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**Downtown Crossing - Route 34 East/Downtown Crossing
Public Meeting Summary**
Shubert Theater Mezzanine
June 9, 2011

The 5th community meeting for the Route 34 East/Downtown Crossing project was held on June 9, 2011 at the Shubert Theater's Mezzanine in New Haven. About 100 individuals attended. This meeting is part of an ongoing set of community meetings concerning the Downtown Crossing project but focused more specifically on the draft 30% preliminary design for Phase 1 /TIGER II grant. The TIGER II grant was awarded to the City in the fall of 2010 and a public information session was held on September 30, 2010.

The agenda of the meeting included a) a summary of the significance of Downtown Crossing to New Haven and the region, b) a description of the Phase II preliminary design elements, c) a walking tour of College Street from the Shubert Theater to the College Street Bridge over Route 34 and d) a description of the intent of the 100 College Street project (the first proposed development within Downtown Crossing). The walking tour planned to view conditions along College Street and the proposed development lot for 100 College Street (Parcel D) was cancelled due to severe weather. Instead meeting attendees took a "virtual tour" of the area by viewing a series of photographs of College Street, beginning at the theater's front door, up to the College Street Bridge and back to the theater from the perspective of the opposite side of College Street.

Kelly Murphy, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, welcomed attendees and described the importance of the project to the City and the region. She said the project is an economic driver – it will create 960 permanent jobs and 2,000 construction jobs in Phase I. When completed, the City will gain an approximate total of 4,000 permanent jobs and \$3.775 million in net tax revenue. Downtown Crossing will also reconnect city streets and neighborhoods, promote healthy lifestyles by generating new workplaces near housing, retail and transit, create new city streets with mixed uses and address the problem of high speeds and crash rates on streets that are inhospitable streets to bicyclists and pedestrians.

Ms. Murphy gave an update on project progress since the last community meeting held in February. The City has met with numerous community groups, drafted Bike and Sign Plans, performed more traffic analysis and has completed 30% of the preliminary design for Phase I. She said the project presented a turning point for New Haven that few cities have – an opportunity to remove a highway from the center of the City, resulting in renewed economic opportunities.

Virtual tour of College Street & Phase 1 Preliminary Design

Mike Piscitelli, Deputy Economic Development Administrator at City of New Haven, narrated a series of photos of College Street, indicating specific elements of the first phase of the project – the proposed transition from I91/I95 to Route 34 to the new Downtown New Haven Exit (Exit 1) and then a description of the changes to the city network including the number of travel and location of turning

lanes, bike lanes and bike boxes, the phasing of pedestrian signals, the expanded size of the sidewalk at the College Street Bridge, the impact of removing highway ramps and how the proposed 100 College Street development parcel fits within the new roadway infrastructure.

Mr. Piscitelli explained Phase I, slated to begin construction in spring 2012, will remove two west bound and one east bound highway ramps and re-build the College Street Bridge. Service drives at the current level of the expressway will carry trucks to the loading docks beneath the Air Rights Garage. Jim Stanewicz from the New Haven Parking Authority explained that they will be building a new in-ramp to access the Air Rights Parking Garage from the service drives at the lowest level of the garage. This ramp will provide direct access from the drive, instead of the left hand entry off of North Frontage Road, removing a significant amount of traffic from the local roadway system. Consultant team Project Manager Bob Brooks elaborated on plans for the bridge. He said retaining walls will be constructed, utility conduits put in place and fill will be brought in so that the bridge will be more like a causeway. This method will result in more cost effective method with significantly less traffic disruption than building a new bridge. It will also widen College Street, allowing more room for a generous sidewalk and bike lanes. Other design elements highlighted for Phase I were: the new intersection at Church Street North Frontage Road (to be named Martin Luther King Boulevard), which will have three through lanes for North Frontage and two turn lanes (one left to Church Street southbound and one right for Church Street northbound); there will be pavement markings for a bike lane and bike boxes at intersections. The changes at Orange Street and George Street were described. A series of illustrations to demonstrate design features were reviewed with meeting attendees. Also presented was the layout of the roadway with signs designed to give motorists cues to slow down in the transition areas between the highway and city streets.

Mobility and traffic analysis

Jay Koolis of the PB consultant team explained the interdisciplinary approach that has been taken in designing the project. He said urban planning, traffic engineering and economic development were the three major considerations used to develop concepts for new city streets and urban boulevards. An inventory of the street network was completed, traffic volumes (present and future) were reviewed and the team continues to analyze traffic data for the "full build" project. More analysis, such as optimizing the timing of signals, analyzing 2035 traffic projections, future traffic volumes and developing alternative traffic network modeling needs to be completed.

Questions/Comments from the public

Several people from the audience asked questions or offered these opinions about the proposed design, with responses from City staff indicated by brackets:

- College Street should be turned into a two-way street between Chapel and Crown. [this is part of the full build or Phase 2 work. In the interim the curb will be bumped out to protect the parking lane on the new College Street section]
- Pedestrians have a hard time handling 4 lanes at College Street today. People in vehicles don't observe the "no turn on red" signs.
- How far will George Street be made two-way? [two blocks from State to Temple]
- How will I get to the train station from West Haven? [use the Long Wharf exit from 95 and take the Church Street South Extension Bridge, or go over the new flyover, take exit 1, using the left lane onto Church at the end of the exit]

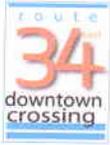
- What is the posted speed on Route 34 today? [35 mph but it's not obeyed – the new design will indicate to motorists they are approaching city streets sooner with a transition from highway speeds to 35 on Route 34 to 25 at Orange Street]

Two written comment forms received at the meeting are attached.

100 College Street development

Carter Winstanley, developer of the 100 College Street, briefly spoke about what attracted him to develop this site. He said he acquired the former SNET building at 300 George Street 10 years ago and has learned a lot about the neighborhood and his tenants' needs. His tenants, who are primarily involved in the biomedical field, want to be as close to Yale University and Yale-New Haven Hospital as possible to collaborate by sharing technology and intellectual property. He noted that the intersection at College Street and North Frontage Road is extremely unfriendly, difficult to cross and one of his tenants became a pedestrian fatality there. Carter Winstanley envisions Downtown Crossing as offering the potential of the robust bio-medical development and vibrant streets like at Kendall Square in Cambridge, MA.

Kelly Murphy concluded the presentation and city staff and consultants stayed to answer Q&A from the community in small groups, or one on one. A set of draft 30% drawings of Phase 1 , as well as draft Bike Study were available for review.



Downtown Crossing/Route 34 East

Community Meeting – June 9, 2011 – Shubert Theater

Agenda

- 5:40 – 6:00 Open House
- 6:00 – 6:05 Welcome
- 6:05 – 6:10 Importance of Project to New Haven
- 6:15 – 6:45 Walk to College Street
- 6:45 – 7:45 Presentation
- 7:45- 8:00 Questions & Comments

Comments

Please continue to plan for or allow for new urban rail (streetcars) in your transportation studies and planning. With Zip Cars etc and intermodal transport I am skeptical of quarter-century (2035) "Habitat projections." These projections are influenced by urban planning, which can be tragic or intelligently Green!



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Comments

5 LANES IS TOO MUCH. STILL FOR
PEDESTRIAN - WHY NOT GO
TO EXAMPLE DESIGN - TOO WIDE
HOW WILL THIS INTEGRATE TO
UNION STATION.
PUT IT INTO 3 LANES,
AND WORK ON ORANGE ST
CONNECTION,