

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Walk Bridge Preconstruction

0301-0176/0180/0181

REPORT OF MEETING

EA/EIE Third Taxing District - 001

March 06, 2017

IN ATTENDANCE

Fallon, James	Connecticut Department of Transportation
Brown, Christian	HNTB
Kenney, Krista	HNTB
Slattery, Kevin	HNTB
Cwikla, Heather	Parsons Brinckerhoff
D'Agostino, Joseph	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Toole, Laura	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Brown, David	Third Taxing District
Goldstein, Debora	Third Taxing District
Intrieri, Michael	Third Taxing District
Smith, James	Third Taxing District
Tenney, Cynthia	Third Taxing District
Yost, Charles	Third Taxing District

Item No.	Action Items:	BIC	Due	Status
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001.01				Closed
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Kevin Slattery explained the difference between an Environmental Assessment (EA) /Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) versus other environmental documents (i.e., Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Kevin Slattery explained what defines a "significant" impact. He provided an explanation of the purpose of EA/EIE and the level of detail for this type of document. He explained the NEPA process and the nature of impacts for planning purposes.

Explanation of common comments and how they affect the projects.

Debora Goldstein noted that the Third Taxing District was not invited to the red robin meeting. The Taxing District is focused on issues that the community has given them for the past 20 years. They did not provide a technical response – generic response based on their feedback.

Examples of a Categorical Exclusion project or a project with substantial impact. EIS has different requirements. Keys of "significant" – what types of mitigations are proposed.

Kevin Slattery explained the mitigation plan and commitments of the plan and what it all means. He noted that the project team will be able to identify the impacts once the project advances. For instance, understanding the traffic in greater detail. CTDOT recognizes that there is a lot going on in this project/program. Business Coordination plan, wetland/water quality – these are the types of things that cannot be figured out at this time but will be clearer over time. The project team has developed a timeline of when these items will be addressed. These plans are living documents and will continually be adjusted and updated.

Contractor means and methods (how many days of disruption, etc.) This is an early planning study.

Question was raised regarding 30% and what it means. Jim Fallon gave explanation of general milestone on project and potential mitigation plans.

North Water Street lot and garage for the parking authority. (their concerns)

FTA documents mitigation plans and makes sure CTDOT is held to these plans.

Comment Review:

Explanation of annotation.

4.1 We did provide outreach. Debora Goldstein noted that they were not invited to meetings. Jim Fallon noted that these meetings are coordinated through Elizabeth Stocker and that they would be notified for all future meetings.

All anticipated responses will be completed by April/May and submitted to FTA in May.

David Brown wondered what kind of impact do they have with their concerns. He asked if CTDOT is just providing lip service. Jim Fallon noted that CTDOT is here to understand their concerns. In the EA, there will be mitigation plans for each concern. Jim Fallon noted that CTDOT is here for them and all their concerns will be addressed. This project is necessary. This is a reliability and resiliency issue. Jim Fallon noted that this is a difficult project but we need to maintain safety.

Question was raised regarding project timeline. Jim Fallon explained other parallel projects that need to be completed first. (Interlocking and Danbury Branch). Start of construction on Walk is beginning of 2019 through 2022.

East Avenue Bridge will be built during Walk Bridge construction.

4.2 Statewide rail plan. Jim Fallon will pass along message but the avenue to address the item. Deborah Goldstein noted that socioeconomic ideas should be a part of the mix.

4.3 Explanation of redundancy. Keep rail in operation. CTDOT wants to maintain navigability. We need to follow the projects purpose and need.

Chris Brown explained the project and how the team plans on constructing the bridge. General approach to phasing construction in... track outages, etc. is really where the other projects came into play. There are similarities to doing this with a fixed bridge and movable bridge. Chris Brown noted video on website that explains why we are reconstructing a new bridge and not rehabilitating it. Schedule driven.

High speed rail study – FRA: Jim Fallon explained that from CTDOT's standpoint, the decision was made in 2013-14 when the bridge failed to close. CTDOT could not continue to defer action. The CTDOT cannot get wrapped up in the future planning – it is not funded. Debora Goldstein noted that the City could get whacked twice.

4.4 Keeping bridge functioning will help divert traffic. David Brown asked Chris Brown about the mechanical upgrades to both fixed and movable bridge. Fixed is not the less costly option, or easy to construct. The schedule is longer and this effects navigation on the waterway.

4.5 Third Taxing District foots the bill for all the customers they lose. (eminent domain) Municipal entity. They have no way to go out and court new customers. Any potential customers have to come to them. Their thoughts are that no one will be moving into town while this project is being constructed. Municipal electric utilities (6 in the state) –Jim Fallon suggested that this comment be reworded and he will pass it along to ROW.

4.6 Terminology – there will be a mitigation plan.

4.7 There is a plan for relocation for IMAX. This is a discussion for the City and aquarium. So far it seems that everyone is onboard with the relocation.

4.8 From a high level perspective, CTDOT looks at from taking it out of service – views this as a routine action. This is not a significant impact. Debora Goldstein – undergrounding – they have to retain contractors. This could ultimately compound costs. This money would come out of metered rate payers/customers. (East Avenue Road widening). Jim Fallon inquired about the Third Taxing District and City's relationship.

SNEW, Third Taxing District and Eversource. 3 electric utilities. Public Works should not be talking about utility coordination without these entities. There needs to be consultation.

4.10 Still looking at hydraulics. Taking most of structure out of river will reduce flooding upstream. Net benefit. CTDOT is in contact with shellfish commission.

4.11 Discussed.

We believe this Report of Meeting accurately reflects what transpired at this meeting. Unless notified in writing to the contrary, within ten (10) days after receipt, we will assume that all in attendance concur with the accuracy of this transcript.

Submitted By: Christian Brown

Reviewed By: *John D. Bonifan* 3/22/17

Cc: All in Attendance