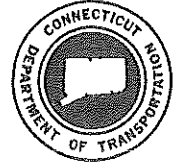


STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546

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DOCKET NO. 1206-96-RR

RE: IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION CONCERNING THE
CONSTRUCTION OF A PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE BRIDGE ON FLOWER STREET IN
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.

SECOND RECONSIDERATION

APRIL 7, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Petitioner's Proposal

By Petition for Reconsideration filed pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-181a(b) and assigned Docket No. 1206-96-RR, the petitioner, the Bureau of Engineering and Construction, requests a second reconsideration, based on changed conditions, of the first reconsideration decision issued on May 20, 2013, regarding Flower Street in Hartford.

On October 19, 2012, a final decision was issued in which Flower Street was closed to vehicular traffic. The first reconsideration decision issued on May 20, 2013, ordered the construction of a grade separated pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Flower Street. The second Petition for Reconsideration was filed to seek removal of the requirement that a pedestrian/bicycle bridge be constructed.

B. Hearing Held

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-181a(b), a public hearing on the second Petition for Reconsideration was held at the administrative offices of the Department of Transportation, in Newington, Connecticut on February 28, 2017.

Legal Notice of the second Petition for Reconsideration and of the hearing to be held thereon was given to the petitioner, Hartford officials, and was published on the department's website.

The hearing on this matter was conducted by a hearing officer designated by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 13b-17.

C. Appearances

Richard Armstrong, Principal Engineer, and Randal Davis, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, presented evidence in this matter.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The petitioner in this matter is the Bureau of Engineering and Construction of the Department of Transportation (hereinafter "petitioner" or "department").

2. The subject crossing is on the Amtrak Springfield line located at milepost 36.20.

3. As a result of CTfastrak, State Project Number 171-305, the Flower Street crossing was closed to vehicular traffic by final decision dated October 19, 2012. Public safety was the primary reason the crossing was closed.

4. The first reconsideration decision, dated May 20, 2013, ordered the construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Flower Street to mitigate the negative impact closing the crossing had on the community.

5. After the first reconsideration decision of May 20, 2013, the department investigated numerous options to provide safe pedestrian/bicycle transport over Flower Street. These options were eventually narrowed down to five design proposals including the Sky Walk, two Elevator designs, the Helical and the Switchback. That list of five was further narrowed down to two options, the single Elevator design and the Sky Walk design; both of which would have some negative impact on abutting stakeholders, The Hartford Courant and the Old Office Supply. If either one of those two plans was to be implemented, it would result in a loss of parking for one of the stakeholders.

6. At the May 12, 2014 public information meeting, many of the Flower Street stakeholders rejected a pedestrian/bicycle bridge as too costly and not worthwhile.

7. Since the issuance of the first reconsideration decision in May 2013, a multi-use trail was constructed by the department between Flower Street and Broad Street for pedestrian and bicycle traffic to navigate around the Flower Street closure.

8. A pedestrian, without disabilities, has a travel time on the multi-use trail of 6 minutes and 24 seconds. A pedestrian, with disabilities, has a travel time on the multi-use trail of 10 minutes and 54 seconds. The bicycle travel time on the trail is 2 minutes and 36 seconds.

9. The Sky Walk alternative has a pedestrian travel time of 5.5 minutes with a savings of 54 seconds over the Broad Street multi-use trail. The Elevator option has a travel time of 5.6 minutes with a savings of 48 seconds over the multi-use trail.

10. The future reconstruction of Interstate 84 may conflict with the pedestrian/bicycle bridge; resulting in its removal.

11. The estimated cost for the Sky Walk option is about 12 million dollars while the estimated cost for the single Elevator option is 10 million dollars. The original cost estimated in 2013 for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge was 3 million dollars.

12. The department is researching the feasibility of constructing a bike path along Sigourney Street between Farmington Avenue and Capital Avenue.

13. Flower Street was closed to all pedestrian and bicycle traffic in 2013.

14. No one from the public appeared to testify at the February 28, 2017 hearing.

15. There was no opposition to the second petition for reconsideration.

16. The stakeholders no longer support the construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge.

III. DISCUSSION

Several significant things have changed since the pedestrian/bicycle bridge was ordered in the final decision issued on May 20, 2013. First off, the stakeholders no longer support the construction of the pedestrian/bicycle bridge. The department introduced several letters from various stakeholders

clearly rejecting the pedestrian/bicycle bridge. The primary reason appears to be the cost of such bridge construction which is now estimated at around three to four times the original cost estimated in 2013.

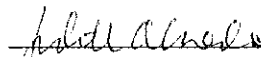
In addition, Flower Street has been closed for several years and the department has now constructed a multi-use path. Using such path when compared to using the Skywalk and Elevator alternatives, adds only a negligible amount of travel time for pedestrians and bicyclists; so constructing a pedestrian/bicycle bridge would not provide a benefit that would warrant the expenditure of significant funds. Further, both of the two pedestrian/bicycle bridge options considered will have some negative impact on one the stakeholders; primarily in the removal of parking spaces. In light of these changed conditions, it does not make good fiscal sense, given the negligible benefit, if any, to the public, and given the significant increased cost, to continue planning for or constructing a pedestrian/bicycle bridge.

IV. ORDER

Based on the evidence of record and the petitioner's showing of changed conditions since the first reconsideration decision and pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-181a(b), the second Petition for Reconsideration is granted and the order for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge, issued in the May 20, 2013 reconsideration decision, is hereby vacated.

Dated at Newington, Connecticut, on this 7th day of April 2017.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Judith Almeida
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Bureau of Finance and Administration