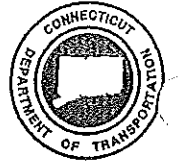


STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546

Phone:

October 29, 2014

The Honorable Daniel T. Drew
Mayor
City of Middletown
Middletown City Hall
245 Dekoven Drive
Middletown, Connecticut 06457

Dear Mayor Drew:

Subject: State Project No. 82-309
Reconfiguration of Route 17 on Ramp onto Route 9 North
City of Middletown

Enclosed, for your information and files, is copy of the report of the Public Informational Meeting held on September 23, 2014 by the Department of Transportation concerning the above referenced project.

If you have any questions as this project develops, please feel free to contact Mr. William W. Britnell, Principal Engineer, at (860) 594-3274.

Very truly yours,

Timothy M. Wilson, P.E.
Manager of Highway Design
Bureau of Engineering and Construction

Enclosure(s)

- cc: Mr. Joseph J. Samolis, Chief of Staff – City of Middletown
- Ms. Amy Jackson-Grove, Division Administrator – Federal Highway Administration
- Ms. Jeanne Davies, Acting Director – Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments
- Mr. Michiel Wackers, Director of Planning Conservation & Development – City of Middletown
- Mr. Robert Dobmeier, Deputy Director of Public Works – City of Middletown
- Mr. Guy P. Russo, Director of Water & Sewer – City of Middletown
- Mr. Thomas Marano, Economic Development Specialist – City of Middletown
- Mr. Jeff Pugliese, Vice President of Chamber of Commerce – Middlesex County
- Mr. Robert Haramut, Senior Transportation Planner – Lower River Council of Governments
- Mr. Thomas Nigosanti, City Engineer – City of Middletown

Manny D. Pires/cat

bcc: Scott A. Hill

Thomas J. Maziarz

Timothy M. Wilson – William W. Britnell – David W. Harms

Charles S. Harlow – Mark F. Makuch

Robert W. Ike – Douglas M. Hummel

Dean Cerasoli

Peter E. Talarico

Theodore H. Nezames – Rabih M. Barakat

FROM THE DESK OF
WILLIAM BRITNELL

NOV 05 2014

	F.Y.I.	PLS. DO	PLS. SH. E
S. BUSHEE			
M. CALABRESE			
D. HARMS			
S. LIBATON			

FROM THE DESK OF
TIMOTHY M. WILSON

NAME	F.Y.I.	PLS. DO	PLS. SH. E
OCT 30 2014			
CONDES			
LOCAL ROADS			
HIGHWAYS			
FILE			

STATE DESIGN SECTION

REPORT OF MEETING

STATE PROJECT NO.: 82-309

ROUTES: 9 & 17

TOWN: Middletown

DATE OF MEETING: September 23, 2014

LOCATION OF MEETING: Middletown City Hall Council Chambers
245 Dekoven Drive
Middletown, Connecticut

SUBJECT: Public Informational Meeting – Reconfiguration of Route 17 On-Ramp
onto Route 9 North

IN ATTENDANCE

City of Middletown

Mayor Daniel T. Drew	(860) 344-3401
Joseph J. Samolis, Chief of Staff	(860) 344-3401
Michiel Wackers, Director of Planning, Conservation & Dev.	(860) 638-4840
Bruce Driska, Middletown Planning	(860) 638-3270

Council Members:

Carl R. Chisen (D)	(860) 632-9077
David Bauer (R)	(860) 301-2244
Deborah Kleckowski (R)	(860) 346-1390
Gerald E. Daley (D)	(860) 347-9315
Grady L. Faulkner Jr. (D)	(860) 344-9395
Hope Kasper (D)	(860) 347-1482
James B. Streeto (D)	(860) 347-3349
Mary Bartolotta (D)	(860) 638-4980
Robert P. Santangelo (D) – Deputy Mayor	(860) 346-1815
Sandra Russo-Driska (R)	(860) 347-8945
Sebastian N. Giuliano (R)	(860) 638-9054
Marie Norwood – Common Council Clerk	(860) 638-1959

ConnDOT

Timothy M. Wilson	(860) 594-3189
William W. Britnell	(860) 594-3274
David W. Harms	(860) 594-3291
Douglas Hummel	(860) 594-2441
Dean Cerasoli	(860) 258-4604
Erik A. Jarboe	(860) 594-3299
Manny D. Pires	(860) 594-3448

Residents/Public

40 residents (approximately)

PROJECT LOCATION

This project is located in the City of Middletown at the Route 17 on-ramp onto Route 9 north, in the vicinity of the intersection of Harbor Drive, River Road and Union Street at Harbor Park.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Route 17 on-ramp onto Route 9 north has been classified as number two on the Department's 2012 Suggested List of Surveillance Study Site (SLOSSS). From 2010 to 2012, there were a total of 375 accidents reported at the site.

"Pursuant to Title 23 United States Code Section 409, this data is not admissible and not discoverable in any federal or state court proceeding, and cannot be considered for any other purpose in any action for damages arising from an occurrence at a location addressed in this report."

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The existing Route 17 on-ramp to Route 9 north is a stop-controlled on-ramp with no acceleration lane. The lack of an acceleration lane is due to the limited roadway width of the bridge immediately north of the on-ramp, which carries Route 9 over a local road intersection and a rail line. This concept proposes to widen the existing bridge to accommodate a full length acceleration lane and remove the stop-controlled condition. The widening of the Route 9 bridge would be facilitated by the relocation of the intersection of Union Street, Harbor Drive and River Road which is now located under the bridge. This intersection would be moved further east to the east side of Sumner Brook, which would require the construction of two new bridges, and the realignment of the three intersecting roadways.

Additionally, as part of this concept, an option to close the existing on-ramp onto Route 9 north located at the north end of Harbor Drive is being investigated by the Department. Closing this ramp would greatly reduce both the volume and speed of vehicles now utilizing Harbor Drive. This would increase safety for vehicles and pedestrians as well as transform the character of the riverfront access.

TRANSACTIONS AND DETERMINATIONS

As per the City of Middletown request, the Meeting started at 6:00 p.m. with Department presenting the proposed conceptual plans to the city's Mayor and council members. This was followed by a public workshop, which started at 6:30 p.m.

During the workshop, the proposed plans were projected on the screen along with two paper plans displayed on the boards, where the Department personnel answered questions before the formal meeting, which started at 7:00 p.m.

The formal meeting began with Mayor Drew making a brief opening by talking about the concept project and thanking the Department of Transportation staff and all the attendees.

Mr. Will Britnell, the Principal Engineer, introduced the Department of Transportation staff, made it clear that this is just a conceptual plan, and that public input is critical for further development. Mr. Britnell also explained the comment form which can be filled out and mailed in after the meeting.

Subsequently, Mr. Erik A. Jarboe, the Project Engineer gave a slide show presentation of the proposed/concept plan, identifying the problem areas and potential solutions.

Council Comments:

Councilman Gerald E. Daley asked if the existing Harbor Drive on-ramp must be closed to accommodate the proposed acceleration lane from Route 17. Mr. Britnell made clear that there is an adequate length between the two access points to accommodate the proposed acceleration lane and that closing the Harbor Drive on-ramp is not required.

Councilman Daley also asked what constitutes support of the plan. Mr. Britnell clarified that all the comments or input from the council members, and from the public in general will be considered and investigated further during the design phase of the project; however, the Department will take direction from the First Elected Official, (the Mayor) prior to pursuing the actual design phase of the project. Later, Mayor Drew added that public insight is very important and he encouraged all to send comments to his office or directly to the Department.

Councilman Grady L. Faulkner Jr. questioned whether the Department has anticipated or developed any plans to handle traffic during the events which take place at the Riverfront. Mr. Britnell explained that specific events have not been discussed, but this will be investigated during the preliminary design phase should the project move forward.

Councilman David Bauer asked whether it was possible to create an at-grade intersection of Route 17 and East Main Street as proposed in a past alternative. Mr. Britnell expressed that the existing topography would not allow the at-grade intersection in conjunction with the existing Route 17/Route 9 interchange.

Councilman Sebastian N. Giuliano asked whether Harbor Drive could be eliminated entirely, expanding the area of the riverfront park. Department staff explained this

suggestion had not been previously considered. The elimination of the roadway may be feasible; however the access to the businesses and boat houses would be a concern.

Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta questioned whether the proposed improvement will impact the number of crashes at the site in question. In response, Mr. Britnell explained that 96% of the reported crashes are rear-end type which are directly a result from the stop-controlled on-ramp. He indicated that removing the stop sign and transforming that on-ramp into a typical on-ramp will substantially decrease the number of crashes.

Public Comments:

A member of the public questioned how the proposed project will affect Sumner Creek. Mr. Jarboe stated that Sumner Creek will be disturbed during the construction of the two proposed bridges that span across the Creek, as well as removing the existing bridge carrying River Road over the watercourse. He explained that coordination will take place with the DEEP and Army Corps and all necessary permits will be acquired. The environmental impact will be minimized to the extent possible.

Several members of the public questioned the effectiveness of the proposed traffic signals at the intersection of Route 17 and Main Street Extension. It was explained that a traffic analysis had been performed to determine the adequacy of the existing intersections. The analysis shows that the installation of these traffic signals will improve the operations at the intersections. It was also explained that the proposed traffic signals will be coordinated to one another and to nearby existing signals to increase the efficiency of the corridor. Additionally, the Department indicated that in lieu of traffic signals, roundabouts were also analyzed. Roundabouts would perform better from a vehicle traffic standpoint and have significant advantages to both pedestrians and bicyclists. Therefore, they will be considered during the design phase.

The owner of the business located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Union Street and DeKoven Drive asked how vehicle traffic will be informed that there will be no access to Route 9 through the Harbor Park on-ramp after its closure. The Department responded that traffic signs will be implemented and installed to redirect traffic to access Route 9 through other points.

One member of the public asked whether there is a possibility to keep both on-ramps opened. The Department explained that although it is preferred to remove the Harbor Drive on-ramp onto Route 9 north, it could remain as there is an adequate length to accommodate the proposed acceleration lane in between the two on-ramps. It is preferred however to eliminate the Harbor Drive on-ramp due to its close proximity to the proposed Route 17 on-ramp. Additionally, the removal of the ramp creates a safer area for bicycles and pedestrians by changing the purpose of Harbor Drive from highway access to a low speed cul-de-sac.

Some of the residents expressed their concerns on how this proposed plan could adversely impact traffic operations, speed, and volume on High Street and Loveland Street. They questioned whether or not the traffic study encompasses those areas. The Department agreed to expand the study area to cover those streets in question.

A member of the public asked whether improvements could be incorporated to the existing bituminous walk along the westbound portion of Route 17 from Main Street Extension to South Main Street. Mr. Jarboe stated that improvement to the subject walk is not currently included as it is outside the scope of the work; however, the Department will investigate this during the design phase.

One of the residents questioned whether the proposed Harbor Drive will accommodate emergency vehicles. It was explained that the roadway will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles including fire trucks. Access to Route 9 north for emergency vehicles would be available from the Route 17 on-ramp.

One resident asked whether there is a more detailed explanation of the redistributed volumes in order to get a better understanding of the anticipated changes. Mr. Britnell explained that the existing and adjusted turning volumes are available for review.

There was also a question concerning Cooley Avenue's capacity to handle any additional anticipated traffic. Mr. Britnell explained that the increase in traffic on Cooley Avenue is not a significant increase, however required improvements will be further investigated during the design phase.

Mayor Drew closed the meeting by expressing his gratitude to Department staff and to all the attendees for their participation on the meeting.

In general, the concept was well-received by those in attendance. The formal portion of the meeting was completed by 8:00 p.m.