



## **REPORT OF MEETING DOWNTOWN CROSSING PHASE 2 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

**Ives Main Library  
133 Elm Street,  
New Haven, Connecticut  
September 29, 2014**

### **Technical Teams**

#### **City of New Haven**

Honorable Toni M. Harp,  
Mayor

Matt Nemerson  
Economic Dev. Administrator

Karyn Gilvarg  
Director of Planning

Doug Haselden  
Director of Traffic and Parking

Michael Piscitelli  
Assist. Director of Econ. Dev.

Donna Hall  
Project Manager

#### **CTDOT**

Andy Fesenmeyer  
Consultant Design

Greg Soja  
Project Manager

Doug Hummel  
Rights of Way

#### **Parsons Brinckerhoff**

Antonio Margiotta,  
Project Manager

Richard Pettinelli  
Deputy Project Manager

Thomas Jost  
Senior Urban Strategist

Joseph Hallisey  
Traffic Engineer

### **Meeting Minutes**

The Honorable Toni M. Harp opened the meeting thanking those in attendance. She previewed the presentation citing two important variables that must be addressed to move the City forward: knitting together communities that have been artificially separated for decades by the Route 34 Connector and improvements to the economic vitality of the City through reclamation of development parcels in the



corridor. The mayor noted information would be presented regarding walkability, public transit, bicycle infrastructure and sustainable development included in the design of the Downtown Crossing Phase 2 project. A transcript of the mayor's statement is attached to this Report of Meeting.

Mathew Nemerson, Economic Development Administrator, Director of Economic Development gave a brief history of the re-development project and goals. He highlighted the changes to the Route 34 Corridor since 1965. He stressed the collaboration of the numerous public and private entities involved in the planning of this difficult and ambitious project. He noted the project will mend the City and bridge the two "edges" of the Downtown and Hill neighborhoods. Urban studies have always concentrated on the connection of the green and the train station as highlighted in the 1910 study.

Michael Piscitelli, Deputy Director of Economic Development reviewed the Downtown Crossing Project status and noted the project is moving into a more formal design phase. He began presenting the PowerPoint presentation prepared for the meeting (a copy of the presentation is attached to this report). He stated the technical presentation will review every aspect of the design.

Mike reviewed the phases of the Downtown Crossing Project.

- Phase 1, 100 College Street and TIGER 2 projects, is in construction has two pieces. Roadwork and construction of a 500,000 square foot office building that will be the home of Alexion and will bring 1000 jobs to the City
- Phase 2 will enable the redevelopment of the Coliseum site by LiveWorkLearnPlay which will be a 1.1 million square foot mixed-use development.
- Phase 3 will be the remainder.

Antonio Margiotta, Project Manager, noted Phase 2 has five main elements:

- At-grade signalized intersection at Orange Street
- Bike and Pedestrian improvements in the vicinity of Orange Street
- Bike and Pedestrian improvements at Union Avenue underpass
- Sustainable stormwater improvements
- Transition Zone (to be presented at a later date)

He reviewed the Phase 2 project area and scope of work. 800 feet of MLK will be reconstructed (3 lanes) as well as 800 feet of South Frontage Road (3 lanes), Orange Street will be reconstructed. Bike lanes will be on Orange, SFR and MLK, and a separated bike lane from Orange Street to Union Avenue. He reviewed the typical sections for the roadways included in Phase 2. He introduced Tom Jost to review the landscape design.



Tom Jost, Senior Urban Strategist reviewed the urban design and gateway element of the project. He reviewed the concept termed “the Hug”. He reviewed the elements of the concept including the hardscape, lighting, trees and green spaces.

Antonio Margiotta reviewed the drainage design for the project. He reviewed the storage system, green infrastructure including swales and tree well bio-swales. The system is designed for a 10-year swale. He then reviewed the utilities for the project and stated the goal is to minimize disturbance to existing utilities. He then reviewed traffic, stating the project has a design year of 2036. He reviewed the queue detection system and pointed out that the design does not include left turns at the Orange Street intersection. He briefly reviewed the construction staging plans. Anticipated permits were identified and listed. He then reviewed Rights-of Way impacts and introduced Doug Hummel.

Doug Hummel, CTDOT Division of Rights- of- Way, reviewed the processes for rights of way acquisition. The DOT must follow the procedures under the “Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 as Amended. A map will be prepared for the property and a letter and map will be provided to the property owner. The owner will be given the opportunity to view the property with the valuator. Design and impacts of the project will be reviewed with the owner. All paperwork will be handled by the City or the State of CT. The decision of the lead agency (State or City) has not been made at this time. If there are difficulties in reaching an agreement eminent domain may be used. He noted copies of the pamphlet, “Property Acquisitions for a Transportation Project” available for distribution.

Antonio Margiotta reviewed the project schedule and solicited comments from the attendees. Construction is anticipated be completed in 2017. He then reviewed the planned public outreach.

The meeting then turned to a question and answer period.



## Question and Answer Period

*Q1*

What are the possibilities of a separate bike lane on Union Avenue similar to that on Water Street?

*A1 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

There will be an at-grade separation through this section. Due to the challenging geometry of the intersection and multiple travel directions, grade separation as planned on Water Street is not practical.

*Q2*

A comment was made regarding the pedestrian movements at the Water Street/State Street intersection. The commentator noted the sidewalk in front of the Knights of Columbus is well maintained

*A2 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

Some of the proposed changes to the pedestrian circulation realign the patterns to place them where signals will stop the cars. He acknowledged the K of C sidewalk is a well maintained sidewalk.

*Q3*

What kind of traffic calming improvements do you have? Have you thought about anything like speed bumps or things like that?

*A3 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

Traffic calming will consist of :

- Compressing the lanes from 12 feet to 11 feet
- Visual Cues to create a "Compression Zone" using trees and lights
- Crosswalks that will be constructed with a different material

*Q4*

Will the underground storage tank infiltrate into the ground or is that going to go into the sewer system?



How far above sea level are the storage tanks?

Is there any Infiltration?

*A4 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

The underground storage tank as it is designed now is not going to infiltrate.

The elevations vary. One is about elevation 6, and the southern one is a little higher.

There will be infiltration in the bio-swales prior to discharge into the storage units; it is not the design intent to introduce large amounts of infiltration into the roadway system which currently experiences flooding and high groundwater.

*Q5*

Do you have some sort of preemption for bicycles at signals? Or do they get the green before motor vehicle traffic does because you're building exclusive bike lanes?

*A5 City of New Haven*

The general theory is with each project we've been improving our level of bike infrastructure, but anytime the general theory of it is to maintain as much as possible bikes with traffic. Even when we're sequencing from our off-road condition back into the road, we're finding that works a little bit better. Also, In many cases, we're introducing a bike box or an advanced positioning so that bikes can get ahead of traffic but not a formal preemption of the signal.

*Q6*

Have you thought about marking the lanes on the bridge to give guidance to drivers?

*A6 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

The left lane acts as an entry for Downtown Crossing and will be signed overhead accordingly. State Project 92-651 is proposing (present today), "25 mile per hour" zones pavement markings painted in the lanes. Due to the condition of the bridge, there are limited options for signage.

*City of New Haven:* The bridge is designed to handle traffic and not any extra weight, like a median barrier or a pedestrian lighting which limits about what we can do on the bridge.



Q7

Has there been any consideration of an exclusive bike and pedestrian bridge or crossing, where you come over the highway having exclusive without any interference from the cars coming off the highway?

*A7 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

Pedestrians can cross underneath the road here (Union), and that path will be improved.

Construction of a pedestrian over the roadway would require a structure that would be significantly higher because it would have to be higher than the roadway itself coming from an area that is much lower. It would require a very large structure. It would be very expensive, and we don't think anyone would really use it. And it would also have to be ADA accessible so it would need elevators and all that or very, very long ramps

The design team believes the main pedestrian routes are really going to be the Orange Street route. The design seeks to make this crossing very special, very important and to congregate people in this area. There's going to be a lot of new development in this area, a lot of activity. We really want to keep the pedestrians here. It's a lot less expensive to build a really good cross walk than to build the overhead. So we went in that direction.

Q8

How long will it take to cross that highway on Orange Street?

*A8 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

The distance across the intersection is approximately 150 feet. A pedestrian speed of 3.5 feet per second for the slowest pedestrian was used resulting in an exclusive pedestrian phase of 43 seconds, which gets you about two-thirds the way across the intersection. Since there are no lefts, a pedestrian may have to wait the next phase to finish the movement. Total time without stopping, it will approximately be about 50 seconds, perhaps a minute with stopping. As the design team proceeds to final design, they will continue to optimize the design.

Q9

Are there pedestrian refuges as you cross?



*A9 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

Yes, there is an island. There will be a pedestrian push button there as well.

*Question 9 (Q9)*

There was a question concerning the function of the intersection and allowing simultaneous, non-conflicting traffic and pedestrian movements

*A9 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

Yes, there will be an exclusive pedestrian phase, but there are also concurrent non-conflicting phases

*Q10*

How long would you have to wait on the island for the next phase to complete crossing?

*A10 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

In the worst case; it will be just shorter than 90 seconds.

*Q11*

A suggestion was made to use signs that don't look like highway signs – similar to those on Tower Parkways.

*A11 City of New Haven*

There's a standard for the green sign. That's a national standard and the design team has to follow that. However, the design team is seeking to strike a balance between the need for signs and the desire to create a downtown feel. The design team is working to decorate the post or figure out a way to reduce the visual impact of the sign so it make a more complete street

*Q11*

And because this is still the highway, you still have to use that here?

*City of New Haven:* As a separate project, the City is renewing the wayfinding system.

*Q12*

A suggestion was made to use reflective road markings to designate the 25 mph zone.



*A12 Parsons Brinckerhoff*

The markings will comply with CTDOT standards and will have some reflectivity. Use of reflective markings similar to other states is not practical due to snow removal impacts..

*Q13*

Max Reim with LiveWorkLearnPlay made a statement in support of the project.

*Q14*

A question regarding the traffic volume and growth was presented.

*A14 Team*

The directional AM peak was used for the design year 2036. A 0.75% growth rate was applied. The volume takes into account planned growth and applies credits approved by CTDOT to reflect alternative transportation methods and transit –orientated development.

*atch: Sign –In List*



**New Haven Downtown Crossing – Phase 2 Orange Street Gateway Project**  
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