



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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April 16, 2018

The Honorable Daniel T. Drew  
Mayor  
City of Middletown  
245 deKoven Drive  
Middletown, Connecticut 06043

Dear Mayor Drew:

Subject: State Project No. 0082-0318 Removal of Traffic Signals on Route 9  
State Project No. 0082-0319 Sidewalk Bump-outs on Main Street  
State Project No. 0082-0320 Saint John's Square and Main Street  
Intersection Improvements  
City of Middletown

A public informational meeting for the above referenced projects was held on March 22, 2018 at the Middletown High School Auditorium, 200 La Rosa Lane, Middletown, Connecticut. The purpose of the projects is to remove the traffic signals on Route 9, reduce congestion, and improve safety along Main Street for vehicles and pedestrians. A presentation was given in July of 2016 regarding these projects as well. This presentation outlined the progression of the project since that meeting, noting the alternatives that were investigated. The following improvements are proposed:

### 0082-0318 Removal of Traffic Signals on Route 9

- The proposed design will eliminate the left-turning movements from Route 9 northbound onto Hartford Avenue in order to reduce conflict points and remove signalization. An at-grade exit lane will be provided for southbound Route 9 traffic in order to maintain access to Hartford Avenue. Access from Hartford Avenue to Route 9 northbound will be maintained by constructing a bridge to convey Route 9 southbound over the on-ramp from Hartford Avenue. Route 9 southbound will be accessible from Hartford Avenue with a right turn free-flow acceleration lane.
- A bridge will be constructed to convey northbound vehicles over Route 9 southbound as well as the railroad tracks and yard. The off-ramp will intersect the north side of Rapallo Avenue at a stop-controlled intersection.
- The proposed design will eliminate the Route 9 northbound and southbound access to Washington Street to reduce conflict points. Access to Route 9 southbound from Washington Street will be maintained with an at-grade acceleration lane. Additionally, the lane configuration on Washington Street will be modified to provide a dedicated left-turn lane onto deKoven Drive.

- The Miller Street neighborhood, which currently is only accessible via direct access from Route 9 southbound, will be reconnected to the downtown area by reopening the railroad crossing on Portland Street.

0082-0319 Sidewalk Bump-outs on Main Street

- This project is proposed to enhance pedestrian safety and reduce vehicular congestion by constructing sidewalk bump-outs to shorten pedestrian crossing distances along Main Street.

0082-0320 Saint John’s Square and Main Street Intersection Improvements

- The proposed work includes the addition of two turn lanes on Saint John’s Square westbound. Widening will occur on the south side, opposite St. John Church, in order to incorporate the two new lanes, as well as a proposed median island. In addition, geometric improvements will be made to the intersection by way of median islands on Main Street that will serve to normalize the alignment.
- Rapallo Avenue, which currently consists of one lane in each direction and on-street parking on both sides of the street, will be converted into a one-way street in the westbound direction.
- Grand Street will be widened for the addition of an eastbound turn lane. The signalization will be modified to provide exclusive side street phases to remove conflicting movements with Rapallo Avenue.
- Widening will also occur at the northwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Washington Street to accommodate a dedicated right-turn lane which will be marked for shared use by bicyclists.

Rights of Way/Property Acquisitions

The following is the anticipated property acquisitions associated with proposed improvements.

0082-0318 – Removal of Traffic Signals on Route 9

- The proposed Route 9 northbound off-ramp will require the total acquisition of three commercial properties and relocation of the three businesses.

0082-0319 – Sidewalk Bump-outs on Main Street

- All construction activities will take place within the State or City right of way.

0082-0320 – Saint John’s Square and Main Street Improvement

- The widening at Main Street, Washington Street and Grand Street will require sliver acquisitions of four properties. Temporary rights and/or easements may be pursued for the reconstruction of driveways on private property.

Construction Cost

The estimated cost of all three projects is \$71 million and will use eighty percent (80%) Federal funds and twenty percent (20%) State funds. The construction breakdowns for each project are as follows;

0082-0318 – Removal of Traffic Signals on Route 9	\$65,000,000
0082-0319 – Sidewalk Bump-outs on Main Street	\$ 2,500,000
0082-0320 – Saint John’s Square and Main Street Improvement	\$ 3,250,000



### Construction Schedule

The following is the anticipated construction schedule for work associated with proposed improvements.

#### 0082-0319 Sidewalk Bump-outs on Main Street

- Start: Spring 2019
- End: Fall 2019

#### 0082-0320 Saint John's Square and Main Street Intersection Improvements

- Start: Summer 2019
- End: Fall 2020

#### 0082-0318 Removal of Traffic Signals on Route 9

- Start: Spring 2020
- End: Fall 2022

### Public Informational Meeting Transactions

There were approximately 225 public attendees present, including elected state and local officials.

Approximately half of the public attendees present also attended the Public Informational Meeting held in July 2016.

The following comments and responses were made at the meeting:

- A few attendees acknowledged that the plan was better than the one proposed by the Department in July of 2016. However, they expressed concern that current plan still adds volume to Route 66 along with additional traffic to Rapallo Avenue with the proposed off-ramp. Some attendees expressed concern regarding the effect the increased traffic would have on the safety of pedestrians. The Department explained that the proposed work on Route 66 and Main Street would greatly improve the operations for vehicles and pedestrians. The sidewalk bump-outs will serve to provide pedestrian visibility and reduce the required pedestrian crossing phase, which would give more green time to Main Street. Despite this, many attendees questioned whether the operations would improve with added volume.
- Numerous attendees expressed concerns with the location of the Route 9 northbound access to the City at Rapallo Avenue. Business owners felt that the added volume would have a negative impact on their business. Many residents expressed concerns that the proposed plan would increase cut-through traffic, despite the fact that the plan will improve the efficiency of Route 66 and Main Street. The most common comment regarding the northbound off-ramp to Rapallo Avenue was that it would have negative impacts to the north end community as a whole.
- The proposal to close the Miller Street access to Route 9 by improving the existing at grade rail crossing on Portland Street to handle daily traffic was well received. Many attendees asked if that part of the project could be constructed separately from the rest of the work. The Department is investigating the possibility of expediting this portion of the design.

- Some attendees expressed concern that the proposed bump-outs would not accommodate turning truck movements. The Department explained that they were designed to take up unused space at each corner, maintaining the turning movements that exist today.
- State Rep. Matthew Lesser asked about the path moving forward regarding these projects. The Department explained that all comments will be taken into consideration and a meeting with the City will take place in determining if the projects should proceed forward as proposed.

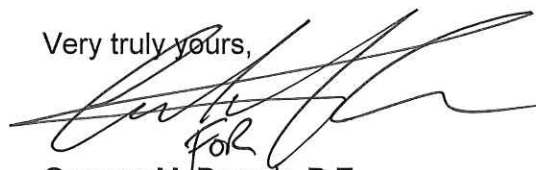
#### Comment Period and Determinations

A two-week comment period was held subsequent to the meeting. Over this time, approximately thirty-one (31) comments were received. While many echoed concerns expressed at the meeting, many comments also expressed support for the proposed projects. Numerous attendees supported opening access to Miller Street by improving the at-grade rail crossing and closing the direct access to Route 9. The proposed Sidewalk Bump-outs on Main Street received minimal comments beyond concerns regarding truck turning movements. The comments on improvements to Saint John's Square and Main Street focused on the additional traffic on Rapallo Avenue and Grand Street due to the proposed Route 9 northbound off-ramp location.

The Department will continue to explore other viable alternatives to address the concerns raised at the two public informational meetings and comment periods regarding the removal of the traffic signals on Route 9 while maintaining adequate access to and from the City. Based on feedback during the public outreach process, the Department will move forward with finalizing the design of the two projects along Main Street (0082-0319 and 0082-0320). The Department will also investigate improving the Miller Street access as part of the Saint John's Square project.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact Mr. Erik A. Jarboe, Project Manager, at (860) 594-3299.

Very truly yours,



Gregory M. Dorosh, P.E.  
Transportation Division Chief  
Bureau of Engineering and Construction

cc: The Honorable Susan Bransfield – First Selectwoman, Town of Portland  
The Honorable Lizz Milardo – First Selectwoman, Town of Haddam  
Ms. Amy D. Jackson-Grove – Division Administrator, FHWA  
Mr. Larry McHugh – President, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce  
Ms. Diane Gervais – Chairperson, Downtown Business District  
Mr. John Hall – Chairman, Middletown Complete Street Committee  
Mr. Anthony J. Salvatore – Town Manager, Town of Cromwell  
Mr. Samuel S. Gold – Executive Director, Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments