



Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

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

Re: CTDOT Project No.: 0175-1608
Route 146 Corridor Management Plan
Public Information Meeting #1

Project No.: 42441.08

- › This meeting was conducted as an in-person meeting at the Branford Fire Headquarters. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting, including staff from CTDOT and VHB. The meeting was recorded by Branford Community Television and broadcast to their public television channel as well as their Facebook page. The recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/V1QlpVTq7Bg>
- › Rob Bell, Director, Office of Environmental Planning, and Office of Strategic Planning, Bureau of Policy and Planning at CTDOT, opened the meeting, introduced himself, and thanked all attendees for coming. He recognized State Senator Christine Cohen and State Representative Moira Rader in the audience. Bell read CTDOT's Title VI Notice to the Public and introduced the project team at CTDOT and VHB. An overview of the project was provided, noting the goals of the project and the difference between a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and a Corridor Study. The CMP will not include designs for projects that people may be interested in, such as the crabbing bridge in Guilford. The CMP will develop strategies on how to account for context-sensitive cultural, historic, and environmental issues around future projects. Bell noted this is the start of the process, and more public engagement is planned.
- › Jaime Cosgrove, First Selectman of the Town of Branford, thanked Bell for explaining the difference between a CMP and Corridor Study. He noted that Route 146 connects Branford and Guilford "green to green" and travels through many residential, commercial, and environmentally sensitive areas. There was a need to take a step back and go through the CMP process instead for Route 146, in order to make sure the character of the road is preserved. He thanked staff and CTDOT for holding the meeting.
- › Matt Hoey, First Selectman of the Town of Guilford, noted that the original Corridor Study did not seem to be satisfying the public. He thanked people for voicing their concerns about it, and said the CMP will be a more holistic process. He noted the goals of the project and said flooding and sea level rise was very important to him.
- › Karyl Lee Hall, a member of the Corridor Working Group from the Route 146 and Route 77 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the different members of the Working Group. She said this is the beginning of the process, and it will be a collaborative process where people will be listened to. She said it was good to come in at the beginning of the process because that does not always happen.
- › Joe Balskus, Project Manager with VHB, provided an introduction to the project. He noted the agenda and that staff will stay around after the meeting for additional questions as needed. The corridor is 13 miles long, and he has both driven the corridor and gone through on his bicycle. Much of the corridor is a Designated State Scenic Roadway, and it is a unique and historic road with many historic homes, wildlife habitats, tidal marshes, and scenic views. Many varying land uses, including rural character, and undulating curves. Limited paved shoulders, though it is designated as a bike route. Recurring flooding is a common concern.

- He reiterated the differences between a Corridor Study and a CMP and noted more community engagement was forthcoming. Historic, cultural, and environmental qualities are important. Walking and biking the corridor can be difficult.
 - Balskus showed an example of a CMP in CT – Route 169 in eastern Connecticut. It was completed in 2016; its purpose was more economic, and drawing people to the area
 - Route 146 had a CMP done in 1996, combined with Route 77. Vision in that one focused on preservation.
 - Briefly noted an existing conditions report from Corridor Study before. Noted the project was done during pandemic, so engagement was tough, but heard loud and clear that something needed to be done differently.
 - Noted following FHWA guidance for elements of a CMP – 14 elements that we look towards for doing a CMP. Noted safety, stakeholders and public engagement, assessment of intrinsic qualities.
- › Daniel Amstutz with VHB went over the CMP goals, public engagement, and existing conditions update. The CMP goals have been identified as: increased safety; involve the community; protect natural and cultural/historic resources; improve bike and pedestrian access; climate and sea level preparedness; preserve intrinsic qualities; maintain infrastructure; establish working group; and balance needs and requirements. These goals are all woven into the planning process to develop the CMP.
- The basic outline of the plan is to update the Existing Conditions Report for the Corridor Study; conceptual Context Sensitive Design; coastal flooding and resiliency assessment; and future strategies. The context sensitive design has to do with how future projects will design towards the unique context of the road.
 - Community involvement is throughout the project. The study website is <https://route146cmp.com/> and provides information about the project. There will also be a public survey, more public information meetings, municipal coordination with the towns, stakeholder focus group meetings, and a corridor field walk. The Corridor Working Group is a critical part of this project.
 - The purpose of the Corridor Working Group is to guide the CMP process, guide the development of the CMP framework, evaluate context-sensitive approaches, provide feedback on deliverables, identify possible stakeholders for focus groups, participate in the corridor field walk, and promote public engagement opportunities. The Working Group is made up of representatives from CTDOT, as well as Guilford and Branford, and other key agencies.
 - Amstutz went over the existing conditions update, which touched on field data & roadside development, safety, historic and cultural resources, land use, inland/coastal wetlands and flooding risk, scenic highway aesthetics, and traffic data. He went over projects that are under construction and recently completed in Branford and Guilford. Safety data was briefly reviewed to identify differences and similarities between more recent crash data and older crash data. Historic resource data has been updated to match work done by the State Historic Preservation Office. Brief notes were made about land use, wetlands information, and recent funding from the National Scenic Byway Program. New data has been collected on traffic volumes, speeds, and vehicle classification; additional data will be collected in the summer.
 - The overall project schedule was displayed. Based on the schedule, the project should be completed in about a year.
 - Next steps including finalizing the existing conditions report, holding the corridor field walk, stakeholder representative interviews, next public information meetings, and more corridor working group meetings. Stakeholders from different organizations will be interviewed about issues including active transportation, economic

development, emergency management, environmental issues, historic and cultural resources, and environmental justice.

- › Patrick Zapatka, CTDOT Project Manager, noted that CTDOT is going through a cultural change and is trying to build stronger relationships with community members and with the municipalities. He opened up the meeting to Q&A.
 - Jill Sparks – Stony Creek resident; asks about scheduling and draft design, when people will get input. Zapatka notes the project will be transparent; concept will not be for building something, but how to approach improvements. Framework or checklist, not project design. Can go to the website to make comments. Can also leave name/number for a callback.
 - Jay Medlyn, Medlyn's Farm. Noted emergency situations when the road/underpasses are flooded. At Sawmill Road, road is flooding and collapsing, how will that be addressed? Zapatka – will contact the municipality first and figure out how to address. There was a berm that was washed out by the railroad. Also near Jarvis Creek – says the road was redone and "the road was lowered". They have to use Sawmill Road when it floods. Patch things up before doing bigger improvements.
 - Steve Wolfson – notes Moose Hill Road at Route 146 intersection and bad sight lines going westbound around the curve here. EVs tough because they make less noise. Something needs to be done.
 - Bob Yaro adds - People are crossing at Moose Hill Road to get to the town beach – Shell Beach. Commends changing culture at CTDOT.
 - Steve Angelo – Guilford resident, rides bike on Rout 146. Why is Route 146 considered a highway? Sets up competing ideas about what happens on the road. David Elder notes highways is a term that is used by the state for all state roads. It's defined that way in statute as well. CTDOT is a fully multi-modal agency and will try to accommodate all modes in projects. Route 146 is constrained by many natural and historic features, but will do the best that can be done for accommodating people walking and biking. We want to hear from all users. Compromise will be needed, due to the constraints of the corridor.
 - Alyce Stowers, Quarry Road. Trucks from the quarry have a hard time traveling along the road, because it's very windy and narrow. Some sidewalks in places, but they disappear in places. Elder notes context-sensitivity, different areas will have different solutions.
 - Lisa Pasco – lower the speed limit to 15 mph and make 10' lanes? 25 mph seems too fast; concerned about the speeding. Make the road narrow to reducing speeding. 10 miles over the speed limit is a significant amount when the speed limit is 25 vs. 55 or 65 (40% more). Bell says that it's not just about speed limits, but different countermeasures that would need to be put in place. Will be looking at approaches in the plan can be used to help lower speed. People already going fast on this road that has many features to slow people down. Karyl Lee notes that large trucks use the road from the Quarry – can't make lanes that narrow. Have gone to the quarry operators to complain, and the truck drivers slowed down for a short period of time, but only for a short time. Need to keep complaining to make them slow down.
 - Frank Twohill – notes 1978 Scenic Highways Act and scenic highway designations in CT. Route 146 was one of the first roads in the state to be designated a scenic highway. Recognizes Lauren Brown. Brown notes the dilemma of keeping the scenic qualities of the road while accommodating safety – they seem to be in conflict.
 - Alan Fairbank – How to address flood risk? Will the plan make recommendations about the road and not just note places where flooding is happening? Balskus noted the flooding conditions and sea level rise was modeled in the

existing conditions report from before. Will need to look at strategies to address that. Will develop potential strategies with the Corridor Working Group. CTDOT is part of the project and would be part of actions that may be taken.

- Charlie McClure – it's not safe to bicycle on the road. Need more law enforcement and lower speed limit. Law enforcement will be quicker fix to traffic safety.
- Perry Maresca - Branford economic development manager. Things are pretty good near town center but in changes when you go under the railroad bridge. Lenny's and the area down there by Linden Ave has become a real destination. Sidewalks on both sides is important, people are walking between businesses. Notes temporary changes for utilities at Sybil Creek Bridge was great, but they put everything back again. Want to keep the road beautiful while dealing with the issues here. Put in bike/ped accommodations without disturbing the beauty. Acknowledged that not every place can be improved equally.

Additional comments/concerns raised after the meeting include the following:

- 638 Leetes Island Road in Branford. Resident experiences bad flooding and gets trapped. Must use Sawmill Road.
 - Culvert collapsing at 710 Leetes Island Road
 - 690 Leetes Island Road – cross slope issue
 - 528 Leetes Island Road – flooding from creeks
- › The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.
- › Additional written public comments were received at the public meeting and via the Route 146 CMP website and are attached.



Route 146

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Route 146 Corridor Management Plan

Public Information Meeting April 25, 2023

Public Comment Form

Emphasize the nature of the road as scenic + historical; prioritize bike and pedestrian traffic and make it so difficult for cars to speed that they give up. This road should not be considered the fastest route between Branford + Guilford

Do you wish to be contacted about your above comments? _____

Name (optional): Judy Miller

Contact information if desired: JudithMillerphd@gmail.com
203-589-8335



Route 146

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



Route 146 Corridor Management Plan

Public Information Meeting April 25, 2023

Public Comment Form

Hello: Over population pressure / ^{This Road} only Fits Cars / Trucks
One of many significant issues
is that the signs need to
be in proper places along that
road when you do this project

One Idea / Leetes Island Rd

Scenic / Public Highway - Big
Sign - Speed Limit (Break
the speeds)

Signs do get taken down that were posted

Do you wish to be contacted about your above comments?

Sure

Name (optional):

Debra Levi

Contact information if desired:

203-500-6840



Patrick Zapatka
Transportation Supervising Planner
Policy, Connecticut Department of Transportation

May 9th, 2023

Dan Amstutz, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner
Transportation Planning & Operation, Connecticut Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. Zapatka, Mr. Amstutz

Shoreline Greenway Trail, Inc. was pleased to have the opportunity to attend the Public Information meeting regarding the Route 146 corridor plan between Branford and Guilford, held April 25th at the Branford Fire Department.

We appreciate the efforts that are being made to solicit input and recommendations for improvements to traffic operations, safety, and locations while also addressing increased flooding and future sea level rise throughout this area. Since the primary purpose of our organization is to work with towns to advocate for the development of a Shoreline Greenway Trail between New Haven and Clinton, our main interest, with regards to the 146 CMP, is in speaking to concerns for bicycle and pedestrian safety along Route 146.

Shoreline Greenway Trail joins with other groups in Branford and Guilford in valuing the preservation of Route 146 as a designated scenic highway and historic district. Since it is also a state designated bike route, it draws bike riders from the regional area and beyond. This makes traffic calming and reducing speeding a high priority. Our organization urges

Route 146 between Branford and Guilford was included in the 2010 Stantec Engineering feasibility study for the Shoreline Greenway Trail prepared for the South Central Regional Council of Governments. As the towns of East Haven, Branford, Guilford and Madison, continue to identify or develop sections of the proposed Shoreline Greenway Trail, and as more and more people turn to cycling for recreation and transit, bicycle use of this stretch of 146 will inevitably increase. We urge that any modifications to Route 146 should be in keeping with preserving its scenic and historic character.

We urge the Plan Advisory Committee to take this into consideration as they develop the scope of the subsequent study. We believe that this section of Route 146 should be primarily intended for the use of local traffic, tourists visiting in response to its historic and scenic designation, and bicyclists. It is not, nor should it be, a road used for speedy automobile transit between Branford and Guilford.

We understand the current initiative is a Plan to understand the opportunities and areas for possible further Studies. That said, and when opportunities are identified, we make the following suggestions:

- Preserve the historic and scenic character of Rt 146.
- "Share the Road" signs should be placed frequently along this route.
- A maximum speed limit of 25 mph should be enforced.
- Signage for No Thru Truck Traffic.
- Consideration for appropriate traffic calming tactics in critical areas
- The addition of bicycle/pedestrian lanes wherever feasible
- The use of sharrows in areas where the road is so narrow that there is no shoulder for bicycles to use



In closing, we would like to express our appreciation that SCRCOG, DOT, and the towns of Branford and Guilford are addressing this important issue and would like to offer any assistance, support or input as opportunities present themselves.

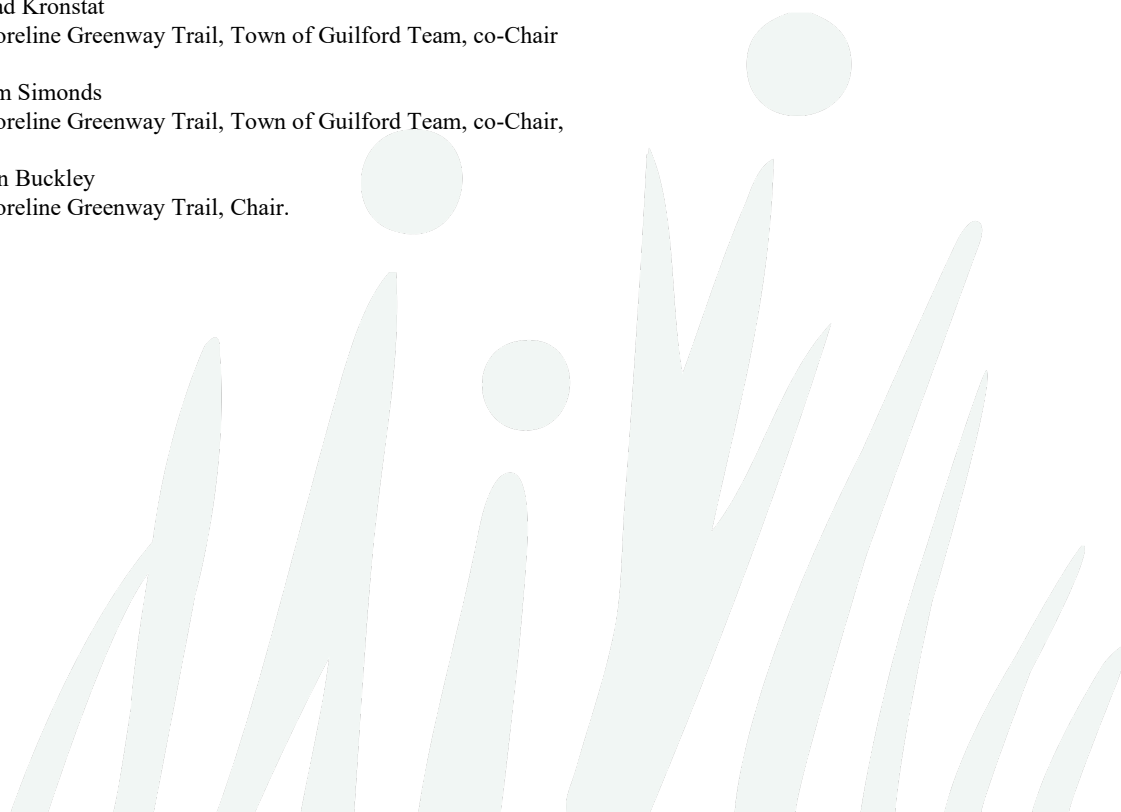
Sincerely,

Judith Miller
Shoreline Greenway Trail, Town of Branford Team, Chair

Brad Kronstat
Shoreline Greenway Trail, Town of Guilford Team, co-Chair

Pam Simonds
Shoreline Greenway Trail, Town of Guilford Team, co-Chair,

Dan Buckley
Shoreline Greenway Trail, Chair.



Submission Date	First Name	Last Name	Add your questions and/or feedback
May 8, 2023	Linda	Zonana	<p>My main worries about possible changes to Rte. 146 concerns the section between Stony Creek & downtown Guilford. It is a road I use frequently and always delight in how winding and hilly it is - it is unique. It offers lovely views of salt marsh, woods, & old homes I have the impression that periodic flooding is the main public concern. I have also seen comments about improving safety for bicyclists & pedestrians. Flooding is sometimes a nuisance and occasionally may have a serious impact, and the expectation is that it will get worse. My hope, in addressing this, is that raising the road (or whatever) will not change the overall appearance of the road. This was a big issue in pondering the fate of the crabbing bridge. I feel strongly that the road should not be widened - that would change its character and encourage speeding, A wider road would accommodate bikes better, but it's hard to think of any through road that is totally safe for bikes. More traffic and more speed decrease safety. I'm assuming that no attempt will be made to straighten out the road. I am hoping it will maintain its charm for many years to come. It is one of the treasures of the Shoreline.</p>
May 7, 2023	Laura	Raymond	<p>I am totally against any modification to Route 146 between Guilford and Branford. If people want to find a safer way to walk or bicycle, then go to another road that makes you more comfortable. This section of 146 is protected by being designated historic (NRHP). Can't the government keep its hands off ruining a treasure that is protected by the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)? There are very few stretches of road left in CT that haven't been ruined and cluttered with overlarge traffic signs and extra sidewalks and bicycle lanes.</p>

Submission Date	First Name	Last Name	Add your questions and/or feedback
May 4, 2023	Kimberly	Schmid	Hi! I'm the vice chair for Guilford's Safe Streets Task Force. Can we be added as a stakeholder group and also schedule some time to talk? Thanks! Kim
May 3, 2023	dan	buckley	<p>CAN I Get a copy of the PRESENTAION from last weeks meeting in Branford?</p> <p>It was a great meeting and I want to share with our team!!</p> <p>thanks DanB</p>
May 1, 2023	Nicholas	Vitale	Please prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety! A number of cycling event routes use 146 as a big part of their routes and it always makes me nervous to ride on there. I would very much like to see some protected cyclist/pedestrian infrastructure there.

Submission Date	First Name	Last Name	Add your questions and/or feedback
Apr 29, 2023	Christopher	Cahill	<p>Hi, apologies, I was not able to make the public meeting. My parents live in Branford, and I love the idea of a plan to improve this corridor! My family and I had a few thoughts, but we weren't sure if the following were under the purview of the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-motorized infrastructure (side walks, bike lanes) - Dedicated connections to existing trails like the Trolley Trail - Planning for salt marsh migration (in relation to where the road impedes that) - Easements for development restrictions (scenic, agricultural, etc.) <p>Please let me know--if so, is there another way to voice comments/concerns after the meeting?</p> <p>Thanks</p>
Apr 27, 2023	Rolland	Strasser	<p>I support trying to improve the safety of the road for both motorists and cyclists, while trying to minimize impact on historic properties and the beautiful salt marsh landscape. Thanks in advance for taking on this challenge.</p>