



# Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, May 25, 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 #4**

Project No.: 42441.08

## ATTENDEES:

### Corridor Working Group Members in Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Rob Bell	CTDOT
David Elder (remotely attended)	CTDOT
Bill Sigmund	CT DEEP
Janice Plaziak	Town of Guilford Town Engineer
Allan Dodge	CTDOT
Sandy Fry	CT Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board
Laura Francis	SCRCOG
Barbara Ricozzi	Branford Resident
Catherine Labadia	CT State Historic Preservation Office
John Hoefflerle	Town of Branford Town Engineer
David Rood	Branford Historical Society
Karyl Lee Hall	Route 146 and Route 77 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee

### Corridor Working Group Members Not Able to Attend:

Name	Affiliation
Patrick Zapatka	CTDOT
Jaime Stein	Guilford Town Planner
Michael Calabrese	CTDOT
Harry Smith	Branford Town Planner
Bob Yaro	Guilford Resident

### Other Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Joe Balskus	VHB
Daniel Amstutz (remotely attended)	VHB

NOTES:

- › Joe Balskus opened the meeting. He went to the first agenda item, to debrief about the first Route 146 CMP public meeting on April 25.
  - David Elder said he noticed that speeding came up as a big issue during the meeting, and was a frequent issue noted in comments.
  - Daniel Amstutz noted the tension between accommodation and beauty, and the issues of speeding and large trucks. There seemed to be acknowledgement that compromise was needed – not everything could be accomplished with changes to the road while also preserving historic resources and other qualities.
  - Flooding was noted as a prevalent issue as well.
  - People appreciated the process and being brought in early. There was a good turnout and a lot of interest in the corridor.
  - Sandy Fry commented that it was clear this is a special roadway to people. People biking and walking can be accommodated with slow speeds. There are parts of the corridor where you have to go slower, and parts where the road opens up and it feels comfortable to drive faster. Maybe don't expect concrete sidewalks along the road, but something more rural in character, like a walking trail.
  - Karyl Lee Hall appreciated the meeting occurring early in the process. She noted the lack of shoulder throughout the corridor is a safety issue. She also noted that cost is a big question – by that she means what would people be giving up for certain changes. Not necessarily money, but property, stone walls, trees, etc.
  - Rob Bell noted the complication of accommodating many different interests.
  - The idea of ranking different issues was brought up.
  - Balskus noted that future strategies will be part of the CMP. This could include looking into different issues with deeper review, like doing safety reviews of certain intersections – the CMP will not include plans or name individual improvements
- › The Working Group discussed the bus tour of the corridor on May 8.
  - There were specific locations that were reviewed where specific traffic engineering issues exist.
  - Barbara Ricoszi suggested breaking up the Route 146 corridor into areas with different typologies. The Greens could be one, the salt marshes another, residential areas another, etc. Balskus noted there is a need for better mapping along the corridor to identify these areas. Elder agreed that having typologies would be a good idea.
  - Fry noted the flooding issues at the railroad overpasses and said it would be a costly issue to fix, if the railroad were to be raised. Balskus questioned if that should be a strategy for the CMP, assuming it is feasible. Alan Dodge suggested discussing this with someone from Amtrak or CTrail. Elder said he has another working group for a different project where he could speak to a representative from Amtrak. He noted that raising the railroad bridge could also change the character and look of the area, though it may address the flooding problem.
  - Elder said one of things he noticed was that the Leetes Island Bridge (Crabbing Bridge) created a lot of local concern in part because it was going to solve one localized flooding issue but didn't comprehensively address flooding in any other areas along the road.

- Enforcement of any speed limit would need to be part of the solution.
  - Elder noted his interest in figuring out the residential neighborhoods where kids often walk down Route 146 or cross 146 to get to parks, playgrounds, beaches, etc., and determine the origins and destinations.
  - It was noted that highlighting places where people can stop and see the scenic views (or creating these stopping places) would help people to enjoy the roadway.
  - Rob Bell noted that the bus had to divert around some parts of Route 146 to avoid the low bridges. He asked if there are parts of 146 where bicyclists should avoid because of lack of shoulder, assuming there is an alternate route. This was done in Simsbury. However, it was noted that some places are hard to get around except via Route 146, such as the Branford/Guilford town line. CWG members discussed different types of bicycle traffic; some bicyclists on Route 146 are experienced cyclists and are training for races. Elder said he would be interested in riding a bike on Route 146 to experience the corridor differently.
- › The CWG discussed the stakeholders who will be interviewed in focus groups for the Corridor Management Plan development. They provided additional names for the stakeholder list and discussed other potential stakeholders. It was also noted that the Town Planner position in Guilford is now vacant.
- › Joe Balskus went over the next steps for the project, which involve documenting the context of the corridor to inform context-sensitive design approaches. Based on the scope of work, this step involves documenting the following contextual assets:
- Roadway infrastructure - structures
  - Drainage/stormwater management – updating flooding areas
  - Roadway – typical cross sections at eight locations for preservation/floodplain/flooding/sea level rise, paved shoulders
  - Signing – detailed sign listing
  - Compliance to standards/barriers – various standards review (such as signing, sight lines, etc.) and barrier protection
  - Bicycle and pedestrian amenities – depiction of amenities
  - Commercial traffic – documentation
- › The goal is to hit the key issues of the context of the corridor. Fry noted there is a “sense” of the corridor, where stone walls are part of the context, salt marshes are part of the context, and these are attractive and amenities in and of themselves. These are character-defining features. Bell talked about the categories of types, such as village types vs. salt marsh types, as discussed earlier. There are certain features that define the corridor that we want to preserve. It was also noted that enhancement of the context is key as well, such as removing invasive plants to restore the salt marsh and scenic views.
- › CWG members requested sending around the original 1996 Routes 146 & 77 Corridor Management Plan again for their review.
- › There was also discussion about how far outside the corridor should be considered – some issues can’t be addressed strictly within the corridor because their origin is outside the corridor. An example was the tide gate/berm near Medlyn’s Farm – it’s not right on the corridor but flooding from it can impact the corridor – can have an impact on Route 146.

- › CWG members also discussed the history of the road in terms of ownership, when it was taken over by the state for maintenance. Some information about the history can be found on the website of an individual who has studied the history of roads in Connecticut (<http://www.kurumi.com/roads/ct/ct146.html>). Route 146 is very different from a “highway” like Route 1 or I-95.
- › The CWG briefly discussed issues of the guide rail/guard rail along the corridor.
- › The members discussed issues of trucking along the corridor and the standards for state roads and local roads. It is very rare that trucks are banned from state roads, and usually has to do with a physical limitation on the road, such as a low or narrow bridge or other feature trucks cannot navigate. Alternate routes should also be considered, however.
- › The next CWG meeting is expected to be at the end of August or early September. Over the summer the project team will start building the base map of context information to bring to the members. Balskus asked if it was necessary to meet with the town governments/councils at this time as it’s in the scope; it was noted that the First Selectmen were involved in the first public meeting and are apprised of the project progress, so it’s not necessary to meet with them again at this time. CWG members asked for updates on the stakeholder meetings as they occur.
- › Next steps include:
  - Send out link to 1996 Routes 146 & 77 CMP;
  - Send out poll to get date for next CWG meeting in August/September; and
  - Follow-up on stakeholder meetings as they get scheduled.
- › Upcoming schedule includes the following:
  - Stakeholder meetings will be scheduled for the month of June;
  - The project team will gather data as part of the contextual documentation over the summer; and
  - Updated flooding information will also be worked on over the summer.
- › The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.