



Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, January 25, 2024
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Place: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Re: CTDOT Project No.: 0175-1608
Route 146 Corridor Management Plan
Corridor Working Group Meeting #7

Project No.: 42441.08

ATTENDEES:

Corridor Working Group Members in Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
David Elder	CTDOT
Rajat Mathur	CTDOT, Traffic Engineer, District 3
Janice Plaziak	Town of Guilford, Town Engineer
David Rood	Branford Historical Society
Laura Francis (remotely attended)	SCRCOG
Barbara Ricozzi	Branford Resident
John Hoefflerle	Town of Branford Town Engineer
Bob Yaro	Guilford Resident
Karyl Lee Hall	Route 146 and Route 77 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee
Anne Hartjen	Guilford Town Planner
Bill Sigmund	CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

Corridor Working Group Members Not Able to Attend:

Name	Affiliation
Catherine Labadia	CT State Historic Preservation Office
Sandy Fry	CT Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board
Michael Calabrese	CTDOT
Rajat Mathur	CTDOT, Traffic Engineer, District 3
Harry Smith	Branford Town Planner

Other Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Joe Balskus	VHB
Daniel Amstutz	VHB
Josh Lecar	CTDOT

NOTES:

- › Joe Balskus opened the meeting. Members who were present introduced themselves.
- › Daniel Amstutz went through the agenda for the meeting. Items to be discussed include the November 2023 public meeting, the Draft CMP Strategies and Public Survey Responses so far, potential strategy timelines, and next steps for the Plan and Public Engagement.
- › November Public Meeting Recap and Feedback
 - Amstutz noted that around 100 people attended the public information meeting in November at the Guilford Community Center. The meeting started a little late and ended late because there were so many people and it ended up being standing room only. CTDOT, VHB, and several Corridor Working Group members attended as well. The purpose of the meeting was to present the draft strategies for the Corridor Management Plan. Overall, the response from the public was positive.
 - About 28 comments were shared at the meeting, almost half of them about bicycle/pedestrian concerns. Other high frequency issues included speeding, flooding, historic context and impact, and other issues related to project prioritization and truck traffic.
 - Amstutz asked if the CWG members had any takeaways or impressions from the public meeting.
 - David Elder noted he was struck by some of the comments around bicycle/pedestrian issues and flooding. These came up as important areas from the community and matched the ideas from the CWG.
 - Bob Yaro suggested a discussion/presentation on the traffic calming toolbox as a strategy at the next public meeting, to better explain to people what countermeasures are available. He also recommended that the corridor be divided into segments based on physical characteristics and surrounding development type, and differentiate between the parts in the historic districts and the parts outside these districts. Pair this with the cross-sections that are part of the scope of work and will be in the final document.
 - Karyl Lee Hall observed that both safety and access improvements are tied to enhancing safety and slowing down traffic. She suggested that traffic calming strategies are a good early action measure to show that the CMP has done something.
 - Elder noted that with the CTDOT paving contract, that will repave additional parts of Route 146, the travel lanes will be brought down to 11'. This is now standard and will help with reducing speeds.
 - Yaro asked if 10' travel lanes could be an option. Barbara Ricoszi noted that State roadways must accommodate all traffic that needs to use the road including trucks. She expressed a concern about increasing the risk for sideswipe crashes if lanes are made too narrow. Balskus clarified that the current strategy in the CMP is to review lane widths and if they can be reduced. We are not expecting to settle the discussion now, before we finalize the CMP. Elder said this is something that can be discussed internally in CTDOT before the final version of the CMP is prepared. Ricoszi pointed out that the repaving also removes debris and silt from the paved shoulders so this should be improved after the paving.
 - Hall read the from the state scenic road regulations the portion which states that widening ROW or increasing pavement should be avoided because of its impact to the scenic road. Yaro added that narrowing lanes help to preserve the road character (by not needing to widen the road), slows traffic, and enhances bicycle and

pedestrian access by providing more shoulder space to walk or bike. He reiterated his comment on exploring more traffic calming measures and showing the public what options are possible.

- The CWG discussed demonstration projects as a strategy. Yaro said that Route 146 could be a good place to experiment. If it doesn't work, things can go back to how it was before. Laura Francis said these can also be funded through SS4A planning grants, which are less competitive than implementation grants. David said they did 3 demonstration projects around the state last year. CTDOT has money to do them – they don't necessarily need SS4A money, which goes to regions and municipalities anyway, not to the state. Janice Plaziak asked about doing this at an existing crosswalk location or a new crosswalk location.

› Draft CMP Strategies Public Survey Responses

- Amstutz noted that the public survey on the Draft CMP Strategies was released in mid-December. The survey provides a high level overview of draft strategies with links to more detailed information, and allows opportunities to put in targeted feedback on each strategy area and suggest additional strategies. So far there have been 41 unique responses to the survey. A summary of the responses is in the presentation slides.
- Elder asked CWG members to read the comments that have been received, the first five then last two, in round robin.
- Flooding & Sea Level Rise Management:
 - After reading comments about the Flooding & Sea Level Rise Management strategies, the CWG discussed a comment on whether the road should still be continuous through the towns. There may be areas of flooding that cannot readily be addressed due to engineering or funding issues, and we may simply have to divert around them somehow. An example of a pinch point and frequent flooding location is at Sachem's Head Road at the railroad underpass. Guilford has discussed bridging over the railroad tracks from Sam Hill Road to go over frequent flood waters. There is an important tax base in Sachem's Head. These "out of the right-of-way" ideas may need to be considered. Should acknowledge that addressing all flooding may not be feasible.
 - Elder discussed the question of whether to harden infrastructure against flooding and sea level rise or retreat from the facility (the road) because cost and effort is simply too great. This is a real scenario. Amtrak is considering ways to move their tracks/route away from shoreline due to these issues.
 - Evacuation plans were also discussed. Francis noted that CTDOT is handling reviewing evacuation routes for state roads in the region. SCRCOG was looking at finding funding to update local municipal evacuation plans. Elder noted that if they were to cut off parts of the road to through traffic they would need to analyze how each individual property along the route would be impacted and how they would get in and out.
 - Noted that the Water Street bridge over the West River in Guilford is being redesigned by CTDOT. Likely after the crabbing bridge design has been figured out.
- The CWG read through many of the comments for the other strategy areas to get an idea of what sort of issues were being brought up in public comment.

› Review Strategy Timelines: Short-Term and Long-Term

- the CWG briefly went through the proposed timelines for the strategies. Amstutz noted that most of them could be completed in the short-term, so there would need some understanding of priority for implementation.
- For the next public meeting, the strategies need to be more robust. Hall said there was a need to continue to make clear to the public what the Corridor Management Plan is and isn't. It still seems a little hard to understand. As

discussed, the Plan doesn't dictate exact projects. Balskus said we can try to have a rough draft of the Plan by this time as well.

- › Next Steps for Plan and Public Meeting:
 - The CWG decided it would be best to meet again soon to keep discussing the strategies. The public survey will be closed mid-February (February 16) and the CWG will meet again Thursday, February 29, from 2-4 pm. The meeting will be at the Branford Fire House again.
 - It was also suggested to figure out the public meeting now so big enough spaces are available for a public meeting. Tuesday or Thursday in late March or early April should be considered.
 - Also, there was a request to circulate the priorities of Hall and Yaro.

- › Next steps:
 - Send a calendar meeting invite to the Corridor Working Group for the Thursday February 29 CWG meeting.
 - Send the priorities of Hall and Yaro to the group.
 - Send public survey link to CWG to distribute again.

- › The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.