

Meeting Summary | Public Information Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday, June 18, 2013, 6:30 p.m.

Location: Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles Street, Glastonbury, CT

Overview:

- **Purpose.** The purpose of the meeting was to receive public input, comments, and questions on the study and the alternatives presented.
- **Attendance.** More than 40 people attended the meeting (excluding study team members from CTDOT and CHA). CTDOT was represented by David Head and Anna Bergeron. CHA (CTDOT's consultant) was represented by Jeff Parker, Sarah Bowman, and Juliette Flotat.
- **Format.** The meeting began with a 30-minute open house session where attendees reviewed study information and exhibits and talked one-on-one with study team members. David Head, CTDOT's project manager, opened the presentation portion of the meeting at approximately 7:00 p.m. Jeff Parker, CHA's project manager, made a formal presentation that was followed by a public question and comment period.
- **Meeting Materials.** Attendees were provided an information packet that included a summary of Frequently Asked Questions and a comment form. Materials for public review during the open house session included exhibits entitled: *Study Overview*, *Study Area & Context*, *Planning & Design Goals*, *Preliminary Path Connections*, and *What Happens Next?*

Summary of Public Comments and Questions:

(The public comments and questions are provided in italics followed by CHA/CTDOT's responses.)

- *Will security measures, such as cameras or call boxes, be put in place along the path?*
 - Although security measures have not been specifically defined at this point in the study, provisions for user safety and security will be a key consideration during the design of the path connections. General recommendations will be included in the study report.
 - It is the Department's experience that call boxes are targets for vandalism. Additionally, the proliferation of cell phones has diminished their value. However, the potential need for call boxes on this project can be further evaluated.
 - Lighting on the bridge will sufficiently light the walkway. Lighting along the path to further enhance user safety can also be considered.
 - *What is the slope of the Wethersfield path connection?*
 - The grade of the favorable alternative (Alternative 3 (Modified)) is approximately 4% to 5% along the majority of the path. The grade flattens out near the intersection with Great Meadow Road.
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- *What surface type was assumed for the path?*
 - It is assumed the path will have a paved surface.
- *What surface will the bridge walkway have?*
 - The walkway will have a composite surface that is lightweight and provides sufficient slip resistance.
- *Who will be responsible for snow removal and maintenance for the path connections and bridge walkway?*
 - CTDOT is responsible for snow removal and maintenance of walkways on state bridges. Generally, the municipalities will be responsible for the path connections. It is noted that maintenance responsibilities are open to discussion and will be further defined when design progresses.
 - It is noted that the design of the walkway on the south side of the bridge encourages natural snow melt.
- *What is the estimated cost for the maintenance of the path connections?*
 - Maintenance costs have not been estimated at this time. The study team will assess the potential maintenance costs based on comparative costs for other municipally-maintained paths in the area.
- *What is the width of the path connections and bridge walkway?*
 - The paved width of the path connections is assumed to be 10 feet. For planning purposes, an additional 2 feet of gravel shoulder has been assumed for both sides of the path connections. As shown in the plans and graphics, the overall width is 14 feet.
 - The walkway will be 6 feet wide.
- *Who would be the primary first responder for an incident on the path connections? How will access from the bridge be provided to the walkway if there is barrier in between?*
 - It is anticipated that police and emergency services will be provided in similar fashion as to how these services are currently provided for Route 3: police service provided by Connecticut State Police and fire/emergency services provided by local companies.
 - Emergency personnel and vehicle access can be provided to the path from the local roadway intersections.
 - It is anticipated that emergency personnel access to the walkway will be provided through gates in the barrier/fence on the bridge.
- *Does the \$2.6 million cost estimate for the Glastonbury path connection include costs for the other potential amenities (such as benches, signs, landscaping) that were noted in the presentation?*
 - These items are not specific line items in the cost estimate, however, the estimating methodology used for this study indirectly accounts for minor construction items like these as a percentage of the major construction items (such as earthwork, pavement, etc.).

- *Has the environmental permitting effort been estimated and is this included in the \$2.6 million cost estimate for the Glastonbury path connection?*
 - The permitting effort will be part of subsequent design efforts. The design efforts are not included in the \$2.6 million construction cost estimate.
- *The previous study documentation showed an estimated cost of more than \$5 million for the Glastonbury alternatives, but the cost estimates are now half of that number. What has changed?*
 - To clarify, the previous cost estimates ranged from approximately \$2.2 million (Alternative 4) to \$5.3 million (Alternative 5). The current range is approximately \$2 million to \$3.9 million. The cost estimate for the favorable Glastonbury alternative (Alternative 6) is \$2.6 million.
 - The reasons for the change in costs include a change in some of the assumptions for specific construction items (in particular a change in the type of retaining wall used for each of the alternatives) and a change in the estimating guidelines that were used (in particular a shift to the guidelines developed by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) for estimating projects for the 2013 STP-Urban funding program application).
 - It is noted that the \$2.6 million cost estimate is an order-of-magnitude estimate developed for planning-level purposes and is subject to further refinement as the study is completed and as future design is advanced.
- *Are there any anticipated right-of-way (ROW)/property acquisitions needed for the path construction, particularly in the area of the Verona Salon?*
 - Based on the property line information available for the feasibility study, it is not anticipated that property acquisition will be necessary for the path construction.
 - It is noted that the assumed sidewalk improvements on Naubuc Avenue to connect the path to the existing sidewalk network will likely require some property acquisition. The extent of the impacts is difficult to determine based on the available property line information, but some strip takings are anticipated along Naubuc Avenue. The actual sidewalk improvements to be provided in conjunction with the path construction, and the associated impacts, will be further defined during subsequent design efforts.
 - At this time, the assumed sidewalk improvements include new sidewalk along the east side of Naubuc Avenue between Glastonbury Boulevard and Putnam Boulevard and a short segment of sidewalk on the west side of Naubuc Avenue to connect the path to an existing segment of sidewalk. These are the extents of the recommended minimum sidewalk improvements that will provide adequate pedestrian connectivity to the path.
- *Who owns the property where the potential parking area is being shown on Naubuc Avenue in Glastonbury?*
 - The parking area is shown within CTDOT's existing ROW.

- *Are the potential parking area and sidewalk improvements on Naubuc Avenue included in the \$2.6 million construction cost estimate?*
 - Yes. However, it is noted that potential ROW costs associated with sidewalk improvements are not included in this estimate.
- *If the current Route 3 bridge rehabilitation is expected to have a service life of 20 years, when will CTDOT begin planning for a replacement bridge?*
 - It is estimated that planning would have to begin in approximately 10 to 12 years in order to have a replacement structure ready in 20 years.
- *How many pedestrians and bicyclists utilize the bridges to the north and south of the project area?*
 - We do not know at this time and we will have to see what data is available. CROG has done counts in the past.
- *What are the limits of the section of path in Glastonbury that would be on new embankment and what is the volume of embankment that would be placed in that area?*
 - The section of path on new embankment would generally be located near the bridge in Glastonbury where the floodplain and wetland boundaries are less constrictive.
 - The actual volume has been approximated and would have to be looked up as the number is not known off-hand. It is noted that no net increase in material placed in the 100-year floodplain is anticipated. It is assumed that material excavated in some areas for path construction or for compensatory flood storage can be used to construct the embankments.
 - It is noted this assumption is contingent upon the quality of the on-site materials being suitable for the construction of new embankments. The validity of this assumption would be determined through geotechnical evaluations conducted during subsequent preliminary design efforts.
- *Why is the embankment section required?*
 - The embankment section was included in the favorable Glastonbury alternative, where possible, to provide greater separation between the path and Route 3 and to minimize the extent of retaining walls needed for path construction, which will help reduce costs.
- *For \$2.6 million, can the scope of the project be broadened to consider replacement of the Point Road bridge, which currently restricts the natural ebb and flow of water in Keeney Cove? Replacing the existing bridge with a structure with a larger opening would help offset some of the original impacts associated with the Route 3 construction and could be considered mitigation for other potential impacts associated with new path construction.*
 - This possibility can be proposed to CTDEEP.
 - It is noted that it would be very costly to build a new Point Road crossing. Such a project would also likely require ROW acquisition.

- *What was the rationale for assuming a paved path surface?*
 - A paved surface was assumed for several reasons, including: to best accommodate a variety of users (consistent with the planning goals of the study); to be conservative in terms of potential costs for the path construction; and to provide better surface durability with lower maintenance over time. It is noted that a stone dust surface is a potential and acceptable alternative to a paved surface, though it would provide more resistance and may be less desirable for road bicyclists, skaters, and wheelchair users; and has the potential for more surface deterioration/washouts that could require more regular maintenance.
- *An attendee noted that the favorable alternatives are a reasonable compromise between costs, environmental impacts, and user experience.*
- *When will the bridge rehabilitation and walkway be completed?*
 - The anticipated completion is 2015.
- *How high is the retaining wall in the favorable Glastonbury alternative?*
 - The retaining wall is generally 5 to 6 feet high along the length of the path, though could be somewhat higher in some areas. Users will typically be below the elevation of traffic on Route 3, which will help reduce vehicular noise levels on the path.
- *Are there any paths in Connecticut or out of state that have a similar design (cut into a roadway embankment with a retaining wall on one side) and do you know what the user experience has been with those paths?*
 - CTDOT and CHA are not aware of any paths in Connecticut with similar design features.
 - It is noted that the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Trail adjacent to I-890 in Schenectady, NY is similar, though specific user experience is not known.
- *What type of barrier will there be between the path and Route 3 adjacent to the Wethersfield connection? It is possible that pedestrian and bicycle activity on the path could be a distraction to motorists merging onto Route 3 in this area.*
 - There would be a concrete barrier with a fence on top located between the path and the roadway for some distance from the bridge. This protective barrier would also provide a visual barrier.
 - It is noted that recommendations for vegetative screening will be considered further west beyond the limits of the concrete barrier to limit the potential for visual distractions.