
Advisory Committee Meeting #1: Transportation Safety & Improvements Study: Farmington

To: Advisory Committee

ATTENDEES: Sign-in Sheet (attached)

FROM: Christopher O. Granatini, P.E.

DATE: May 11, 2016

On May 4, 2016, the first Advisory Committee Meeting was held at the Town of Farmington Board of Education Conference Room. The meeting was the kickoff for the Advisory Committee and the Community Involvement process for the Farmington Transportation Safety & Improvements Study. This memo summarizes the meeting in two sections, the events of the meeting and the input and feedback received from the committee on the study area. The committee provided comments on areas that are successful and areas that need improvement based on their local knowledge of the study and local goals and objectives for the future transportation system in the study area.

Meeting Events

1. The meeting began with CRCOG explaining the background of the Study. CRCOG explained that a comprehensive Study scope initially included Hartford and Farmington. However, now the two areas have been separated and this Advisory Committee will focus on the Farmington area. CRCOG also noted that the Farmington study area retained the comprehensive study scope of services while the Hartford area was a more focused on bike/ped/transit access and facilities to the new UConn campus in Hartford.
2. CRCOG will serve as the liaison between the consultant team led by Tighe & Bond and the Advisory Committee.
3. The Advisory Committee will set the Study goals, guide the development of the Study, provide input on the scope and direction of alternatives proposed by the study team, and measure the effectiveness of the improvements with input from the public during the three public information meetings.
4. A brief description of the handout materials and study area goals and objectives was provided by Tighe & Bond. Tighe & Bond noted that the goals and objectives included in the handout were from the CRCOG's work scope and were developed during the scoping process. The study team indicated that the goals and objectives should be refined by the Advisory Committee.
5. The Advisory Committee participated in an exercise to identify problem areas within the study area that need improvement and current transportation strengths and opportunities within the study area that can potentially be expanded upon through the study process. This exercise provided key areas and opportunities for the study team to focus on.
6. The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of the community involvement process for the Study, an update on the data collection, with traffic counts completed in late 2015, and a review of the overall Study schedule, which was provided in the handout.

7. The AC determined the first public information meeting will be in September once Tighe & Bond has completed the assessment of existing conditions. The next Advisory Committee Meeting will take place approximately one month before the public information meeting to review the findings.

Advisory Committee Feedback

The Advisory Committee Feedback section provides a summary of the strengths and weaknesses discussed.

- CTDOT is constructing a new commuter parking lot to support the CTfastrak at the current waste stockpile area location on SR 423. This parking lot will accommodate approximately 150 vehicles under the full-build. A portion of the lot will be built in a Phase 1 project.
- UCONN Health is currently meeting their parking demand with the addition of the parking garages included in their recent expansion project.
- The Town noted that they see a value in investigating opportunities to utilize "The Stack" area for a possible transit-hub for local and regional commuters with connections to CTfastrak. The Town acknowledged that access control gates which restrict passenger vehicles from flowing from Interstate 84 to Tunxis Road would be needed.
- Improving the Interstate 84 and Route 9 connection is part of CRCOG's Long Range Plan. No funding has been identified.
- UCONN Health will assist with identifying the portions of their expansion program that were operational when the traffic counts were conducted in November 2015. Currently the New Hospital Tower is not built and the Outpatient Pavilion is operational except for half of one floor that is being relocated from another location on campus. T&B will incorporate the additional traffic volumes into the existing conditions to account for the development under construction.
- A UCONN Health Master Plan that looks out to the future does not currently exist, growth would likely occur on the research side primarily and at a more modest pace than recently.
- UCONN Health provides bike racks and bike facilities on site. Many national researchers come from urban areas and do not have vehicles.
- CTDOT is reconfiguring the intersection and installing a traffic control signal at the intersection of Colt Highway and Interstate 84 EB On-Ramp to address safety concerns.
- CTDOT and the Connecticut Transportation Institute at the University of Connecticut are conducting a Household Travel Survey for the entire state. This is the first time in many years that the State has conducted this study.
- Additional development has been approved near the intersection of the I-84 ramps and Route 4. The Town will provide the details to the Study Team.

Weaknesses/Issues:

- Operational and queueing issues at the five-leg Farmington Avenue at Talcott Notch Road, Old Mountain Road and 195 Farmington Avenue Commercial Driveway intersection. No solution was found during the OSTA approval process for the recent UCONN Health expansion. UCONN Health has recently acquired the property located at 195 Farmington Avenue. UCONN Health also owns the property located at 209 Farmington Avenue, currently the American Red Cross has a lease until 2035.
- The existing commuter parking lot at the corner of the Route 4 exit ramps and Route 4 is over capacity. The commuter parking lot at Batterson Park is underutilized, this land is leased from Peter Pan.
- Eastbound Colt Highway experiences congestion and weaving issues at its intersection with Birdseye Road and Fienemann Road.
- Discontinuous sidewalk facilities exist along Farmington Avenue between UCONN Health's Main Campus and their Cell & Genome Building. There is also a lack of bike facilities and/or accommodations
- The guiderail on the north side of Middle Road (just east of South Road) is continuous with the sidewalk located behind it. People are seen walking their dog or children on the road since the guiderail does not have any breaks for them to access the sidewalk. The Town noted that it may be feasible to relocate the rail to the back of the sidewalk.
- Aggressive driving at the Middle Road and Munson Road intersection.
- The Stack is an underutilized asset of available State ROW
- Route 4 and entrance ramp vehicle queuing and congestion.

Ideas:

- Conduct a survey of the users, potentially in collaboration with the University of Connecticut. Currently the UCONN Transportation Planner is conducting a transportation survey of all faculty, students and staff on all campuses including UCONN Health.
- Potential regional transit connection between UCONN Health and UCONN Storrs is being considered to improve the connection between the campuses.
- Bicycle facilities along Route 4 (Farmington Avenue), improved pedestrian and sidewalk connectivity with better definition.
- Review opportunities to develop bicycle connections to West Hartford Center from the study area.
- Bus shelters along the Route 4 (Farmington Avenue) corridor.
- Potential internal connection between 1 Farm Glen Boulevard and 299 Farmington Avenue to provide direct vehicle and pedestrian connection between the facilities.

- Potential access to UCONN Health further east on Farmington Avenue at the Talcott Notch Road intersection.
- Potential sidewalk on Birdseye Road. The Town identified public opposition to these sidewalks.

Action Items

- Tighe & Bond to find an alternative location to The Stack surface parking lot for a regional park and ride & transit connection facility review by the Advisory Committee at the next meeting.
- Tighe & Bond to obtain existing GIS Data and proposed local development plans and studies from the Town of Farmington.
- Tighe & Bond to contact CTDOT Transit group regarding proposed *CTfastrak* commuter lot on SR 423 and possible expansion of commuter parking lot at the corner of Route 4.
- Tighe & Bond to obtain the Traffic Study completed for the UCONN Health expansion from OSTA and other available studies from the Town.
- Town of Farmington will let Town Council know about Public Information Meeting planned for the Fall and will coordinate the location of the meeting at the Community Center.

J:\C\C1072 CRCOG-Farmington-Hartford\Administration\Meeting Info\2016_05-04 AC Meeting 1\2016_05-04 ROM_AC_1.doc