › Plaziak said the Crabbing Bridge should be added as a planned project for the CMP. The replacement of this culvert/causeway was very controversial with town residents. Bell noted the design has been put on hold pending completion of the CMP project. The intent of the CMP was not to get into the design issues of the Crabbing Bridge specifically but could be something to discuss in relation to the CMP. CWG members noted there has not been an update about the bridge from CTDOT recently and many residents will not separate out the CMP discussion from the bridge. It should be made very clear at the first public meeting that the CMP is not about the bridge.
- › At the end of the presentation about existing conditions, the CWG discussed the first public meeting, proposed for April 11 or 13, in the evening.
 - It was recommended that a member of the CWG speak about the project at the first public meeting.
 - CWG members noted the following topics are likely to be brought up by members of the public at the public meeting: the Crabbing Bridge, speeding, the Shoreline Greenway, guardrails/guiderrails, and flooding.
 - The group agreed it would be best to have the next CWG meeting before the public meeting to go over the proposed presentation and other details. April 4 was proposed, potentially as a virtual or hybrid meeting.
 - The theme of the first meeting could be preservation of the corridor.
 - It was recommended to remove the VHB template background from the presentation to make it easier to see.
- › The CWG went over the list of stakeholders identified for stakeholder interviews/focus groups.
 - CWG members generally agreed with the list of stakeholders but asked the Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Management be made into two separate categories.
 - Some additional stakeholders were added including the Guilford Fire Chief and the Guilford Green Committee.
 - The Friends of Historic Route 146 were recommended as an additional stakeholder. CWG members discussed where they would fit in the stakeholder list and who they should communicate with. Trish Karter was suggested as the appropriate representative.
 - Members noted that stakeholder meetings could take place after the first public meeting.
- › Members briefly discussed the corridor field walks and logistics. Going on a ride along the corridor in a small bus was suggested, with stops along the way. If anyone from the CWG has not driven the corridor, it would be a good idea to do so ahead of time. Members were asked to mark locations on a display map of the corridor where the walks should be, or to reach out to CTDOT/VHB with suggestions.
- › Next steps include:
 - Confirming date and location for first public meeting (proposed for April 11 at the Guilford Community Center);
 - Sending around summary of this meeting;
 - If CWG has any comments about the website, which is now live, send them to CTDOT/VHB.
- › Upcoming schedule includes the following:
 - The Existing Conditions Update should be finalized by the end of March;
 - The next CWG meeting is planned for early April before the first public meeting;
 - Corridor field walks and stakeholder interviews would occur after the public meeting.
- › The meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm.