



# Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, February 29, 2024  
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Place: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Re: CTDOT Project No.: 0175-1608  
Route 146 Corridor Management Plan  
**Corridor Working Group Meeting #8**

Project No.: 42441.08

## ATTENDEES:

### Corridor Working Group Members in Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
David Elder	CTDOT
Janice Plaziak	Town of Guilford, Town Engineer
David Rood	Branford Historical Society
Laura Francis ( <i>Remotely Attended</i> )	SCRCOG
Barbara Rizzo	Branford Resident
John Hoeffler	Town of Branford Town Engineer
Bob Yaro	Guilford Resident
Karyl Lee Hall	Route 146 and Route 77 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee

### 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
Anne Hartjen	Guilford Town Planner
Bill Sigmund	CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

### Other Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Joe Balskus	VHB
Daniel Amstutz	VHB
Josh Lecar	CTDOT
Jennifer Pacacha ( <i>Remotely Attended</i> )	CTDOT
Elsa Stone	Guilford Resident
Steve Wolfson	Guilford Resident

NOTES:

- › Joe Balskus opened the meeting. Members and others present introduced themselves.
- › Daniel Amstutz went through the agenda for the meeting. Items to be discussed included the results of the Draft CMP Strategies and Public Survey Responses, an overview of potential Traffic Calming measures for the corridor, updates to the strategies document, recap of potential strategy timelines, and review of the Corridor Management Plan Document table of contents.
- › Draft CMP Strategies Public Survey Responses Results
  - The public survey on the Draft CMP Strategies was released in mid-December and was held open an additional two to three weeks to close on February 16. 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. In total, 228 people responded to the survey. Since the survey was open-ended with options to comment on all the strategy themes, people could comment more than one time. This resulted in 825 individual comments.
  - Overall, respondents supported the strategies and encouraged quick action to address the persistent issues along the Route 146 corridor.
  - An updated summary of the responses is in the presentation slides.
  - Bob Yaro suggested noting the system of marshes around Leetes Island near the Amtrak line – there is interest in restoring these marshes to restore natural flows of water in the area. In addition, Amtrak has funding to mitigate wetlands impacts along its line and they are looking for opportunities to do so – this location could be one of them.
  - Amstutz noted the summary of suggested strategies from the public had been put together based on what seemed reasonable to consider, what had been frequently mentioned, and what was not already covered by the draft strategies proposed for the plan.
  - The Corridor Working Group discussed the comments from the public and the suggested strategies:
    - Many comments suggested better flood warning signage and signage more in advance of flood areas to give people better information and give them a chance to turn around or take an alternate route prior to approaching flood waters. It was noted that flood monitoring signs can be ugly and obtrusive. John Hoeffler noted that a new flashing sign warning of flood conditions is going to be installed in Stony Creek at the railroad underpass. More frequent communications with neighborhood associations and overall with the community about flooding issues may be helpful – there are many organizations and committees working on flooding issues as well. It was agreed that adding communication about flooding and warning mechanisms can be added to strategy A.2, which discusses evacuation routes and ways to get around flooded areas.
    - It was noted that burying utility lines on evacuation routes would be very expensive and is outside the purview of this plan.
- › Draft Strategies Revisions
  - The CWG next discussed the revisions to the draft strategies based on the conversation and comments from the previous CWG meeting and the priorities shared by Bob Yaro and Karyl Lee Hall. Significant updates have

been made to the Speed Management theme, including adding more speed limit information, more details on traffic calming, and updates the speed camera enforcement text. Some intersection locations have been called out that were mentioned in public comments, and the Guilford Green Traffic Study will be underway shortly. Some other minor updates were also done.

- Two new strategies were added to the Environmental and Historic Preservation theme: enhance intrinsic qualities and collaborate to preserve key open spaces. As noted above, possible additional strategies were put on the end of the document for discussion.
- VHB will send a detailed response to Yaro and Hall to explain how their priorities were integrated into the draft strategies.
- Hoeffler raised a concern about the language of strategy G.1, relating to zoning and land use controls to help preserve the corridor. CTDOT should not be seen as recommending or encouraging municipalities to make changes to how they address land use. The text will be adjusted to say the Towns “may want to consider” additional land use changes.
- The CWG discussed strategy G.2, which suggests revitalizing the local Scenic Roads Advisory Committee. The Town Manager of Guilford supports this, and they can be a good way to get out information about Route 146 to the rest of the community. There is interest in getting new people on the committee, and the CMP should help bring more attention to the committee, which works to be a “caretaker” of the plan and promotes its implementation.
- Barbara Ricozzi requested revisions to the traffic calming section of the strategies to note “safer” travel speeds in the corridor and to reference pedestrian safety zones, which could be implemented in parts of the corridor with heavy pedestrian traffic (particularly around the Town Greens) to bring speed limits down to as low as 20 mph. In addition, the speed management section should note the need to enforce existing speed limits, which is important even as efforts are made to reduce speeding in other ways. Enforcement can be immediate, and the CMP should recognize that this a part of the speed management discussion.
- The CWG discussed next steps on the strategies as part of the wider strategy conversation. Some sort of implementation plan is needed to keep the momentum going of the plan and address the issues that have been brought up over the course of this project. David Elder noted that there will be some upcoming projects either that come out of this plan or will be restarted after this plan is over, such as the replacement of the crabbing bridge. The CMP will be used as a way to “screen” projects that come through that would impact Route 146, to see how well they conform to the plan and how they could be improved to meet the goals of the plan. Elder noted there is still a need to identify critical pedestrian crossings and places where people biking and walking need to cross safely. VHB staff will provide information gathered from the public engagement process over the last year that should assist CTDOT to identify those locations.

#### › Traffic Calming Overview

- Balskus gave an overview of traffic calming for the CWG. The FHWA Traffic Calming ePrimer defines traffic calming as: *“To support the livability and vitality of residential and commercial areas through improvements in non-motorist safety, mobility, and comfort. These objectives are typically achieved by reducing vehicle speeds or volumes on a single street or a street network. Traffic calming measures consist of horizontal, vertical, lane narrowing, roadside, and other*

*features that use self-enforcing physical or psycho-perception means to produce desired effects.”* Higher traffic speeds have been correlated with greater injuries and fatalities for pedestrians.

- The goal of traffic calming is to reduce speed and enhance the street environment for non-motorists using vertical deflections, horizontal shifts, and narrowing the roadway. An additional goal is to reduce cut-through traffic by obstructing traffic movements in one or more directions. These can be roadway closures through diagonal diverters, half/full road closures, and median barriers (primarily for local roads).
  - Examples of traffic calming measures include lateral shifts, chicanes, realigned intersections, and small modern roundabouts or mini-roundabouts (not traffic circles). Additional measures may be speed humps, speed tables, raised crosswalks, raised intersection, curb extensions, choker (where the road is narrowed), median islands, and on-street parking (which can provide traffic calming benefits). Speed cushions are not applicable for Route 146, due to issues with maintenance, nor road diets, since Route 146 is almost entirely one lane in each direction. Balskus showed a before-and-after image of US 1 in Madison, CT, with narrowed lanes, curb extensions, and more streetscape accommodations.
- › Strategy Timelines: Short-Term and Long-Term
- Amstutz went over the proposed timelines for the strategies. Amstutz noted that the new strategies added, G.3 and G.4, related to preserving intrinsic qualities and preserving open spaces, would be considered long-term strategies as they would continue to be pursued through the life of the plan.
- › Corridor Management Plan Document
- Amstutz reviewed the elements of the Corridor Management Plan document that will be put together over the next several weeks. The goal is for it to be visually appealing and accessible to the public. Other CMP documents will be used as guides and inspiration for the development of the Route 146 CMP document. Elder noted the document will need to be Section 508 compliant (ADA accessible).
  - The Table of Contents includes a state of purpose and need, executive summary, introduction with an overview of the intrinsic qualities of the corridor and scenic road designation, overview of the existing conditions, assessment of intrinsic qualities along the corridor, and information on the coastal flooding and resiliency assessment. Much of the plan will focus on the strategic framework and the strategies that have been discussed by the CWG, and there will be a discussion of the robust public engagement that has taken place for the plan development. CWG members noted a need for more detail in these sections during the document development.
  - The CWG discussed having a draft of the document available for review towards the end of April, which would line up with plans for the next public meeting. Elder noted the draft document would be published on the project website after the CWG has reviewed and commented on it and there would be a 45-day public comment period for the document.
- › Next Steps
- The CWG decided to set the public meeting for the evening of Tuesday, April 23, at the Branford Fire House. Thursday, May 9 is the back-up date in case April 23 is not available. VHB will reserve the space.

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› Action Items:

- VHB will contact the Branford Fire Headquarters to reserve the meeting room space for the public meeting on April 23 in the evening.
  - VHB will send around the list of all the public survey comments, the updated strategies document, and the short-term and long-term strategies list to the CWG.
  - VHB will provide a response to Bob Yaro and Karyl Lee Hall on how their priorities document was integrated into the main strategies.
  - VHB will draft the CMP document in advance of the public meeting.
  - VHB will send information to CTDOT on bicycle and pedestrian priority areas identified in public comments and stakeholder interviews.
- › The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.