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From: Kevin Fleming (Kevin.Fleming@ct.gov)

Date: August 20, 2024

Subject: Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project
Norwalk, CT
State Project No. 0102-0358
Record of Decision

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is submitting materials related to the Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) developed pursuant to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) requirements for the Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project (project) for your review and determination of adequacy pursuant to Section 22a-1a-9 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

The project was scoped in the *Environmental Monitor* on October 7, 2017, and a public scoping meeting was held on October 17, 2017, at Norwalk City Hall. On June 16, 2020, a Post Scoping Notice was published to indicate CTDOT's intent to undertake an EIE, and on July 18, 2023, the EIE was published and made available to the public. A public hearing for the EIE was held on August 16, 2023, at Norwalk City Hall.

The Record of Decision (ROD), including pertinent supporting materials, was developed to respond to comments received during the EIE public review process and to facilitate your evaluation of adequacy with CEPA requirements.

For your situational awareness, since this project involves federal funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the project is also required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project on July 31, 2024 to complete the NEPA process.

Please provide written confirmation that the ROD and EIE have satisfied the CEPA requirements for the subject project. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Kevin.Fleming@ct.gov.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

RECORD OF DECISION

Prepared in accordance with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act

ROUTES 7 & 15 INTERCHANGE PROJECT

Norwalk, Connecticut

State Project No. 0102-0358



August 2024

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I. Decision

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) intends to implement the Proposed Project, Alternative 26, to improve connections between Routes 7 and 15 and the local roads in the City of Norwalk, Connecticut.

This decision to implement Alternative 26 is based on the May 2023 Joint Environmental Assessment/Section 4(f) Evaluation and Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE) for the Routes 7/15 Interchange, Norwalk, Connecticut and comments received during the public review period from July 18, 2023, through August 31, 2023, and during the August 16, 2023, public hearing. No changes to the project scope have occurred since the EA/EIE was published.

A copy of the EA/EIE Errata Sheet is included as Appendix A. The Executive Summary of the EA/EIE is provided as Appendix B.

II Summary of Environmental Impact

There will be no significant impacts to the environment as a result of implementing the Proposed Action, Alternative 26. All practical means to avoid or minimize impacts have been adopted. The mitigation measures in the EA/EIE, Errata Sheet and in the responses to agency and public comments have been adopted. The Executive Summary, attached as Appendix B, provides a summary of environmental impacts and minimization/mitigation efforts.

III Summary of Consultation with Agencies and Other Persons

Early consultation with agencies and the public began with the initiation of the public scoping process. A Notice of Scoping for the Proposed Action was published in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) *Environmental Monitor* on October 3, 2017, and a Public Scoping meeting was held in the City Hall Rotunda in the City Hall Auditorium at Norwalk City Hall 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT on October 17, 2017.

Verbal and written comments were provided at the scoping meeting and written comments were received from agencies and the public during the 30-day comment period that ended on November 16, 2017. Scoping and Post Scoping materials, including the comments, responses, and a Public Scoping Summary Report are included in Appendix C.

During the preparation of the EA/EIE document, all agencies with regulatory authority over resources within the study area were consulted.

A Notice of Availability of the EA/EIE and announcement of the Public Hearing was published in the *Environmental Monitor* on July 18, 2023. Legal notices were also published in local newspapers to announce the availability of the EA/EIE and the Public Hearing details. These newspapers included *The Norwalk Hour* on July 19, 2023, July 26, 2023, and August 2, 2023, and

La Voz, a Spanish language newspaper on July 20-27 2023, Edition 29, July 27-August 3, 2023 Edition 30, and August 3-10 2023 Edition 31.

A Public Hearing was held on August 16, 2023, in the Community Room of Norwalk City Hall at 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851 and the public review and comment period ended on August 31, 2023. The EA/EIE was available to the public during the review and comment period on the CTDOT website, the project specific website, and in hardcopy at the seven locations listed below.

CTDOT 2800 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06131	FHWA CT Division Office 450 Main Street, Suite 612 Hartford, CT 06103	Connecticut State Library 231 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106
Norwalk City Hall 125 East Avenue Norwalk, CT 06851	Norwalk Public Library Main Branch 1 Belden Avenue Norwalk, CT 06850	Norwalk Public Library South Norwalk Branch 10 Washington Street Norwalk, CT 06854
WestCOG 1 Riverside Road Sandy Hook, CT 06482		

All notices and advertisements for the Notice of Availability of the EA/EIE and Public Hearing are included in Appendix D.

Oral testimony and written comments were provided at the Public Hearing and numerous written comments were submitted during the EA/EIE public review period. All comments received and responses are provided in Appendix E. The following agencies provided written comments:

- Friends of the NRVT
- State of Connecticut CEQ
- Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.
- Western Connecticut Council of Governments
- Preservation Connecticut
- CT State Historic Preservation Office
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1

Appendix F provides the transcript of the Public Hearing.

Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project

State Project 0102-0358

CEPA Record of Decision

Appendix A

EA/EIE Errata Sheet

ERRATA SHEET

Environmental Assessment/ Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation/ Environmental Impact Evaluation

Route 7/15 Interchange Project – Norwalk, Connecticut

State Project No. 102-358 | Federal Project No. 0015(133)

1. Section 3.4.3 Noise Mitigation Measures

Delete the last sentence: “CTDOT’s final recommendation regarding noise abatement would be made during the project’s final design and public involvement process.

Add the language: If the scope of the project changes during the Final Design Phase, CTDOT’s Office of Environmental Planning will review any changes to determine if the Noise Analysis will require re-evaluation.

2. Section 7.0 Environmental Commitments and Mitigation – Page 7.1

In the Commitments Section for Noise :

Delete the statement: Incorporate CTDOT’s final recommendation regarding noise abatement in final design.

Insert: As currently proposed, there are no abatement measures that have been determined to be reasonable or feasible. If the scope of the project changes during the Final Design Phase, CTDOT’s Office of Environmental Planning will review any changes to determine if the Noise Analysis will require re-evaluation.

3. Table 5.2.1 State, Tribal and Federal Agencies

The table does not include the Stockbridge-Munsee Community (SMC) under “Mandatory Section 106 Consulting Parties.” However, please note that the SMC expanded their area of interest to include the project area after the EA/EIE was published. Because of this, FHWA formally consulted with the SMC in FHWA 2024 and provided their Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) with a copy of the MOA for comment. The SMC had no comments; however, the MOA was revised to include a record of this consultation and was recirculated to the Signatories and Concurring Parties.

Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project

State Project 0102-0358

CEPA Record of Decision

Appendix B

EA/EIE Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to construct improvements to the US Route 7 (Route 7) and State Route 15 (Route 15) interchange (Routes 7/15) and to improve interconnections with local roads in the City of Norwalk (Norwalk), Connecticut (Project).

E-1 OVERVIEW OF PROJECT SITE

The Project is located in the northern portion of Norwalk at the interchange of Routes 7/15 (Interchange 39) and includes the interchange of Route 15 with Main Avenue (Interchange 40); Route 719 (Main Avenue); and Glover Avenue/Creeping Hemlock Drive in the vicinity of Main Avenue. The proposed limits of construction (Project Site) extends along Route 15 from approximately 0.5 miles west of Route 7 to approximately 0.5 miles east of Main Avenue and along Route 7 from approximately 0.5 miles south to approximately 0.5 miles north of Route 15. The Project Site is illustrated in Figure E1.1.1.

Route 15

The segment of Route 15 in which the Project is located is also known by its original name, the Merritt Parkway. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its significance in the areas of landscape design, transportation and architecture. It is also designated as a National Scenic Byway and State Scenic Road. Within the Project Site, Route 15 carries traffic over Perry Avenue, Route 7 and Main Avenue, as well as the Norwalk River and Metro North Railroad. This portion of Route 15 includes four historic bridges that are contributing resources to the National Register listing. Also within the Project Site is the Glover Avenue Bridge, which has been determined to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP.

Route 7

The segment of Route 7 in which the Project is located is a four-lane limited access expressway. Within the Project Site, Route 7 carries traffic over New Canaan Avenue (Route 123), over the Norwalk River, and under Route 15.

Existing Interchanges

Interchange 39 provides partial connections between Route 7 and Route 15. Interchange 40, a second nearby interchange, provides connections in all directions between Route 15 and Main Avenue. This interchange is located approximately 1,500 feet east of the Route 7 and Merritt Parkway interchange and the Norwalk River. On Route 7, Interchange 2 provides connections in all directions between Route 7 and Route 123.



Figure E1.1.1 Project Site



Local Roadways

Main Avenue is currently a four-lane urban minor arterial that parallels Route 7 and the Norwalk River and extends north and south of the Routes 7/15 interchange. Main Avenue forms a skewed, five-legged signalized-intersection with Glover Avenue, Creeping Hemlock Drive, and the southbound Route 15 on-ramps. The southbound Route 15 off-ramp to southbound Main Avenue is also within the footprint of the intersection and provides STOP-controlled access onto southbound Main Avenue. There are also two other ramps providing access to and from Main Avenue from Route 15 and they are located approximately 300 feet east of the intersection via Creeping Hemlock Drive (Figure E1.1.2).



Figure E1.1.2 Route 15 / Main Avenue Interchange

Glover Avenue is a two-lane local road that intersects with Main Avenue approximately 300 feet north of the Route 15. From its intersection with Main Avenue, Glover Avenue spans westward for 600 feet before making a 90 degree turn to the north and continuing nearly a mile before intersecting with Grist Mill Road.

Creeping Hemlock Drive also follows a roughly L-shaped alignment that intersects with Main Avenue. It proceeds eastward from Main Avenue for approximately 0.3 miles to an intersection with the southbound Route 15 ramps before continuing northward into the Creeping Hemlock neighborhood.

E-2 PROJECT HISTORY AND PRIOR ASSESSMENT

A brief history of prior assessments of the Routes 7/15 interchange is summarized here in order to provide context for the alternatives assessed as part of this Environmental Assessment/



Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE).

In the early 1990s a project to address deficiencies at the Routes 7/15 interchange was initiated and in 2000, the EA/EIE was approved. In 2005, when the project was in the early stages of construction, litigation of the project resulted in a stoppage of work. In 2006, following a court ruling, the construction contract was cancelled when the court found the project's administrative record did not adequately document that avoidance, minimization and mitigation alternatives associated with impacts to resources within the project area had been fully analyzed.

Following the court's decision and resultant construction cancellation, CTDOT undertook a review of the original design alternatives and assessed new alternatives. During this time, CTDOT formed and worked with a public stakeholder group which included representatives from neighboring residents and the lawsuit's lead plaintiff, the Merritt Parkway Conservancy (MPC). After reaching consensus with the stakeholder group on a new design alternative, CTDOT presented it in an open public forum in February 2009. The new design concept was well received by the greater public.

At that time, there was not sufficient funding available for reinitiating the project, but it was anticipated that the strategic plan of the state's transportation system would continue to identify this infrastructure investment as a future need. The Department filed a letter with FHWA cancelling the project and its associated Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact (EA/FONSI) in 2013.¹ It was acknowledged that if a future project were to be undertaken, CTDOT would prepare new studies based on current needs and deficiencies and a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review would be conducted.

This 2021 EA/EIE represents the new NEPA document and presents the new studies required for the reinitiated Route 7/Route 15 interchange project. The 2009 community endorsed alternative was evaluated and screened during the current Project's scoping process and is identified as Alternative 21D in this EA/EIE.

E-3 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Project is to:

- improve roadway system linkage between Route 7 and Route 15 at Interchange 39;
- improve the mobility for vehicles at both the Route 15 interchanges at Route 7 and at Main Avenue (No. 39 & No. 40), and to improve the mobility for all users (motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists) along the immediate adjacent local roadway network (Main

¹ Timothy Sullivan (CTDOT) letter to Amy Jackson Grove (FWHA), *Notice of Intent to Cancel NEPA and Close Project Accounts, State Project Nos. 102-269/312, FAP No. 0007(117) Routes 7/15 Norwalk*, dated November 6, 2013.



Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock Drive, and;

- improve safety in the vicinity of these interchanges.

CTDOT and FHWA are proposing the Project to address deficiencies of the existing interchanges and streets in the vicinity of the interchanges. A description of the various Project Needs is below.

Roadway System Linkage

The existing Route 15 and Route 7 Interchange configuration does not provide all connections between Route 7 and Route 15, specifically the following connections:

- Southbound ² Route 15 to northbound Route 7
- Southbound Route 15 to southbound Route 7
- Northbound Route 7 to northbound Route 15
- Southbound Route 7 to northbound Route 15

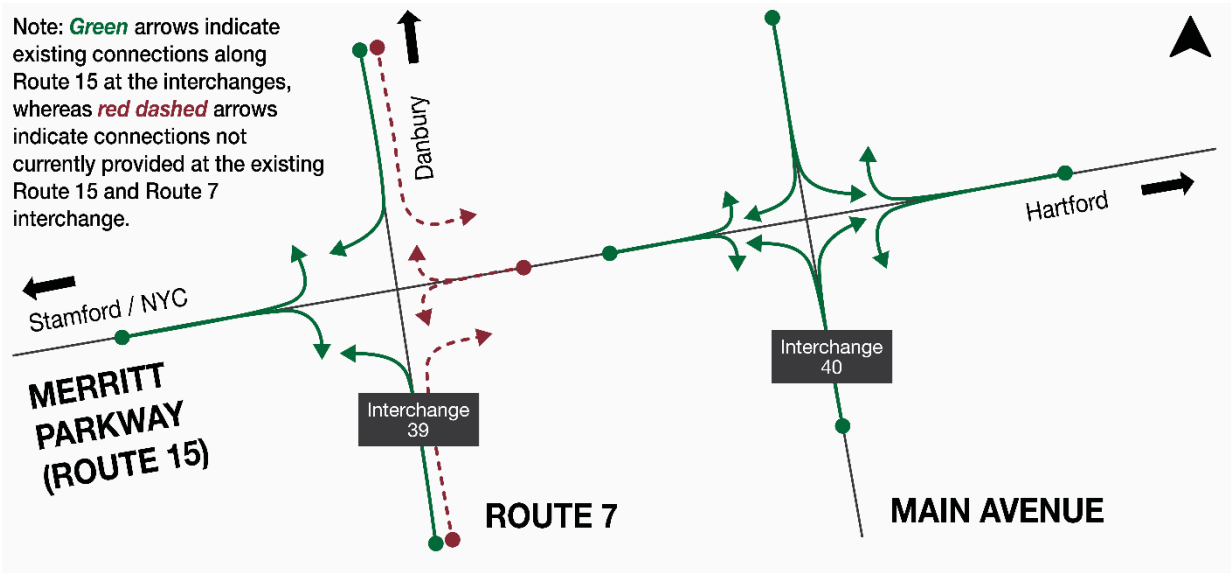


Figure E1.1.3 Existing Needs (Roadway System Linkage)

Existing roadway system linkage needs are depicted in Figure E1.1.3. Existing connections along Route 15 at the interchanges with Route 7 and Main Avenue are depicted in green whereas connections not currently provided at the existing Routes 7/15 interchange are depicted in red.

² Route 15 runs generally southwest to northeast. By convention, Route 15 directions are referred to as “northbound” (northeast) and “southbound” (southwest).



Mobility - Vehicular

Interchange 39 currently provides partial connections between Route 7 and Route 15. Connections between Route 7 and Route 15 to and from the north are not provided.

Interchange 40, a second nearby interchange, provides connections in all directions between Route 15 and Main Avenue. However, connections between Route 7 and Main Avenue do not exist in the vicinity of Interchange 39 or Interchange 40.

Mobility – Other Users – (Bike/Pedestrian/Transit)

There are no bicycle facilities in the Project Site, and shoulder widths are less than one foot on Main Avenue. Sidewalks only exist in short, discontinuous segments along Main Avenue. Only one small roadway segment, along with Glover Avenue, is fully in compliance with the U.S. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks within this area are missing and/or lacking safety features for visually or hearing-impaired pedestrians, reducing access and mobility for users with disabilities.

Safety

The existing Main Avenue and Route 15 Interchange ramps have substandard acceleration and deceleration lanes, steep changes in grade, sharp curves, and limited sight distance. These factors contribute to a high number of crashes.

Other Desirable Outcomes for the Project

The list below summarizes other desirable outcomes that were identified for consideration during the alternative analyses screening process, including the Project needs and input provided by stakeholders.

- Reduce congestion
- Provide long term serviceability of the affected roadways within the Project vicinity
- Optimize the value gained from public investment in the Project
- Integrate the Project roadways and landscape with the environment and neighborhood context.

E-4 ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This section describes the reasonable alternatives identified for assessment in this EA/EIE.

No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, no substantial improvements to the operation, linkages, and capacity of the existing interchanges would be performed nor would significant corridor landscape improvements occur beyond routine maintenance and/or spot safety improvements currently performed by CTDOT. The intersection and interchange geometry would remain as they currently exist within the Project Site (Figure E1.1.4).



LEGEND

00721 EXISTING BRIDGE

EXISTING SIGNAL

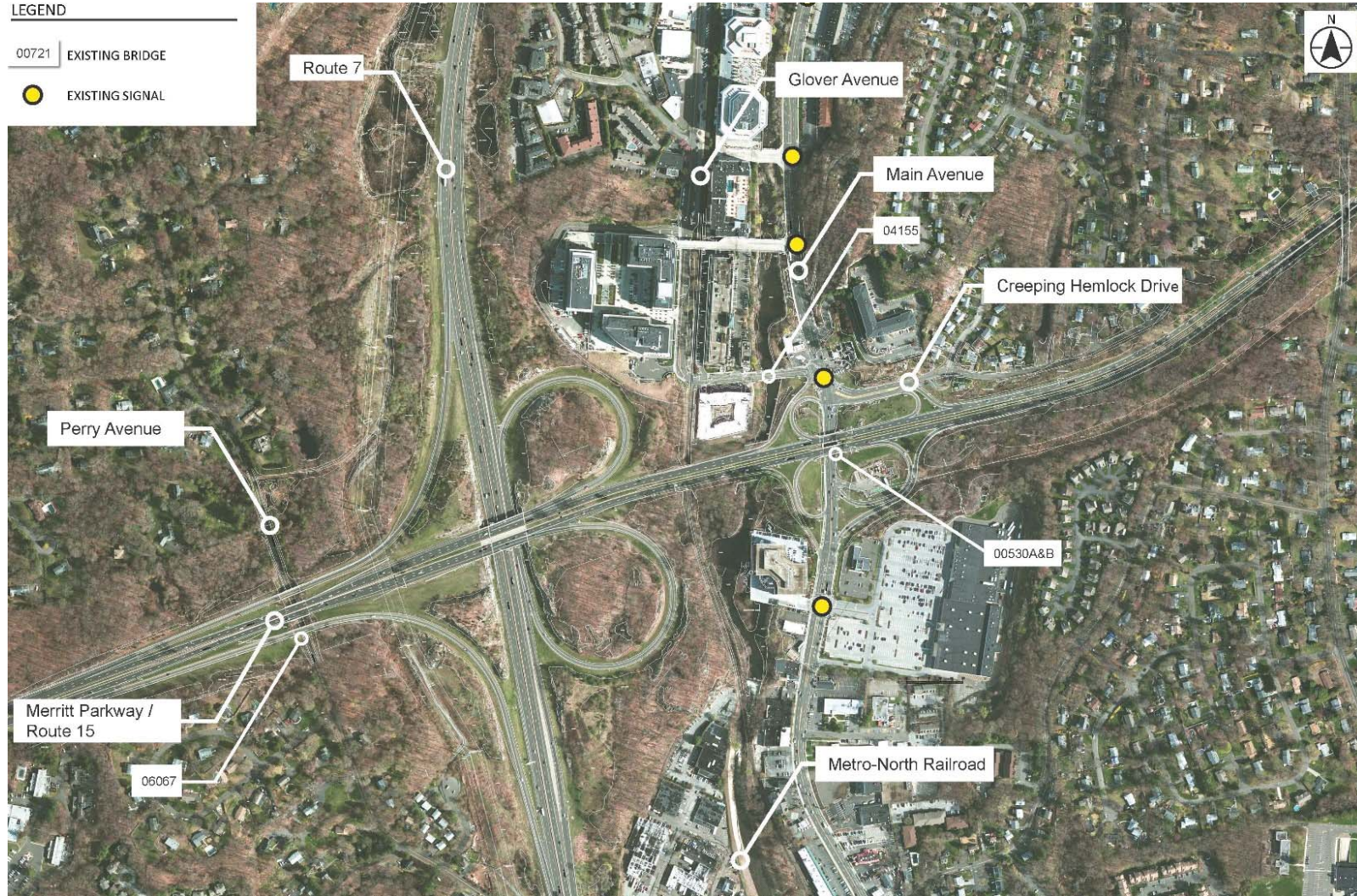


Figure E1.1.4 No Build Alternative (Existing Conditions)



Alternative 26

Alternative 26 would complete the connections at Interchange 39 with traffic movements between Route 7, Route 15, and Main Avenue (Figure 1.1.5). This alternative would introduce two signalized intersections along Route 7 to complete the partial interchange. A modified diamond interchange with Route 15 would retain the existing loop ramp in the northeast quadrant and the existing direct connector ramp in the southwest quadrant to optimize traffic operations at the two signalized intersections.

The loop ramp in the northeast quadrant would be reduced in size from the existing larger ramp, a change made possible by slower speeds on the reclassified Route 7 from a freeway to a signalized arterial. Three northbound and three southbound lanes would be necessary at the signalized Route 7 ramp intersections, with turn lanes at each Route 7 intersection approach. No powerline tower relocations are required for Alternative 26.

The dual historic Route 15 bridges (Bridge #00530 A & B) over Main Avenue (Interchange 40) would be replaced and the bridge spans extended to allow for a widened roadway section. In addition, Main Avenue would be lowered to provide the required vertical bridge clearance. The increased span would provide space below for a wider Main Avenue and allow for the construction of additional left turn lanes to provide for left-turn movements and provide wider sidewalks and incorporation of bike facilities. This would facilitate the Project's purpose related to improved mobility of both vehicles and other users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users). In addition to the existing signal at Glover Avenue and Main Avenue, two new signalized intersections would be provided along Main Avenue for a total of three-closely spaced signalized intersections. Glover Avenue would be widened, and a replacement bridge would be constructed over the Norwalk River. Creeping Hemlock Drive would be realigned to the north and widened. A new signalized intersection would be provided along Creeping Hemlock Drive at the existing westbound Merritt Parkway off-ramp.

The four existing tight-loop ramps at Interchange 40 would be eliminated. Elimination of the existing ramps in the southwest quadrant of the Main Avenue interchange would allow for an eastbound weaving lane between an eastbound Route 7 entry ramp and an improved exit loop ramp in the southeast quadrant of the Route 7 interchange. In the westbound direction, the tight Route 15 exit loop ramp in the northwest quadrant would be eliminated. To avoid further weaving on the westbound Merritt Parkway for the southbound Main Avenue movement, an independent ramp would be located between the westbound weaving lane and the new residential building to the north.

In addition to the new ramps and roadways noted above, Alternative 26 would require the construction of four new bridges and the replacement of two existing historic bridges (Route 15 over Main Avenue and Glover Avenue over Norwalk River) to incorporate new or widened roadways or ramps.



Figure 1.1.5 Alternative 26



Alternative 21D

Alternative 21D would complete the connections at Interchange 39 with traffic movements between Route 7, Route 15, and Main Avenue (Figure E1.1.6). The existing Routes 7/15 interchange loop ramps would be retained in the easterly quadrants as would the direct connections in the westerly quadrants. The four remaining Routes 7/15 interchange movements would be achieved with semi-direct connections. Several towers of a power line may require relocation.

The dual historic Route 15 bridges (Bridge #00530 A & B) over Main Avenue (Interchange 40) would be replaced and the bridge spans extended to allow for a widened roadway section. In addition, Main Avenue would be lowered to provide the required vertical bridge clearance. The increased span would provide space below for a wider Main Avenue and allow for the construction of additional left turn lanes to provide for left-turn movements and provide wider sidewalks and incorporation of bike facilities. This would facilitate the Project's purpose related to improved mobility of both vehicles and other users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users). In addition to the existing signal at Glover Avenue and Main Avenue, two new signalized intersections would be provided along Main Avenue for a total of three-closely spaced signalized intersections. Glover Avenue would be widened, and a replacement bridge would be constructed over the Norwalk River. Creeping Hemlock Drive would be realigned to the north and widened. A new signalized intersection would be provided along Creeping Hemlock Drive at the existing westbound Merritt Parkway off-ramp.

The four existing tight-loop ramps at Interchange 40 would be eliminated. Elimination of the existing ramps in the southwest quadrant of the Main Avenue interchange would allow for an eastbound weaving lane between an eastbound Route 7 entry ramp and an improved exit loop ramp in the southeast quadrant of the Route 7 interchange.

In the westbound direction, the tight Route 15 exit loop ramp in the northwest quadrant (to southbound Main Avenue) would be eliminated. Longer Route 15 ramp acceleration and deceleration lanes would also be provided. The westbound entrance ramp would be built between a recently constructed residential apartment building and Route 15. As currently conceived, the new ramps would be at or below the elevation of Route 15.

In addition to the new ramps and roadways noted above, this alternative would require the construction of eleven new bridges and modifications or replacements of three existing bridges for expanded roadways and/or ramps. This includes replacement of two historic bridges (Route 15 over Main Avenue and Glover Avenue over Norwalk River).



Figure E1.1.6 Alternative 21D



PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In evaluating each alternative, CTDOT and FHWA considered the Project's purpose and need, engineering complexities, constructability, estimated construction and maintenance costs, and potential environmental impacts. In consideration of comments solicited from the public and input from the Project's Project Advisory Committee (PAC) on screening criteria and assessments, CTDOT and FHWA have identified **Alternative 26** as the preferred alternative. As described throughout this document and summarized below, this alternative best addresses the Project's purpose and need while minimizing the environmental impacts.

No Build Alternative

While the No Build Alternative would avoid impacts, including direct impacts to archaeological resources and visual and historical resources, it would not meet the Project's purpose and need, and would not accomplish the other desirable outcomes identified for the Project as described in Section E-3.

Build Alternatives

Alternatives 26 and 21D would both address the Project needs and have similar level of environmental impacts. However, this EA/EIE has identified benefits and adverse effects that differ in type and magnitude between the Build Alternatives and which provide a basis to select a Preferred Alternative.

Based on the current conceptual design, Alternative 26 would impact two of three archaeological sites that were recommended as NRHP-eligible in Phase II testing, however, data recovery may be utilized at sites that cannot be avoided by construction. Alternative 21D would not impact any of the three archaeological sites.

Alternative 26 has substantial advantages over Alternative 21D, including:

- Notably fewer impacts to wetland resources in terms of the number, total area, and linear feet of wetlands and streams impacted compared to Alternative 21D.
- Less impact to wildlife habitat and less increase in impervious cover within the watershed.
- Fewer ramps and bridges and thus more modestly scaled and more in keeping with the context of the Parkway than Alternative 21D.
- Greatest opportunity to preserve and enhance natural features and systems of the Merritt Parkway landscape, integrate the roadway into a park-like setting with appropriate topography and planting clusters, reduce maintenance, and design access and egress ramps as Parkway amenities, by virtue of its compact footprint of built elements.
- Preliminary capital construction cost estimates are approximately \$109 million for Alternative 26 compared to \$207 million for Alternative 21D. In addition, a Benefit-Cost



Analysis found that Alternative 26 is projected to yield the greatest multiple of benefits to costs with a benefit/cost ratio of 3.89 (more beneficial) whereas Alternative 21D is projected to yield a ratio of 2.37 (less beneficial).

In summary, Alternative 26 would meet the goals with substantial advantages compared to Alternative 21D. Although impacts to archaeological resources are anticipated with Alternative 26, methods to mitigate those impacts have been identified. Therefore Alternative 26 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative.

E-5 PROJECT IMPACTS

Environmental resources/factors evaluated and potentially affected by the Project in this EA/EIE are listed in Table E1.1.1, together with anticipated actions, potential benefits or impacts to these resources, and proposed mitigation measures for adverse effects.



Table E1.1.1 Benefits and Impacts of Project Actions

Resource	Project Build Actions	21D Benefits/Impacts and Mitigation	26 Benefits/Impacts and Mitigation	No Build Benefits/Impacts and Mitigation
Traffic	Removal of bridges/ramps, construction of new ramps/bridges, modified lane widths and signals	10 locations would operate below an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) during the AM peak hour and 9 locations below an acceptable LOS during the PM peak hour. Safety issues would be addressed. Redesigned ramps would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes.	10 locations would operate below an acceptable LOS during the AM peak hour and 8 locations below an acceptable LOS during the PM peak hour. Safety issues would be addressed. Redesigned ramps would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes.	Numerous areas of congestion during peak hours under the No Build condition. 23 locations would operate below an acceptable ³ LOS during the AM peak hour, with 18 below an acceptable LOS during the PM peak hour. Existing safety issues would remain.
Bicycles and Pedestrians	Reconfigured local roadways and connections, new sidewalks and signals	Alternative would include upgraded pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Main and Glover Avenues which would facilitate connections to the planned bike lane improvements near the new Merritt 7 train station.	Alternative would include upgraded pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Main and Glover Avenues which would facilitate connections to the planned bike lane improvements near the new Merritt 7 train station.	Alternative would not include new or improved pedestrian or bicycle facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian activity levels are anticipated to remain limited due to lack of existing infrastructure and connectivity, and safety concerns.
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Reconfigured roadways resulting in changes to vehicle emissions	Air quality modeling results indicate: • lower emissions of volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, mobile air toxics, and greenhouse gases than the No Build condition. • no increase in carbon monoxide emissions.	Air quality modeling results indicate: • lower emissions of volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, mobile air toxics, and greenhouse gases than the No Build condition. • no increase in carbon monoxide emissions.	Vehicular traffic emissions, including greenhouse gas emissions, would continue to increase with projected increases in vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
Noise	Reconfigured roadways resulting in changes to vehicle traffic	Highway traffic noise would not substantially increase at any of the evaluated receptors. Compared to No Build, the levels would remain the same or decrease slightly (1-2 dBA). Although the NAC is approached/exceeded in 1 location, initial analysis shows noise abatement is not considered reasonable.	Highway traffic noise would not substantially increase at any of the evaluated receptors. Compared to No Build, the levels would remain the same or increase/decrease by no more than 1 dBA. Although the NAC is approached/exceeded in 1 location, initial analysis shows noise abatement is not considered reasonable.	Noise levels would remain the same at most evaluated receptors, with increases of 1 dB(A) predicted at two receptors. ⁴ Although the NAC is approached/exceeded in 1 location, initial analysis shows noise abatement is not considered feasible or reasonable.
Rare/Threatened/Endangered Species	Construction activities in potential plant/wildlife habitat	Time of year restrictions (no unconfined in-stream work between April 1 and June 30) may be required as part of the permitting process for activities during construction to avoid and minimize impacts to anadromous fish runs in the Norwalk River.	Time of year restrictions (no unconfined in-stream work between April 1 and June 30) may be required as part of the permitting process for activities during construction to avoid and minimize impacts to anadromous fish runs in the Norwalk River.	No change
Wetlands	Construction activities in wetland areas	Permanent impacts to approximately 3 acres (AC) of wetlands, approximately 120 linear feet (LF) of intermittent streams, and approximately 650 LF of perennial streams. Permanent impacts to the Norwalk River are not expected.	Permanent impacts to approximately 1.4 AC of wetlands, approximately 40 LF of intermittent streams, and approximately 410 LF of perennial streams. Permanent impacts to the Norwalk River are not expected.	No direct impacts. Indirect impacts from existing infrastructure, including roadway runoff and siltation, and inhibition of wildlife movement, would continue.
Groundwater	Construction activities	Potential groundwater pollutants during construction would be managed per Norwalk First Taxing District and Department of Public Health guidance. During operation, no new contamination sources would be added and no mitigation would be required.	Potential groundwater pollutants during construction would be managed per Norwalk First Taxing District and Department of Public Health guidance. During operation, no new contamination sources would be added and no mitigation would be required.	No change
Surface water	Construction activities; increased impervious surfaces	The Project would adhere to the requirements of Connecticut's Construction Stormwater General Permit, which requires developers and builders to implement a Stormwater Pollution Control Plan to prevent the movement of sediments off construction sites into nearby water bodies and to address the impacts of stormwater discharges from a project after construction is complete.	The Project would adhere to the requirements of Connecticut's Construction Stormwater General Permit, which requires developers and builders to implement a Stormwater Pollution Control Plan to prevent the movement of sediments off construction sites into nearby water bodies and to address the impacts of stormwater discharges from a project after construction is complete.	No change

³ A location is generally assumed to operate acceptably if it achieves a level of service (LOS) rating of D or better.

⁴ A change of 3 dB(A) or less is considered to be undetectable to the human ear in an outdoor environment.



Resource	Project Build Actions	21D Benefits/Impacts and Mitigation	26 Benefits/Impacts and Mitigation	No Build Benefits/Impacts and Mitigation
Floodplains	Construction activities	Alternative would have little impact on the 100-year floodplain and would not promote additional floodplain development.	Alternative would have little impact on the 100-year floodplain and would not promote additional floodplain development.	No impact to the floodplain or floodway.
Historic & Archaeological Resources	Ground disturbing activities including excavation, trenching, grading, pile driving	Alternative would have no impact to any of the three archaeological sites that were recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP in the Phase II testing.	Alternative is anticipated to impact two of the three archaeological sites that were recommended as NRHP-eligible in the Phase II testing.	No impact
Visual Impact Assessment	Removal and replacement of historic/scenic roadway elements; reconfiguring existing roadway geometry	Alternative imparts more overall noticeable visual impact on the Project Site than Alternative 26 as it includes more constructed features that add to the overall “highway” feel of the Project Site.	Alternative has fewer ramps and bridges than Alternative 21D and thus the cumulative visual impact to the Project Site can be considered lower than that of Alternative 21D.	No change
Merritt Parkway Landscape (Scenic Byway)	Removal and replacement of scenic landscape elements	Alternative’s larger footprint provides less opportunity to preserve and enhance natural features and systems, integrate the roadway into a park-like setting with appropriate topography and planting clusters, reduce maintenance, and design access and egress ramps as Parkway amenities.	Alternative’s compact nature provides the greatest opportunity to preserve and enhance natural features and systems, integrate the roadway into a park-like setting with appropriate topography and planting clusters, reduce maintenance, and design access and egress ramps as Parkway amenities.	No effect on the Parkway, but also no opportunities for remediating past circumstances that have diminished the Parkway’s defining characteristics
Hazardous Materials	Ground disturbing activities including excavation, trenching, grading, pile driving	No active spills, superfund sites or brownfields were identified within the Alternative’s footprint. Standard construction practices would address hazardous materials if encountered during construction.	No active spills, superfund sites or brownfields were identified within the Alternative’s footprint. Standard construction practices would address hazardous materials if encountered during construction.	No change
Benefit Cost Analysis	Site preparation, fill and grading activities. Bridge, ramp, and lane removal/construction	Benefits are greater than costs by a factor of 2.37.	Benefits are greater than costs by a factor of 3.89.	No benefits are generated by the No Build Alternative.
Climate Change and Resiliency	Reconfigured roadways resulting in changes to vehicle traffic	New structures would be designed based on more recent storm models/rainfall intensities and make the interchange more resilient to climate change-induced storm events.	New structures would be designed based on more recent storm models/rainfall intensities and make the interchange more resilient to climate change-induced storm events.	No change
Environmental Justice (EJ)	All above actions plus general construction activities, in EJ and Title VI communities in the Project vicinity	No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to minority or low-income populations.	No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to minority or low-income populations.	No negative and disparate impacts



Public Participation

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed for this Project. Public outreach and involvement efforts included a CEPA scoping meeting and Open House on October 17, 2017. The scoping session was posted in the Connecticut Environmental Monitor on (October 3, 2017) and was also noticed in multiple local media. CTDOT selected a public scoping meeting venue that met ADA compliance regulations and was easily accessible by bus, Metro-North Railroad, automobile and pedestrian routes. An additional public information meeting was held on October 23, 2019. CTDOT was available to respond to comments and questions throughout the process. Questions/comments and responses are reflected in the documentation in Appendix N.

Launched in August 2016, the Project website offers a publicly-available resource for information on the Project overview, history, schedule, and a documents library, which contains meeting materials and various Project documents. CTDOT also distributes Project newsletters with updates and ways for the public to reach out to the Project Team.

In addition, CTDOT formed a PAC in March 2017 which was composed of approximately 25 individuals representing a variety of local stakeholders including local neighborhood groups, interest groups, economic development groups, municipalities, transit providers, and major landowners / developers. The PAC has met throughout the course of the Project, providing key local knowledge as the study team progressed with the development of this document along with input on screening the alternatives.

Opposition to the Project

While there has been no opposition to the Project as a whole, and recognition that improvements to the interchange area are needed, there is a split in support to the alternatives being considered. Concerns and opposition associated with Alternative 26 include air, noise, and safety concerns with proposed traffic signals on Route 7. Concerns and opposition associated with Alternative 21D include modification of the original design intent of the Merritt Parkway and associated ramps. Additionally, stakeholders have noted concerns whether the 'No Build' alternative would be duly considered in this EA/EIE.

Intergovernmental Coordination

As part of NEPA and the CEPA compliance process, coordination with regulatory agencies has been initiated for input to clearly define the regulatory requirements for the Project. Table E1.1.2 provides an overview of Intergovernmental Coordination and Status.



Table E1.1.2 Agency Regulatory Coordination and Status

Permit/Process	Agency	Status
Section 404 Permit for filling or dredging waters of the United States.	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)	Concurrence on the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative as part of NEPA/404. Application for Section 404 permit would be made after FONSI approval.
Air Quality Conformity Determination	FHWA	Request for determination to be submitted following selection of a preferred alternative.
Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)	Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CTSHPO)	MOA expected following the circulation of the draft EA-EIE.
Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters Associated with Construction Activities (Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §22a-430b / §402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA))*	Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP)	Request for approval submitted following final design and prior to commencement of construction activities.
Floodplain Management Certification (CGS 25-68b - 25-68h), Inland Wetland and Watercourses Permitting on the State level	CTDEEP	Application for Flood Management Certification and Inland Wetland approval to be requested during the permitting stage of the Project, after a preferred alternative has been chosen and designed
Water Quality Certification (§401 of the CWA)*	CTDEEP	Request for approval submitted during final design and prior to commencement of construction activities.

* Federal program administered at the State level

Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project

State Project 0102-0358

CEPA Record of Decision

Appendix C

Scoping and Post Scoping Notices

Scoping Summary Report

Connecticut State Council on Environmental Quality

[CT.gov Home](#) [\(/\)](#) [Council on Environmental Quality](#) [\(/ceq\)](#) October 3, 2017



October 3, 2017

Special Notices

1. State Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut, 2018-2023 (State C & D Plan) - Revised Draft Available
2. Connecticut State Water Plan Final Draft Report: Notice of Request for Written Comments

Scoping Notices

1. University of Connecticut Athletic District Improvements, Mansfield
2. Replacement and Improvements for the East Avenue Railroad Bridge, Norwalk
3. **NEW!** Route 7 and Route 15 Interchange Project, Norwalk
4. **NEW!** Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan, Bridgeport

Post-Scoping Notices: Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) Not Required

1. **REVISED!** Derby Downtown Redevelopment Project, Derby

Environmental Impact Evaluations

1. Route 7 Wastewater Facility Decommission and Construction of New Pump Station and Force Main to South St. Wastewater Treatment Facility, Ridgefield

State Land Transfers

1. Proposed Sewer Easement, Pomfret

The next edition of the Environmental Monitor will be published on October 17, 2017.

[Subscribe to e-alerts \(/ceq/guestaccount/registration_form.asp\)](#) to receive an e-mail when the Environmental Monitor is published.

Notices in the Environmental Monitor are written by the sponsoring agencies and are published unedited. Questions about the content of any notice should be directed to the sponsoring agency.

Special Notices

1. Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut, 2018-2023 (State C & D Plan)

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has published a revised draft of the *Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut, 2018-2023 (Draft State C&D Plan)*, in accordance with CGS Section 16a-28(b). The *Draft State C&D Plan*, including the Draft Locational Guide Map, can be viewed at: <https://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2990&Q=587532&PM=1> (<https://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2990&Q=587532&PM=1>).

OPM, in cooperation with Regional Councils of Governments (COGs), will schedule, publicize, and conduct formal public hearings on the *Draft State C&D Plan* in each of the state's nine planning regions over a five-month period.

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on **October 16, 2017**.

Written comments should be sent to:

Name: Daniel Morley

Agency: Office of Policy and Management

Address: 450 Capitol Avenue, MS #54 ORG

Hartford, CT 06106-1379

Fax: 860-418-6486

E-Mail: Daniel.Morley@ct.gov (<mailto:Daniel.Morley@ct.gov>)

This notice is published in the Environmental Monitor at the request of the Office of Policy and Management to provide notice of the availability of the revised draft of Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut, 2018-2023. There is a strong link between this plan and CEPA.

2. Connecticut State Water Plan Final Draft Report: Notice of Request for Written Comments

The State Water Planning Council (WPC) is soliciting and collecting public comments on the Connecticut State Water Plan Final Draft Report. A copy of the draft plan and associated resources can be found at www.ct.gov/water. (<https://www.ct.gov/water>)

Members of the public may submit written comments on the plan. Comments must be filed no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 20, 2017.

Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. 22a-352(c), the (WPC) is required to provide a time period of not less than one hundred twenty days for public review and comment of the State Water Plan Draft Report prior to finalizing the State Water Plan Report and submitting it to the legislature. The WPC will fully consider all written and oral comments concerning the proposed state water plan and will make the electronic text of the finalized state water plan available on www.ct.gov/water, along with a report summarizing all public comments received, and (2) the changes made to the finalized state water plan in response to such comments and the reasons for such changes.

Written comments may be submitted electronically (recommended) or by mail.

To submit comments electronically, complete the web-based comment form at the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CT_StateWaterPlan (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CT_StateWaterPlan). This form provides the option to either (1) upload comments as a PDF or Word document (maximum size 16MB), or (2) input comments in a text box directly on the form.

To submit hard-copy comments by mail, send a letter to:

Public Utilities Regulatory Authority

10 Franklin Square

New Britain, CT 06051

ATTN: State Water Plan Draft Report Comments

All comments submitted using the methods above will become part of the formal public record and posted to www.ct.gov/water (<https://www.ct.gov/water>) for viewing.

Please report any technical issues you are experiencing with this website to the site administrator at wpc@ct.gov (<mailto:wpc@ct.gov>).

Scoping Notices

"Scoping" is for projects in the earliest stages of planning. At the scoping stage, detailed information on a project's design, alternatives, and environmental impacts does not yet exist. Sponsoring agencies are asking for comments from other agencies and from the public as to the scope of alternatives and environmental impacts that should be considered for further study. Send your comments to the contact person listed for the project by the date indicated.

The Following Scoping Notice has been submitted for review and comment.

1. Notice of Scoping for University of Connecticut Athletic District Improvements

Municipality where proposed project might be located: Mansfield

Address of Possible Project Location: Jim Calhoun Way on the University of Connecticut Storrs Campus, Mansfield, Connecticut

Project Description:

UConn proposes to construct improvements to the Athletic District in order to renovate and improve aging facilities consistent with NCAA Division I requirements. The 2015 Campus Master Plan identified a need for special use facilities and new athletic venues at the University. New stadium projects for soccer, baseball, softball, and throwing were identified as Master Plan priorities to be completed by 2020. The proposed improvements will provide special use facilities towards meeting the prioritized needs. Proposed improvements include:

In-situ construction of a new competition soccer pitch and new seating;

Construction of a new softball field surface and seating in or near its existing location;

Relocation and construction of new baseball field and seating;

Construction of a +/-54,000 square foot Performance Center including locker rooms, concessions, weight training, sports medicine, restrooms, and administrative offices for soccer, baseball, and softball;

Construction of a sound barrier for the chillers at the Frietas Ice Forum;

Minor improvements to the throwing area; and

Relocation of practice soccer field and maintenance facility to present location of baseball field.

New construction associated with this project will incorporate best practices of sustainability with a minimum goal of LEED Gold certified.

Project Maps: Click [here](#) to view a map of the project area. Click [here](#) to view a conceptual map of the proposed Athletic District improvements.

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: October 20, 2017

There will be a Public Scoping Meeting for this project at:

DATE: October 10, 2017

TIME: 7:00 p.m. (Doors will be open at 6:30 pm)

PLACE: Conference Room B of UConn's Facilities Operations & Building Services, 25 LeDoyt Road, Storrs, CT

Written comments should be sent to:

Name:	Paul Ferri, Environmental Compliance Professional
Agency:	University of Connecticut, Office of Environmental Policy
Address:	31 LeDoyt Road, Unit 3055, Storrs, CT 06269-3055
Fax:	(860) 486-5477
E-Mail:	paul.ferri@uconn.edu (mailto:paul.ferri@uconn.edu)

If you have questions about the public meeting, or other questions about the scoping for this project, contact:

Name:	Paul Ferri, Environmental Compliance Professional
Agency:	UConn Office of Environmental Policy

2. Notice of Scoping for the Replacement and Improvements of the East Avenue Bridge

Municipality where proposed project would be located: Norwalk, Connecticut

Address of Possible Project Location: Railroad Bridge over East Avenue

Project Description: The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) proposes to improve the East Avenue Railroad Bridge, the Metro-North Railroad station, and a nearby retaining wall in East Norwalk. The proposed work includes the following elements:

- Replace the East Avenue Railroad Bridge (State Bridge No. 03691R) with a new bridge structure;
- Construct elevators/stair structures for access to the station platforms;
- Lengthen existing station platforms along both sides of the new East Avenue Railroad Bridge and railroad;
- Replace a deteriorated timber retaining wall (Wall 27) along the south side of the railroad right-of-way; and
- Construct a temporary access road to the construction site off of Strawberry Hill Avenue.

The purpose of this project is to:

- Construct a resilient replacement bridge to address the state of disrepair and age of the existing bridge substructure and superstructure;
- Improve pedestrian accessibility, safety, and mobility at the East Norwalk Metro-North Railroad station and platforms, including compliance with Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements; and
- Improve a deteriorated wall condition whereby the existing retaining wall cannot support current loading from commuter, inter-city passenger, and freight train movements.

Project Maps: Click [here](#) to view a map of the project area.
Click [here](#) to view an aerial view of the project area.

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: Friday October 20, 2017

Any person can ask the sponsoring agency to hold a Public Scoping Meeting by sending such a request to the address below. If a meeting is requested by 25 or more individuals, or by an association that represents 25 or more members, the sponsoring agency shall schedule a Public Scoping Meeting. Such requests must be made by the close of business on Friday September 29, 2017.

Written comments and/or requests for a Public Scoping Meeting should be sent to

Name: Mr. Kevin C. Fleming, Transportation Planner

Agency: Connecticut Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Planning

Address: 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06111

E-Mail: info@walkbridgect.com (<mailto:info@walkbridgect.com>) (please use subject heading "East Avenue Bridge")

If you have questions about the scoping for this project, contact:

Name: Mr. John Hanifin, Project Manager, Facilities and Transit

Agency: Connecticut Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering and Construction

Address: 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06111

Phone: (860) 594-2899

E-Mail: info@walkbridgect.com (<mailto:info@walkbridgect.com>) (please use subject heading "East Avenue Bridge")

Additional information can be found online at: www.walkbridgect.com (<http://www.walkbridgect.com>).

3. Notice of Scoping for Route 7/15 Interchange Project

Municipality where proposed project might be located: Norwalk

Address of Possible Project Location: Merritt Parkway's Main Avenue and Route 7 interchanges (No. 39 and No. 40)

Project Description: The project proposes interchange improvements and new connections to improve system linkage between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway at Interchange No. 39; improve the mobility for all users at the Merritt Parkway's Main Avenue and Route 7 interchanges (No. 39 and No. 40); and improve safety in the vicinity of these interchanges.

Project objectives include:

- long-term serviceability of the affected roadways within the project area
- maximization of public investment with the project
- integration of the project roadways with the environment and neighborhood context
- provision for reasonably foreseeable future pedestrian and bicycle access through the project area

Project Map: Click [here](#) to view a map of the project area .

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: November 16, 2017

There will be a Public Scoping Meeting for this project at:

DATE: October 17, 2017

TIME: Open House for individual discussions with Department officials in the City Hall Rotunda will begin at 4:00 pm followed by formal presentations in the City Hall Auditorium at 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm. The same presentation will be given at both sessions.

PLACE: Norwalk City Hall, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT

NOTES: The meeting location is ADA accessible. If language assistance is needed please contact the Department of Transportation's Office of Communications at 860-594-3062 (voice only) at least five days prior to the meeting. Persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities may dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). Language assistance is provided at no cost to the public and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance.

Additional information about the project can be viewed online at: <http://www.7-15norwalk.com/> (<http://www.7-15norwalk.com/>)

Written comments should be sent to

Name: Andy Fesenmeyer, PE, Project Manager

Agency: Department of Transportation

Address:
2800 Berlin Turnpike
PO Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

Fax: (860) 594-3373

E-Mail: andy.fesenmeyer@ct.gov (<mailto:andy.fesenmeyer@ct.gov>)

If you have questions about the public meeting, or other questions about the scoping for this project, contact:

Name: Andy Fesenmeyer, PE, Project Manager

Agency: Department of Transportation

Address:
2800 Berlin Turnpike
PO Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

E-Mail: andy.fesenmeyer@ct.gov (<mailto:andy.fesenmeyer@ct.gov>)

The agency expects to release an Environmental Impact Evaluation for this project, for public review and comment, in Fall 2018

4. Notice of Scoping for the City of Bridgeport, Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan

Project Title: Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan

Municipality where proposed project might be located: Bridgeport

Project Location: Southern Bridgeport, bounded to the north by US Rte 1.

Project Description: Bridgeport is a combined sewer overflow (CSO) community, where both sanitary sewage and stormwater are carried in a single pipe. Approximately 28% of the municipality is served by combined sewers that are concentrated in the southern portion of Bridgeport; the oldest and most developed part of the city. During rainfall events of sufficient intensity and duration the capacity of the combined system is exceeded and may overflow. Built-in overflows were designed to prevent combined sewer flows from backing up into basements and surcharging onto streets.

The CSO Long Term Control Plan recommends a combination of solutions to be implemented in phases over a 30-year period that will prevent overflows for the 1 year, 24 hour duration design storm (2.47" rain). The solutions include sewer separation, "green" technologies, a CSO Storage tank and relief sewers. a re-evaluation of water quality and update to the plan will be conducted at 5-year intervals to determine the need for any modifications to the plan.

An EIE for the "Facility Plan 2000 Report" was noticed on August 5, 2009 and addressed water quality improvements around the central section of the Pequonnock River and Ash Creek. Project Phases 1-IV of the referenced LTCP have been completed pursuant to that report.

The remaining phases are the subject of this scoping notice. Improvements under these phases include:

Phase V: Improvements for Black Harbor's water quality

Phase VI and VII: Water quality improvements on the upstream portion of the Pequonnock River

Phase VIII: Cedar Creek, Bridgeport Harbor, and the final Pequonnock River improvement following the re-evaluation.

An update to the Long Term Control Plan schedule dated August 14, 2013 redistributed the phases by tasks as follows:

Phases I and II: Completed. Design and Construction River Street Pump Station, Storm Water Pump Station, Congress Street Siphon Liner, and Lining and Sewer Separation Projects. This is attributed to the Pequonnock River improvements and the phase included a monitoring program.



Route 7/15 Interchange Project

Norwalk, Connecticut

SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT



January 2019

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is focusing on improving connections between Route 7, the Merritt Parkway (Route 15), and Main Avenue in the City of Norwalk. The purpose of the project is to improve roadway system linkage between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway at Interchange No. 39; improve the mobility for vehicles at both the Merritt Parkway's Route 7 and Main Avenue Interchanges (No. 39 & No. 40) and improve the mobility for all users (motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists) along the immediate adjacent local roadway network (Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock); and improve safety in the vicinity of these interchanges.

The current layout of the Route 7/15 interchange does not allow direct connections between:

- Route 7 northbound to Merritt Parkway northbound;
- Route 7 southbound to Merritt Parkway northbound;
- Merritt Parkway southbound to Route 7 southbound and;
- Merritt Parkway southbound to Route 7 northbound.

The missing direct connections require travelers to use Main Avenue, resulting in heavy congestion and long delays. The project is included in Governor Dannel P. Malloy's "Let's GO CT" transportation plan to invest in transportation infrastructure.

The Merritt Parkway was constructed between 1934 and 1940. Planning for Route 7/15 interchange improvements began in the late 1990s. During this time, multiple alternatives were developed and analyzed as part of the environmental planning process. Once environmental documentation was completed, the preferred alternative advanced to final design. Construction began in 2005, with an original plan to reconstruct the interchange. However, in 2006, construction was stopped due to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) being sued under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Subsequent to the lawsuit, CTDOT formed and worked with a public stakeholder group to reevaluate the design alternatives. This group included residents, representatives from the Merritt Parkway Conservancy, public agencies, and other interested parties. Strong public consensus was reached on a new design alternative, identified as 21C, at a public meeting in 2009. However, due to a lack of funding, the project was unable to move forward.

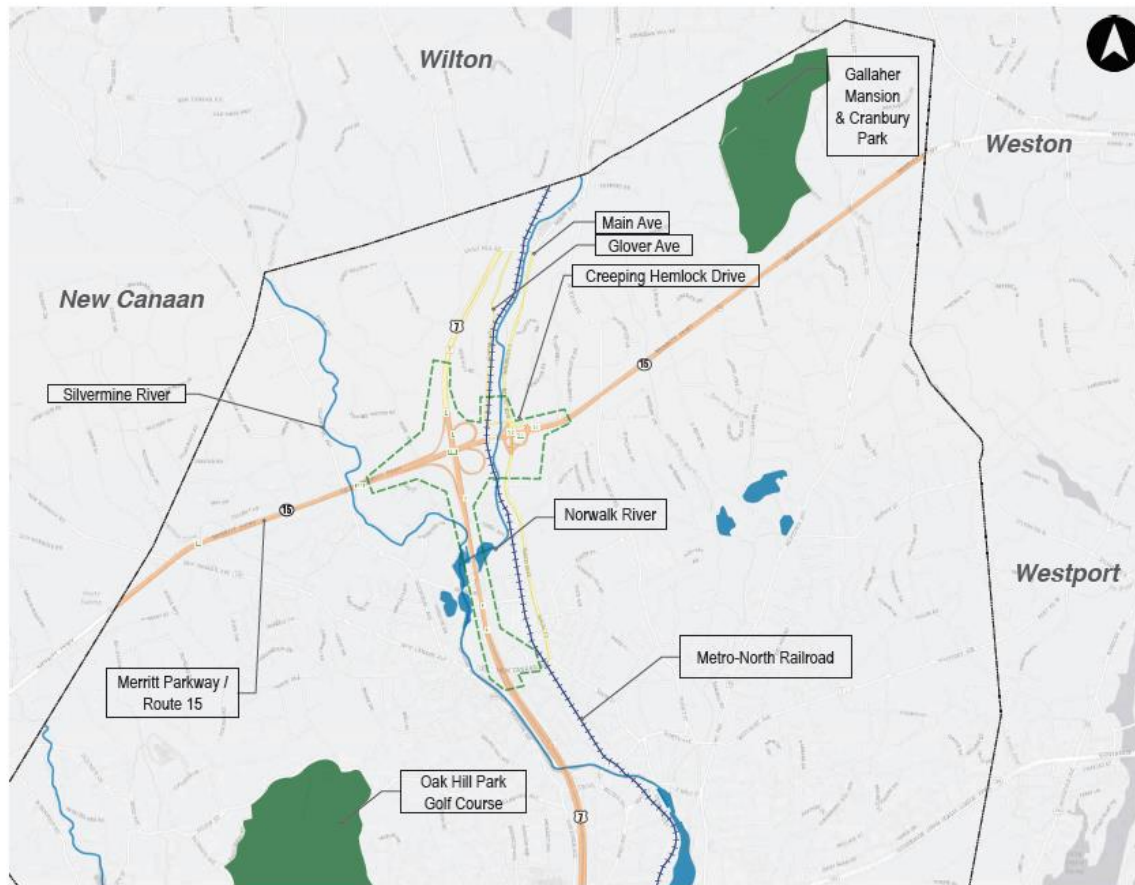
In 2016, CTDOT received a combination of Federal and state funds, and reinitiated the project. Since that time, the team has been meeting with stakeholders to explain how the project will proceed over the next two years and find out how community needs may have changed since 2009. As the project moves forward, CTDOT and its team of consultants are working with the City of Norwalk, the Town of Wilton, Merritt Parkway advocates, local businesses, bicycle and pedestrian organizations, historic preservation groups, and residents to improve connections in the area while maintaining the Merritt Parkway's historic character.

Since 2016, the project team has launched an intensive public involvement program, began reassessing design alternatives, and started work on the environmental document. The Route 7/15 Norwalk Project team has launched a website and hosted a public scoping meeting in the fall of 2017. The team is working with a Project Advisory Committee, and other public outreach efforts that have included two newsletters and ongoing social media updates on Facebook and Twitter.



Route 7/15 Norwalk

Project Area



Legend:

- +++++ Metro North Railroad
- Water Resources
- Local Streets (Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, Route 7 and Creeping Hemlock Drive)
- Route 7
- Route 15
- Exits
- City/Town Boundaries
- Gallaher Mansion Cranbury Park & Oak Hill Park Golf Course
- Project Area

CTDOT State Project #102-358

Chapter 2 Purpose of the Report

This report provides a summary of the scoping process and summarizes comments provided by the public and involved agencies during the scoping comment period. This report includes the following key elements:

- Summary of scoping process and format
- Documentation of all public and agency scoping comments
- Scoping display boards

As the Project Team conducts the Environmental Documentation process, consideration of substantive comments will be critical towards refining the reasonable range of alternatives; shaping the scope of the environmental review process.

Chapter 3 NEPA/CEPA and the Scoping Process

Both the federal government and the State of Connecticut have environmental review processes (NEPA) and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) respectively, to ensure that agencies consider the potential effects of projects that they are undertaking or approving. This project's environmental review will be conducted by CTDOT in accordance with NEPA, as amended; the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); and CEPA. The environmental document will be dually compliant with both NEPA and CEPA requirements. In addition, CTDOT will adhere to NEPA Implementing Regulations (23 CFR Part 771), and FHWA's Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents (Technical Advisory 6640.8A, October 30, 1987). The environmental document will address, as necessary, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 303); and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. The environmental document will describe environmental conditions; analyze the possible social, economic, and environmental impacts and benefits of the project; and identify proposed mitigation measures, as warranted.

Scoping is the first step in the environmental process. The Project Team designed this scoping process to solicit input on areas of the project such as its purpose and need, goals and objectives, the study area, alternatives, and potential impacts. Public scoping encourages early communication in the NEPA/CEPA process to help lead agencies gather public input and understand public concern on the project.

Scoping allows the public and relevant regulatory agencies to provide feedback early in the environmental process. Input gathered during the scoping process helps guide the refinement of alternatives. It sets the course for environmental review, ensuring a process that is thorough, comprehensive, and focused on key elements of concern. All public and agency comments submitted during scoping are summarized in this Scoping Summary Report, which will be made available to the public on the project website. This process helps determine the scope of the issues that should be addressed and provides the project team guidance on the development of project alternatives.

For this project, the official CEPA scoping period began on October 3, 2017 with the publication of the project in the Environmental Monitor and ended on November 16, 2017. A public information/scoping

meeting was held on October 17th, 2017. The meeting was intended to provide an overview of the project purpose and obtain comments from the public.

The next step in the process will be a public hearing for Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation. Once the environmental documentation phase is concluded and a course of action decided upon, project design may proceed.

Chapter 4 Summary of the Public Scoping Meeting

The CTDOT conducted a public scoping meeting on October 17, 2017, from 4:00 to 8:00 PM, at Norwalk City Hall, located at 125 East Ave, Norwalk, CT. The public meeting venue met Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliance regulations and was located in the City of Norwalk, easily accessible by bus, Metro-North Railroad, automobile and pedestrian routes.

The scoping meeting and related information was advertised in the following publications:

- Norwalk Hour
 - Display ad published on October 3rd and October 10, 2017
- Stamford Advocate
 - Display ad published on October 3rd and October 10, 2017
- Published in the Connecticut Environmental Monitor three times in 2017
 - October 3rd
 - October 17th
 - November 7th
- Norwalk's local television network (Channel 12) advertisements for two weeks beginning September 28, 2017
- Email blasts to project contact list sent September 26, 2017; and an email reminder sent on October 12, 2017
- Route 7/15 project website (www.7-15norwalk.com): notifications posted on the project website on September 26, 2017 and were available through the end of the scoping comment period November 16, 2017.
- CTDOT website (www.ct.gov/dot): a press release was issued by CTDOT on September 28, 2017.

At registration, attendees were asked to sign in and were provided an agenda and comment sheet and, if interest was expressed, the draft purpose and need document, the Route 7/15 Norwalk Fall 2017 newsletter, and a business card. Project Team members verbally explained the agenda, as well as the various ways to comment. Individuals interested in speaking were provided a speaker card upon registration.

The meeting began as an Open House at 4:00 PM, where 19 informational boards (all meeting material was also made available on the project website (www.7-15norwalk.com) were displayed around the room, each staffed by a Project Team member. The public was encouraged to view the boards and ask the Project Team any questions that they may have.

Informational boards included:

- Project Area Map
- Project Schedule/Timeline
- Purpose & Need

- NEPA/CEPA Process
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Historic Bridges
- Visual Resources (2)
- Land Use/Socio-Economic Conditions
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Conditions
- Peak Hour Traffic Levels of Service
- Data Collection Locations
- Origin/Destination Traffic Patterns (2)
- 2010-2014 Crashes in Merritt Parkway Corridor
- Alternate 26
- Alternate 21C

During the Open House, several copies of the Fall 2017 newsletter, purpose and need document and comment sheets were available at tables in the main board display area.

Duplicate formal presentations were given at 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM. Each presentation was followed by a public comment listening session. The presentation gave an overview of the project, as follows:

- Project Introduction
- Environmental Documentation Process
- Project Location and Key Environmental Considerations
- Landscape Setting
- Draft Purpose and Need Statement
- Review of Existing Alternatives
- Alternative Analysis Process
- Next Steps

Attendance included 42 members of the public, 5 elected officials, 2 members of the press, 4 consultant teams (BL Companies, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., VN Engineers and Stantec) and CTDOT representatives.

Scoping Comment Session

Following both the 5:30 and 7:30 presentations, members of the public were invited to provide oral comments on the project and the proposed alternatives for improvement. Two (2) elected officials and four (4) members of the public spoke after the 5:30 presentation and two (2) members of the public spoke after the 7:30 presentation. A copy of the comments of the elected officials and members of the public are included as Appendices to this scoping report.

In addition, attendees were directed to comment cards which they could fill out and return at the meeting or send via the US Postal Service. Attendees were also informed that comments could be submitted via the “Contact Us” page on the project website (www.7-15norwalk.com), as cited in outreach materials, and via email and post to Andy Fesenmeyer at CTDOT.

After the conclusion of the final 7:30 presentation and public comment period, Project Team members remained available to answer additional questions until the meeting closed at 8:00 PM.

Chapter 5 Summary of Scoping Comments by Theme

During the Public Scoping Comment period from October 3, 2017, to November 16, 2017, 50 members of the public submitted comments.

The Project Team identified six main themes: Traffic and Transportation, Alternatives, Environmental, Purpose and Need, Public Involvement, and Financing.

Topic	Number of Comments
Traffic and Transportation	18
Alternatives	10
Environmental	5 (<i>public and agency comments</i>)
Purpose and Need	11
Public Involvement	1
Financing	5
Total	50

Please note that some of these comments were about multiple topics, so the dominant topic of each comment was used to identify the comment theme.

All comments received during the Scoping Period will be reviewed and taken under consideration during the environmental documentation process (NEPA/CEPA).

Generalized Comments

The following pages provide a generalized description of the feedback on each topic, with the Project Team response below it. The original comments are verbatim in the scoping comment matrices included in Appendices A and B.

Topic: Traffic and Transportation

Commenters expressed concern about adding traffic signals on Route 7. The primary concern was that adding traffic signals will increase traffic backup on Route 7, especially during peak hours.

Project Team Response: Traffic operations, traffic safety, and land use are only a few of the many considerations that will be taken into account as part of the environmental review/alternatives analysis process for all alternatives.

Topic: Alternatives

Most of the commenters are supportive of the project moving forward but have differing opinions on the alternatives. Some commenters expressed concern and suggested that Alternative 26 will introduce noise/congestion problems due to the addition of traffic signals on Route 7.

Project Team Response: Traffic operations and traffic safety are some of the many considerations that will be made as part of the environmental review/alternatives analysis process for all alternatives.

Topic: Environmental

Most of the commenters about this topic were environmental groups dealing with water quality. A common theme within these comments were concerns about water quality protection in the Norwalk River, existing landscape preservation, and aquifer protection.

Project Team Response: CTDOT, as part of the environmental review process (NEPA/CEPA) will review a wide range of environmental and natural resource issues and will coordinate with appropriate agencies.

Topic: Purpose and Need

Common themes included the importance of finishing the project as it was intended and completing the Route 7 and Merritt Parkway connection.

Project Team Response: The purpose of the project is to improve roadway system linkage between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway at Interchange No. 39; improve the mobility for vehicles at both the Merritt Parkway's Route 7 and Main Avenue Interchanges (No. 39 & No. 40) and improve the mobility for all users (motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists) along the immediate adjacent local roadway network (Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock Drive); and improve safety in the vicinity of these interchanges.

Topic: Public Involvement

Comments were supportive of the public outreach efforts surrounding this project, and opportunities for input.

Project Team Response: Public input will continue to be a key driving force in this project. Please stay tuned to our website at www.7-15norwalk.com and related social media pages for further opportunities to get involved.

Topic: Financing

Many commenters expressed concern about the state budget, project funding sources, and whether allocating money for this project is the best investment of limited state resources.

Project Team Response: We are currently using Federal (80%) and State (20%) funding for this project, and construction is planned to be funded as part of the Governor's "Let's Go CT" transportation plan.

Appendix A

Comments Received During Scoping Meeting

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Alternatives	17-Oct-17	5:30 Scoping comment	Norwalk Planning Commission	Mike Mushak	I am a resident of Norwalk, a member of the City Planning Commission and former Bike Walk Task Force member. I want to share my vote in support of the Merritt Parkway Trail, it is integral to this region, as well as the Norwalk Valley Trail. How these two trails integrate is important. The coming of e-bikes is the way of future. The Merritt was once built for the future. We need to look forward towards innovation. Regarding Alternate 26: I wonder if the state can look at rotaries (roundabouts) instead of stoplights for Route 7? I also want to thank representatives Lavielle and Wilms for making case for tolls in the state. The state GOP has been dead set against tolls, but we're a national laughingstock – people come from ALL over the county going through our state and on our highways for free. Tolls will help pay for our transportation expenses.
Alternatives	17-Oct-17	7:30 Scoping comment	PAC	Jo-Anne Horvath	<p>(from written comments read at the meeting): My name is Jo-Anne Horvath and I reside at 1 Cobblers Lane, Norwalk, near Creeping Hemlock Drive, and I am very familiar with this project.</p> <p>Back in 1985 when Bill Collins was mayor of Norwalk, I wrote to his office concerning the exit ramp at Exit 40-B of the Merritt Parkway and since then I have been actively involved in this project.</p> <p>Back in 2008/2009 I was part of a group of neighborhood Stakeholders who met with the State Department of Transportation engineers for a year to develop a concept design for this interchange project. All of those stakeholders at that time chose Alternate 21-C as their preferred plan.</p> <p>I am now serving on the Project Advisory Committee reviewing the two alternates that were discussed this evening. But tonight I am speaking as a Norwalk resident. The design of Alternate 21-C involves flow-through ramps which would provide seamless <u>SAFE</u> connections between the Merritt Parkway and the Route 7 Connector. <u>This is the Alternate Plan I favor.</u></p> <p>Alternate 26, with two traffic signals on the Route 7 Connector highway, would pose a major traffic nightmare! From what I have seen of drivers in this area, they are in a hurry to get to their destinations. Do you think they want to stop for traffic lights? I don't think so. What about distracted drivers - talking on hand free cell phones and texting, etc.? I think too many accidents would happen with rear-end collisions - think about it. Alternate 26 is not the answer!</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Alternatives	17-Oct-17	5:30 Scoping comment	Resident	Marcia Kibbe	I am a 32-year resident and have been involved in this project since 2007-8. I have been very interested in project for a long time. This is a necessary project, and I'm glad the DOT is taking these plans into consideration. My main concern is with adding stoplight on Route 7 for Alternate 26. This is going to cause traffic backup, and I'm concerned about the accidents that could be happening, and I'm also concerned about noise from big trucks putting on their brakes to stop at those stoplights. If Route 7 becomes boulevard and there's stoplights there, what is going to happen to the land on either side of Route 7 – what kind of development is going to be there and how will development be controlled? We need this project and need to be pennywise but not pound foolish.
Environmental	17-Oct-17	7:30 Scoping comment	Resident	Diane Lauricella	Thank you for this scoping session. I agree with Ms. Horvath's comments. I was involved in the 2008 environmental studies, there was lots of work done on this project. As a former environmental consultant with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, I feel that revisiting all 26 alternates seems inefficient way to use state funds. Roundabouts are not popular yet, so 21C seems to be the most efficient use of state money. We need to move forward with this project. Businesses were promised that interchange would be replaced by now, and we don't want to go back to the drawing board. I understand that you must do due diligence, but the CTDOT did good job then (in 2008); we don't need to reinvent the wheel. I will speak with state representatives and senators to help this move forward. Whatever alternative you decide on, please be sure that any storm drains – especially in the southern cloverleaf area – do not harm the aquifer. Also, the Super 7 project needs to look at emergency response to possible contamination.
Financing	17-Oct-17	5:30 Scoping comment	Elected Official, State Rep. 143 District	Gail Lavielle	I am a representative of Norwalk. This was a very professional presentation. I've been to many meetings on this, and I appreciate the very good communication of the project team. Thank you. My comments are related to the current context of the financial situation of the state and its transportation budget. There is only \$2.8 B bonded for transportation this year, and this includes projects for good repair. This project is part of the bonded funding. Recently I met with Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Redeker. When he was asked the status of a 40-year transportation project, he replied that once we get to 2020 "it is Armageddon" in terms of funding. This comment says to me we need to be careful -- not that I advocate doing nothing -- but analysis of federal funding to come and the desperate uncertainty of state budget needs to be considered. The focus needs to be on crucial state good repair projects that are currently in the pipeline, and on projects that must be done first for safety etc., followed by a focus on projects classified as those "that would help". I live in Wilton, and I know this project would help, but we need to see this in light of other projects, so we can be sure we are not missing crucial construction safety projects. We have a lot of state-of-good-repair work to do.

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Financing	17-Oct-17	5:30 Scoping comment	Resident	Joe Cusack	The idea of putting an exit lane on the Merritt Parkway to access Route 7 does not work. Put the money somewhere else, like towards expanding Route 7 (Super 7). Is Route 7 always going to end at Grist Mill? It's a road to nowhere, you want to put an exit ramp to nowhere. I feel bad for people living on Grist Mill; their problem is not a needed exit but the dropped end of Route 7. I've been in area for 14 years, and I don't know why the DOT has spent so much money on this. The question should be: what are we doing with 7? If the state has an end plan for continuing Route 7 then we can deal with current situation of the interchange, but only if a larger plan for Route 7 is there. This is all happening with a state that doesn't have budget -- where is the money coming from? I just don't see it. Your presentation was spot on by the way.
Public Involvement	17-Oct-17	5:30 Scoping comment	Elected Official, State Rep. 142 District	Fred Wilms	What we can afford must be part of the conversation, I agree with Representative Lavielle on this. Regarding this project, I like that there has been ongoing outreach to stakeholders. I am happy that the DOT has kept Alternate 21C on the table, especially regarding the Silvermine community. Alternative 26 is a little out of the box, but it merits a further look. I thank the Department for speaking with stakeholders tonight. I also like all the bicycle and pedestrian options being shown. I encourage the DOT to keep the public outreach going, including social media, presentations like this, and more.
Purpose and Need	17-Oct-17	Comment Sheet	Resident		Close down the Interchange 40 entirely. Build just the completion of Route 8 and Merritt Parkway
Traffic & Transportation	17-Oct-17	5:30 Scoping comment	PAC	Elizabeth Stocker	Those were some good comments from Mr. Cusack: what is going to happen to Route 7? This question needs to be part of the scope of this project. Also, I'd like to ask the project team to pay attention to businesses that might benefit from an expansion of Route 7, and to this regard I hope that the environmental review takes into consideration our business and residents along the Route 7 corridor and the surrounding area.
Traffic & Transportation	17-Oct-17	Comment Sheet	Resident		Pay attention to Creeping Hemlock Drive - note people using that and West Rocks two and from the north to avoid Main Avenue during peak hours.

Appendix B
Comments Received During Scoping Comment Period

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Alternatives	22-Oct-17	Email	Resident	C. Martin Weimer	<p>My comment for 7/15 Norwalk Project concerning completion of the Merritt Pkwy and the Rt.7 Connector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Complete this important Rt.7 Connector interchange ASAP. <p>My comments for 7/15 Norwalk Project concerning the Merritt Pkwy and the Main Ave. interchange (exits 40A-40B):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The 40A-40B interchange will be redundant and should be removed. · The 40A-40B interchange has a high accident rate. · The 40A-40B interchange is no longer necessary because the Rt.7 Connector currently provides an interchange at New Canaan Ave and also access at Grist Mill Rd., both about (1) mile from the 40A-40B interchange. <p>I believe that if you were to "reverse engineer" these interchanges, in other words, if you already had the 7/15 interchange fully completed along with the current Rt.7 Connector interchanges at New Canaan Ave. and Grist Mill Rd.; you could not justify building the current 40A-40B interchange.</p> <p>If my above comments are implemented, the 7/15 Norwalk project becomes less complex and could be completed more quickly and at a much lower cost.</p> <p>Also, there will be no need to modify the Merritt Pkwy bridge over Main Ave. since the volume of traffic on Main Ave will be significantly lower and not need to be widened as proposed.</p>
Alternatives	22-Oct-17	Letter	Resident	Mary D. Campbell	<p>October 22, 2017 Andy Fesenmeyer; Connecticut Department of Transportation 2800 Berlin Turnpike; Newington, CT 06131</p> <p>Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer,</p> <p>I regret I was not able to attend the meeting at Norwalk City Hall on October 17th to share my concerns regarding the Merritt Parkway Route 7 redesign. As a lifetime resident of this area and a frequent user of the Route 7 Connector, I have several objections to the project.</p> <p>First, Alternate 26, a signalized boulevard, is unacceptable. The Route 7 Connector was built to better move traffic on the Route 7 corridor. Installing traffic signals to allow cars to access the Merritt Parkway from the connector is inefficient and will create a traffic nightmare. Look at how the traffic backs up now in the morning and evening during peak commutation times. Adding traffic signals would impede efficient traffic flow, reminiscent of the old Route 7. While it is unfortunate that the project was not done properly the first time and that the connector has not been built any further north, it has improved the flow of traffic on the north/south Route 7 corridor.</p> <p>Secondly, given the financial state of Connecticut, it is fiscally irresponsible to spend \$100 - \$200 million dollars on either alternative for this project. Access to the Merritt Parkway and the Route 7 Connector is readily available within a reasonable distance via Main Avenue/Route 7. The state should install proper signage to direct people to the current access point on Main Avenue/ Route 7.</p> <p>Lastly, does the State of Connecticut have any idea how many vehicles would use the new interchange? Please keep me informed of future meetings and updated information as it relates to this project.</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Alternatives	7-Nov-17	Email	Resident	Leigh Grant	At the end of the day, I favor "no build." However, in separate project, reengineer the cloverleaf at 40A and B as it is so outdated and dangerous. Originally, because the boulevard design was much less intrusive and costly, I was in favor of it. But it has become evident that the boulevard design will bring development with it - which I am not in favor of. 26 is far too costly and overbuilt for what it is meant to achieve if this highway is never continued to Danbury. It is a waste of money that Connecticut doesn't have.
Alternatives	8-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Jeremy Frost	I think the "boulevard plan" seems the most practical solution to the needs at hand.
Alternatives	9-Nov-17	Mailed Comment Sheet	Resident	Linda Lee	I think the connections proposed at 39A make no sense. To spend all that money so people travel North on the connector only to reach the end of the connector less than one mile away. People coming from the East can already access the Connector and get down to I-95. The only connections that need to be made are to allow people heading west access to I-95 via the Connector and people driving from I-95 who want to go West on the Merritt without getting off the highway.
Alternatives	14-Nov-17	Website	PAC	Joanne Ferrera	I prefer 21 or 21C alternatives. In my opinion, 26C will create a great deal of noise, unwanted lighting and air pollution in a residential neighborhood due to the traffic signals that will be installed. There is also the potential for more accidents.
Alternatives	15-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Michael Fetterer	Thank you for taking public comment for this project. Appreciate how you are taking the time to get this right. I want to see this project move forward and be as successful as possible. From the intersection of Routes 7 and 15, I live a short distance away, to the northwest. If you adopt the boulevard approach in Alternative 26, I am hoping / requesting you will do a full study on how quickly traffic may flow during peak hours. I would be curious about Rt 7 southbound traffic approaching the intersection to the north of Rt 15. If traffic backs up during peak periods, I would be concerned about air quality in the surrounding area, especially on summer afternoons when air quality sometimes gets into unhealthy levels.

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Environmental	25-Oct-17	Letter	Norwalk River Watershed Association	Louise Washer	<p>October 25, 2017 Andy Fesenmeyer; Project Manager, Rt. 7-15 Norwalk; CTDOT</p> <p>Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer, I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association, a non-profit organization that represents over 800 households and works to protect water quality and wildlife habitat in the Norwalk River watershed. We were impressed with the level of diligence and thought that has been given to this project as presented at the scoping presentation on October 17, and we wish you continued success. We realize public scoping is the initial stage of the project, and we appreciate the chance to offer input at this point before the environmental assessment has been done. Any work in the proposed design areas will impact the Norwalk River. Our main concerns are the effects on water quality and wildlife habitat of any construction done in or near the river and wetlands and of storm water runoff both during the construction process and after. We are especially concerned about threats to water quality because this is one of several large projects planned in the watershed.</p> <p>The Norwalk River is listed as a class B river, an impaired waterway, and the DOT has in the past used that classification as the starting point for claiming that no impact in water quality will result from its projects. While parts of the river are indeed impaired, it is important to understand that organizations like NRWA, Harbor Watch, Trout Unlimited and Norwalk River Watershed Initiative have been working for the last 20 years to improve water quality in the river. These groups use as a guide the Norwalk River Watershed Action Plan, which was written in 1998 and updated in 2011. Three years ago, these organizations and their volunteers were credited by the EPA with helping to remove two sections of the river from the impaired waterways list. As the EPA report stated, “the watershed approach has improved the river.” The EPA report credits our work, citing how, “Countless volunteers have participated in efforts to monitor water quality, identify pollution problems on the river, restore streamside buffers, and enhance trails and access points.” The goal of our work has been and remains to remove more sections of the river from the Impaired Waterways list and to protect the quality of the water entering Long Island Sound. This year alone, NRWA engaged close to 200 volunteers to help improve the watershed. Harbor Watch and Trout Unlimited are larger organizations with even more employees, interns and volunteers.</p> <p>Harbor Watch has been testing water quality in the river consistently for almost 20 years, so our community has a wealth of data to use as a guide for our work to protect the river as a resource. Additional challenges to water quality from construction or from added storm water runoff from new highway projects in the watershed threaten to set back our community’s efforts to improve water quality.</p> <p>In light of the number of projects in our area, NRWA requests that the CTDOT use a third party independent assessor to conduct its Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE) and that it include an assessment of the cumulative effects, including increases in storm water runoff, of the multiple CTDOT projects planned for the Norwalk River Watershed. The combined effect of the current planned projects makes rigorous storm water controls for each one all the more imperative. The current Walk Bridge EA/EIE does not go far enough in assessing impact; it simply states no permanent</p>

				<p>impact on water quality. The added storm water outlets will result in increased runoff. It is hard to believe there will be no impact. The current EIE states that to manage runoff, “drainage swales may be used and closed deck approach will be used where applicable.” We hope the EIE for the Route 7/15 Interchange will include specific plans for capturing runoff as well as a detailed assessment of damage to water quality, wetlands, wildlife, wildlife habitat and aquatic life during construction and from storm water runoff. We also request that the DOT add requirements for capturing runoff to its plans for the restoration of the Walk Bridge and the Yankee Doodle Bridge. The repair of these bridges and the Route 7 interchange alone present the CTDOT with a unique opportunity to reduce the amount of contaminated storm water runoff that enters the Norwalk River, the harbor, and the Sound. A concrete commitment to capturing runoff from bridges and highways that pass near wetlands and watercourses should be the baseline from which the CTDOT is working. Our community is owed these protections to water quality at the very least since it is bearing the brunt of the negative impact of years of construction on multiple projects. The Route 7/15 EIE should include consideration of the permanent damage that years of temporary impact from construction can cause to water quality, wetlands and aquatic life.</p> <p>We ask the CTDOT to clearly specify mitigation measures and erosion and sedimentation controls for any listed construction activities in and over the water and wetlands. We would like the DOT to provide information on what best management practices will be employed and who will oversee adherence to those standards, including who will test water quality during construction and how often. NRWA asks CTDOT to consult with Harbor Watch, which currently conducts regular water quality testing in the river, about how best to monitor impact during construction and protect wildlife habitat and water quality as well as the best ways to carry out mitigation efforts during and after construction.</p> <p>We hope to see very specific plans for protections to the wetlands and the river during construction. NRWA has had concerns about the effects on water quality and the severe damage to the riverbank at the site of repair work on the Perry Avenue Bridge. Protections of the riverbank vegetation and attempts to avoid compacting the soil are important to protecting the river from harmful runoff both during construction and after. Neither has been done at the Perry Avenue site.</p> <p>We hope the DOT will take this opportunity to improve the methods it uses to safeguard the river and surrounding wildlife habitat during construction projects. We also hope this project will be used as an opportunity to improve the mechanisms for capturing runoff from the intersection before it enters wetlands. We were very disappointed that such improvements were not included in the plans to repair the Yankee Doodle Bridge.</p> <p>Finally, NRWA fully supports the plans for including pedestrian and bike connections to the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT). We see the NRVT as a vital way to connect the community to the Norwalk River and natural resources our community has to offer. Thank you for considering NRWA’s concerns.</p> <p>Sincerely, Louise Washer, President Norwalk River Watershed Association</p>
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Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Environmental	16-Nov-17	Letter	Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	Linda Brunza	<p>To: Andy Fesenmeyer, PE, Project Manager, Department of Transportation, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington CT From: Linda Brunza- Environmental Analyst Telephone: 860-424-3739 Date: 11/16/2017 Email: Linda.Brunza@ct.gov Subject: Scoping Notice for Route 7/15 Interchange Project, Norwalk</p> <p>The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) received the Notice of Scoping for the Route 7/15 Interchange project proposed by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The project is an initiative to provide missing connections between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway and improve access and safety. The following comments are submitted for your consideration.</p> <p><u>Inland Wetlands and Watercourses:</u> A map of this area shows that portions of the project may be located in or adjacent to wetlands and watercourses. DEEP recommends that a certified soil scientist perform a reconnaissance of the site in order to determine whether it meets the federal definition of a wetland or watercourse as defined in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual and Regional Supplements for the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit program. If the reconnaissance identifies regulated areas, they should be clearly delineated. Any activity within federally regulated wetland areas or watercourses at the site may require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Further information is available on-line at Army Corps of Engineers, New England District or by calling the Corps Regulatory Branch in Concord, Massachusetts at 978-318-8338. If a permit is required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Water Quality Certificate will also be required from DEEP pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act. For further information, contact the Land and Water Resources Division at 860-424-3019. A fact sheet regarding 401 Water Quality Certification is available online at 401 Certification.</p> <p><u>Inland Fisheries:</u> DEEP Fisheries staff are working with the City of Norwalk and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the Flock Process Dam located on the Norwalk River in the next 12 months. Removal of the dam will restore diadromous fish to upstream portions of the watershed. The Flock Process Dam impounds water upstream to the bridge labeled as "E" on the map provided by DOT. DOT project planners should coordinate with DEEP Fisheries Division because the water level will change once the dam is removed, and the project boundaries of the dam removal are located within the DOT project boundaries. Any instream work must protect stream morphology and habitat quality. DEEP Fisheries will work with the DOT during the permit review process to ensure fisheries resources and habitats are protected. Time of year restrictions and mitigation will be considered if there is direct in-stream work. DEEP Inland Fisheries can be contacted at 860-424-3474.</p> <p><u>Stormwater Discharge During Construction:</u> Stormwater discharges from construction sites where one or more acres are to be disturbed, regardless of project phasing, require an NPDES permit from the Permitting & Enforcement Division. The General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters Associated with Construction Activities (DEEP-WPED-GP-015) will cover these discharges. Stormwater treatment systems must be designed to comply with the post-construction stormwater performance management requirements of the permit. These include post-construction performance standards requiring retention of the water quality volume and incorporating control measures for runoff reduction and low impact development practices. For further information, contact the division at 860-424-3018. The construction stormwater general permit registrations can now be filed electronically through DEEP's e-Filing system known as ezFile. Additional information can be found on-line at: Construction Stormwater GP.</p> <p><u>Threatened and Endangered Species:</u> DEEP Wildlife Division maintains the Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) maps. These maps represent the approximate locations of species listed by the State, pursuant to section 26-306 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as endangered, threatened or special concern. The maps are a pre-screening tool to identify potential impacts to state listed species. The applicant may be required to submit a Request for Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) State Listed Species Review Form (DEEP-APP-007) and all required attachments, including</p>

				<p>maps, to the NDDDB for further review. Additional information concerning NDDDB reviews and the request form may be found on-line at: NDDDB Requests.</p> <p><u>Air Quality:</u> DEEP Air Bureau typically recommends the use of newer off-road construction equipment that meets the latest EPA or California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards. If newer equipment cannot be used, equipment with the best available controls on diesel emissions including retrofitting with diesel oxidation catalysts or particulate filters in addition to the use of ultra-low sulfur fuel would be the second choice that can be effective in reducing exhaust emissions. The use of newer equipment that meets EPA standards would obviate the need for retrofits. DEEP also recommends the use of newer on-road vehicles that meet either the latest EPA or California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards for construction projects. These on-road vehicles include dump trucks, fuel delivery trucks and other vehicles typically found at construction sites. On-road vehicles older than the 2007-model year typically should be retrofitted with diesel oxidation catalysts or diesel particulate filters for projects. Again, the use of newer vehicles that meet EPA standards would eliminate the need for retrofits. Additionally, Section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) limits the idling of mobile sources to 3 minutes. This regulation applies to most vehicles such as trucks and other diesel engine-powered vehicles commonly used on construction sites. Adhering to the regulation will reduce unnecessary idling at truck staging zones, delivery or truck dumping areas and further reduce on-road and construction equipment emissions. Use of posted signs indicating the three-minute idling limit is recommended. It should be noted that only DEEP can enforce Section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the RCSA. Therefore, it is recommended that the project sponsor include language similar to the anti-idling regulations in the contract specifications for construction in order to allow them to enforce idling restrictions at the project site without the involvement of DEEP.</p> <p><u>Hazardous and Solid Waste:</u> DEEP staff determined that it is likely that there are hazardous or solid waste related concerns due to the historic nature of the site. Any project that has the potential for excavation contaminated soil must adhere to DEEP's laws, regulations, and policies governing such media. A site-specific hazardous materials management plan should be developed prior to commencement of construction and a health and safety plan for construction workers should also be prepared. The Development plans in urban areas that entail soil excavation should include a protocol for sampling and analysis of potentially contaminated soil. Soil with contaminant levels that exceed the applicable criteria of the Remediation Standard Regulations, that is not hazardous waste, is considered to be special waste. The disposal of special wastes, as defined in section 22a-209-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA), requires written authorization from the Waste Engineering and Enforcement Division prior to delivery to any solid waste disposal facility in Connecticut. If clean fill is to be segregated from waste material, there must be strict adherence to the definition of clean fill, as provided in Section 22a-209-1 of the RCSA. In addition, the regulations prohibit the disposal of more than 10 cubic yards of stumps, brush or woodchips on the site, either buried or on the surface. A fact sheet regarding disposal of special wastes and the authorization application form may be obtained at: Special Waste Fact Sheet.</p> <p><u>Flood Management:</u> Portions of the proposed project site are located within FEMA defined floodway and floodplain, Zone AE, on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map. The project must be certified by DOT as being in compliance with flood and stormwater management standards specified in section 25-68d of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) and section 25-68h-1 through 25-68h-3 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA). The DOT project team should coordinate with DEEP to be made aware of the design constraints under the Flood Management Statutes and National Flood Insurance Program regulations. For assistance on the program and additional information, contact the Land and Water Resources Division at 860-424-3019. A fact sheet regarding Flood Management Certification is available online at Flood Management Certification. Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. These comments are based on the reviews provided by relevant staff and offices within DEEP during the designated comment period. They may not represent all applicable programs within DEEP. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions concerning these comments.</p> <p>cc: Robert Hannon, DEEP/ OPPD</p>
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Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Environmental	16-Nov-17	Letter	Norwalk Valley River Trail Steering Committee	Jim Carter	<p>From: Norwalk Valley River Trail Steering Committee To: ConnDOT</p> <p>The Steering Committee of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) strongly supports the accommodation of the NRVT in the new, planned 7/15 interchange. The NRVT is a 38 mile Regional Trail Network traversing Fairfield County from Norwalk to Danbury and is identified in Gov. Malloy's 5 year transportation plan as <u>a trail of regional significance</u>. Portions of the trail are now complete in Norwalk and Wilton and active design and construction is currently underway in both communities. These projects will bring the NRVT to the Merritt Parkway Corridor -- the only barrier to a viable alternative transportation artery and valuable recreational and tourist resource.</p> <p>The 7/15 Interchange project comes into contact with the NRVT in three locations -- the NRVT West Branch follows the Eversource powerlines and will cross the Merritt near Perry Ave; the NRVT East Branch follows Glover Ave. and will cross under the Merritt near Main Ave (or TBD). The West Branch also will cross the reconfigured Grist Mill interchange near Belden Hill Rd. Completion of each of these three trail intersections is crucial to public safety. Otherwise, pedestrians, cyclists, commuters and tourists coming from the north and south will encounter abrupt dead-ends and be forced onto dangerous stretches of busy commercial thoroughfares.</p> <p>To summarize, the NRVT Steering Committee respectfully request ConnDOT complete these three essential trail accommodations to:</p> <p>A) improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists on an existing and expanding regional trail network for commuting, tourism, and recreational use;</p> <p>B) improve public safety;</p> <p>C) satisfy the goal of ConnDOT to improve multi-modal transportation options in urban areas;</p> <p>D) enhance both commercial and residential property values along the trail as well as further leverage the state and federal investment in the trail, redevelopment projects and incentives to businesses in proximity to the trail; and</p> <p>E) comply with FHWA's policy of accommodating all users in federally funded projects [reference 23 U.S.C. 217 (e) (g)]</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Jim Carter Norwalk Representative Norwalk River Valley Trail Steering Committee</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Environmental	20-Nov-17	Letter	Department of Public Health	Lori Mathieu	<p>November 16, 2017 Mr. Andy Fesenmeyer, P.E. Department of Transportation, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546, Newington, CT 06131-7546 Re: Notice of Scoping for Route 7/15 Interchange Project Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer:</p> <p>In April of 2017, the Department of Transportation provided a Draft of the Purpose and Need Statement for the above noted project to the Department of Public health (DPH) for review and comment. The purpose and need statement was reviewed by the Drinking Water Section Source Assessment and Protection Unit and the attached comments were provided for your consideration.</p> <p>The DPH thanks you for the opportunity for early input into this process. At this time, the DPH has no additional comments to offer. If you have any questions, please contact Pat Bisacky of my staff at 860-509-7333 or via email at Patricia.Bisacky@ct.gov.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lori J. Mathieu, Public Health Section Chief, Drinking Water Section -----July Comments-----</p> <p>July 11, 2017 Mr. Andy Fesenmeyer, Transportation Supervising Engineer State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering and Construction 2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546, Newington, CT 06131-7546 Re: Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation Route 7/Route 15 Interchange, Norwalk, Connecticut State Project No. 102-358; DPH Project No. 2017-0166 Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer,</p> <p>The Department of Public Health (DPH) Drinking Water Section (DWS) is in receipt of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement for the subject EA /EIE. The proposed project area is partially within the Level A Aquifer Protection Area (APA) of the Kellogg Deering Wellfield, a source of public drinking water for the customers of the Norwalk First Taxing District.</p> <p>Planning, construction and long-term maintenance of the proposed interchange improvements should take into consideration protection of the source of public drinking water. Please consider addressing the following items in the EA/EIE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the planning phase the following should be addressed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Norwalk First Taxing District should be consulted to provide the delineation of the Level A APA and specific source protection recommendations. b. The storm water system should be designed to minimize impacts to the water quality of the source of public drinking water. 2. Construction should be conducted in accordance with the DPH's "General Construction Best Management Practices for Sites within a Public Drinking Water Supply Area " 3. Long-term maintenance of the proposed project should include measures that protect the long-term purity of the public drinking water source of supply. Such measures include but may not be limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utilizing mechanical means to control vegetation rather than applying pesticides, b. Reducing application rates of de-icing chemicals to the road surfaces in the winter in a manner that balances the needs for public safety with the potential public health impacts resulting from increasing sodium and chloride concentrations in the source water for public drinking water supplies. c. Maintaining the storm water system in accordance with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's "General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Department of Transportation Separate Storm Sewer Systems". <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide early and put into this draft document. Sincerely, Lori J. Mathieu, Public Health Section Chief, Drinking Water Section</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Financing	19-Oct-17	Website	Resident	Jackie Slaker	To save money, consider not having the exit from southbound Merritt to Rt 7 north. Road ends shortly
Financing	13-Nov-17	Website	Resident	William Langley	project does not seem necessary after all this time. Better to save the money.
Financing	13-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Leroy Staib	This state is broke no more borrowing
Purpose and Need	19-Oct-17	Website	Resident	Jackie Slaker	This was not presented yet, but I can see if happening. The Merritt has done very well without lighting. There is no need to put lights all around the intersections. Does not help safety. Just an electric company sales pitch. Not fair to the neighboring country communities.
Purpose and Need	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Celeste Burton	Any politician supporting this project will never get the votes of my family again. Any business that supports this project will never get the support of my family again. Any person or entity that interferes with the environment that protects the flora and fauna in this area should be run out of our community.
Purpose and Need	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Art Petrone Jr.	This is a must have! It will promote a safer road and accelerate passenger car movement.
Purpose and Need	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Jim Depasquale	It is well over do! The minimal impact on a few residence should not supersede the major need of a much larger portion of the community. Commerce, safety and the overwhelming benefit to Fairfield county should come first!
Purpose and Need	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Holly Mazzeo	I work at 801 Main Avenue. This whole corridor is problematic for cars
Purpose and Need	13-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Donald Sauvigne	The interchange must be upgraded to the original intent of proper entrance and exit ramps from all directions to support the traffic patterns on Rt 15 and Rt 7. This is very important to the improved flow of traffic, reducing accident prone area, and enhancing the economic competitiveness of Connecticut and Fairfield country for attractive work environments---which need quality road networks with ease of access. Thank you.
Purpose and Need	13-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Martin Katz	This project will never improve traffic until you solve the mowing problem! The Merritt is congested daily Spring, Summer, and Fall with delays due to lane closures for mowing. Why not save money and make commuters happy by eliminating mowing efforts/expense and spread grass killer down. Building a new 7/15 interchange will make travel on Merritt any better. Fix the mowing problem and help everyone out!

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Purpose and Need	14-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Frank Taylor	If/When any work is done, it should maintain the "Merritt Parkway" look for design vs the industrial/freeway look of the current rt7/15 bridge or the rt 8/Merritt bridge. Before spending time and money on what is a bad design originally, money and time should be spent actually finishing projects that seem to be under construction for months/years or are significant safety maintenance issues. I95 east of New Haven and in Fairfield Cty seem to be continually under construction - barriers, cones and signs up but it can be stretches of months at a time when there is no apparent work actually being done. When work is done, please cleanup all of the signs, etc. about construction vs leaving them for months after work is complete. On RT 53 in Redding there are still construction ahead signs when work has been apparently complete for months.
Purpose and Need	14-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Craig Esslinger	PLEASE. PLEASE. Finish this project as it was intended. I have been commuting from CT to Long Island for 30 years. This has turned into a quality of life issue. The Merritt Parkway Historical Society does not represent the users of this major thru fare. They should not hold us hostage. Finish the interchange. Make the parkway accessible going North and South from Route 7. Make it a legitimate choice to go Northbound from I-95/exit 15 when things are not moving. The Grist Mill area is a disaster. Route 7 should be extended into Wilton (Wolfpit Rd).
Purpose and Need	20-Nov-17	Email	Resident	Frank Agostino	<p>Andy,</p> <p>I attended one of the City Hall meetings related to the Route 7-15 proposed work that is under review. Thank you for taking the time to answer some of my questions.</p> <p>I am a resident of Lakewood Drive and very concerned about the outcome of this project. I see the good, but I am also worried about the surrounding impact. I realize there is compromise in most of the decisions we make and this project is no different. There is always the challenge of satisfying the want, versus the need. I hope that the needs are addressed properly and the wants do not drive an incorrect outcome.</p> <p>I reviewed the "Landscape Master Plan for the Merritt Parkway" document. It shares a vision with expectation that the designer wanted allowing the cars passing along to have a beautiful driving experience. I believe that the people who live along the Merritt Parkway desire that same grand vision just from a different perspective.</p> <p>Attached is a representation of my thoughts/inputs related to the Route 7-15 project showing a concept that may satisfied everyone.</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my comments.</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Traffic & Transportation	19-Oct-17	Website	Resident	Marilyn Slaker	The Route 7 expressway should remain as such. Adding traffic signals does not make any sense. If you add traffic signals, the road becomes like the existing route 7 main ave. The purpose of the expressway is to avoid the traffic signals. Traffic signals will create further back-up which already exists at certain hours at the grist mill exit.
Traffic & Transportation	26-Oct-17	Website	Resident	Kevin Karl	Stoplights on the connector is ridiculous. We need normal free flowing ramps between the two highways.
Traffic & Transportation	26-Oct-17	Website	Resident	Michael Stenger	As a resident of the area impacted by the currently-faulty 7-15 interchange, I feel the time is finally right to correct the deficient exit situation once and for all. I would strongly discourage the addition of any traffic lights along Route 7; at rush hour, traffic is bad enough, and the Grist Mill terminal is backed up significantly for over an hour most nights. Essential to the completion of a cohesive and modern interchange is the expansion of Route 7 itself. I have read that there is a proposal to extend Route 7 up into Wilton; that would significantly alleviate local traffic and the entire 7/15 interchange project make much more sense. Placing traffic lights on Route 7 would only further increase congestion on Main Ave., West Rocks Road, and other auxiliary north-south streets in that area of the city. Please take the future into consideration; as Norwalk continues to add apartment buildings and its population increases at a rapid rate, we need to be able to keep our transportation system modern, effective, and efficient for Norwalk's citizenry.

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Traffic & Transportation	3-Nov-17	Email	PAC	Sue Prosi	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Route 7 and 15 interchange project . As a south western CT regional transportation planner who worked to identify transportation system deficiencies and evaluate and advance projects to improve transportation system efficiency, connectivity, safety, operations and mobility choices for decades, the Route 7 & at project is essential and long overdue.</p> <p>Given the uncertainty of funding for any of the currently proposed build options, I recommend that additional alternatives be added to the NEPA and CEPA analyses that promote improvements to the Route 123-Route 719-Route 7 corridor. Any of these strategic improvements will provide benefits to the traveling public, the economy and the environment. Mobility for the public and safety responders will be enhanced. Regardless of which build option is funded and constructed in the future, the identified alternatives are needed and are not “throw away” investments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corridor safety and operational improvements and enhancement of pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodations between Route 123 at Riverside (Norwalk) to Route 719 and Route 7 at Route 33 (Wilton); and Route 7 Gristmill improvements. 2. Corridor safety and operational improvements and enhancement of pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodations between Route 123 at Riverside Avenue (Norwalk) to Route 719 at Route 7 and Gristmill (Norwalk); and Route 7 Gristmill improvements. 3. Improvement of Route 7 and Gristmill intersections and transitions to Route 7 north of Gristmill, Route 719 south of Gristmill, and Gristmill west to Belden Hill and its intersection with Belden Hill. <p>In addition, a commuter parking lot on property owned by the state in the vicinity of Route 7 and Gristmill should be included in all designs. Proponents of extension of the Norwalk River Trail and the Route 7 expressway north should realize that the commuter parking lot will not be an obstruction to either the multiuse trail or future expressway. A public commuter lot will provide a location for parking for users of the Norwalk River Trail, rideshare and transit users in the interim period before the multiuse trail is extended or gaps filled. Extension of the Route 7 expressway requires extensive environmental assessment and mitigation as well as significant funding and reversal of the political sentiment of corridor towns and people north of Norwalk who oppose extension of the expressway.</p> <p>Would you please add my name to the project contact list so I may keep up with the project progress? Also, please confirm receipt and disposition of my comments. Merritt Parkway Exit 40, Glover and Creeping Hemlock, should be evaluated and upgraded to the maximum extent possible if the full interchange project (#102-358) is not selected as the preferred alternative.</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Traffic & Transportation	7-Nov-17	Email	Resident	Mike Armstrong, IIDA	<p>Hi.</p> <p>I understand you are taking comments regarding the potential road construction project. I work at FactSet in Merritt 7 so I drive the area frequently.</p> <p>I'm sure you've heard most of these already:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The traffic backing up onto the Merritt parkway from people trying to get off during rush hour is a big problem. These ramps have to be expanded and improved (including the route 33 exit southbound) 2. The route 7 connector currently goes from 4 lanes down to 2 and then opens back up to three at the stop light. I never understood the pinch down. 3. I agree that the connector should be attached to the Merritt parkway for northbound access as well as the current southbound. 4. Seems like there could be another exit near the end of the route 7 connector that swings down to Glover ave. Maybe feeding onto Glover southbound only. Maybe an entrance to the connector from Glover as well...up and over. That might help all the congestion at the grist mill stop light.
Traffic & Transportation	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Adolph Neaderland	<p>The current expressway 7 was designed to siphon traffic (especially trucks) away from Main Ave.</p> <p>Even though not completed thru Wilton, it did.</p> <p>If traffic lights are added at the 15/main ave/7 (to save money), the incentive will be compromised. and traffic on Main Ave will increase. A lost cause!</p> <p>That intersection design should revert back to the community approved design of a couple of years ago - all without traffic lights.</p>
Traffic & Transportation	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Janet Trifero	<p>YES, WE NEED A EXIT FOR MERRITT NORTH, AND EXIT FROM MERRITT TO CONNECTOR. ALSO, THE LITE FROM THE STREET WHEN EXITING NORTH FROM THE MERIT 44? AND CROSS OVER TO MERRITT 7 OFFICES NEEDS TO BE COORDINATED WITH THE NEXT LITE WHEN YOU TAKE A LEFT TO SILVERMINE! IT MAKES NO SENSE TO WAIT A VERY LENGTHY TIME THEN MAKE THE LEFT, ONLY TO HAVE A RED LITE AGAIN! PLSE FIX!!</p>
Traffic & Transportation	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Cathleen Lesko	<p>I agree that the Rt to Merritt Parkway project is very needed. I oppose the installation of light poles on the Merritt Parkway. I believe it is unnecessary and may lead to higher speeds.</p>
Traffic & Transportation	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Roma Stibravy	<p>The interchanges should be completed, taking into account the MINIMAL impact on the abutting Silvermine neighborhoods.</p> <p>Also, the Route 7 Expressway should be completed to Danbury over the objections of Wilton and Ridgefield. If a survey were taken today you would get many more YES votes from these two towns.</p>

Topic	Date	Comment Type	Organization	Name	Comment
Traffic & Transportation	7-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Maureen DeNunzio	Norwalk definitely needs a connection from Rt 7 N directly to Merritt Parkway N, and same for South. Too much congestion. Need better traffic flow, less frustration and road rage.
Traffic & Transportation	8-Nov-17	Website	Resident	John Bradley	This project is decades overdue. I fully support the addition of access points for Routes 7
Traffic & Transportation	8-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Elsa Obuchowski	The Route 7 / Merritt Parkway interchange should be a regular full cloverleaf. I heard they were talking about adding stop lights on Route 7, which would be counterproductive. Just make it a full cloverleaf. Thank you.
Traffic & Transportation	11-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Frank Hennessy	i agree rt 7 north should connect to Merritt north and Merritt south should connect to rt 7 south
Traffic & Transportation	13-Nov-17	Email	Resident	Steve Pond	Hello,The Merritt Pkwy/Route 7 interchange should be completed with access to north and southbound from both directions. I believe it could be and should be done WITH adequate oversight so that the environmental impact is lessened as much as possible. the DOT CERTAINLY has the capability to figure out how to do this project and at the same time keep the environmental impact to a minimum AND maintain the aesthetic qualities of the parkway.Let us reason together! The benefits of doing so will be well worth the extra budget needed by the project so that the concerns are addressed.
Traffic & Transportation	13-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Frederic Chiu	Reducing traffic between 15/Exit 40 and 7/Exit 2 would allow safer turns out of commercial driveways onto 123, particularly left turns. i.e. exiting South out of McDonalds, or exiting North out of Citgo. Currently, one can wait many minutes before being able to exit/turn left.
Traffic & Transportation	14-Nov-17	Email	Resident	Martin Katz	Gentlemen: I have commuted on Merritt Parkway for 40 years and unsure this Project has any value to commuters! Since you live out of area and have not commuted in morning and afternoon rush hours, I don't believe you have any reality of the real problems with traffic! I would advise you and the rest of the Project Team to spend one week traveling south on the Merritt at 7:30 am from Trumbull to Greenwich, and north at 5:15pm from Greenwich to Trumbull. Also, please travel any week day during Spring, Summer, and Fall mid day and explain why the State mows the parkway and closes lanes causing massive traffic delays? Why this expense in labor and equipment to mow Merritt Parkway? Why not spread grass killer down in spring and reduce traffic delays on Merritt? The 7/15 Interchange will not improve anything and you cannot understand unless until you experience commuting on Merritt Parkway!
Traffic & Transportation	15-Nov-17	Website	Resident	Karen Murray	We need a way to connect Rt 7 N with RT 15 N. Difficult for commuting each day!!!

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Appendix C

Website Comments, Individual Letters, Agency Letters and Emails

Website Comments

Alternatives

First: Jeremy

Last: Frost

Email:

Home Zip: 06890

Work Zip:

Comment: I think the "boulevard plan" seems the most practical solution to the needs at hand.

Alternatives

First: joanne

Last: Ferrera

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip:

Comment: I prefer 21 or 21C alternatives. In my opinion, 26C will create a great deal of noise, unwanted lighting and air pollution in a residential neighborhood due to the traffic signals that will be installed. There is also the potential for more accidents.

Alternatives

First: Michael

Last: Fetterer

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip: 10604

Comment: Thank you for taking public comment for this project. Appreciate how you are taking the time to get this right. I want to see this project move forward and be as successful as possible.

From the intersection of Routes 7 and 15, I live a short distance away, to the northwest. If you adopt the boulevard approach in Alternative 26, I am hoping / requesting you will do a full study on how quickly traffic may flow during peak hours. I would be curious about Rt 7 southbound traffic approaching the intersection to the north of Rt 15. If traffic backs up during peak periods, I would be concerned about air quality in the surrounding area, especially on summer afternoons when air quality sometimes gets into unhealthy levels.

Financing

First: Leroy
Last: Staib
Email:
Home Zip:
Work Zip:
Comment: This state is broke no more borrowing

Financing

First: Jackie
Last: Slaker
Email:
Home Zip: 06851
Work Zip:
Comment: To save money, consider not having the exit from southbound Merritt to Rt 7 north. Road ends shortly

Financing

First: william
Last: langley
Email:
Home Zip: 06903
Work Zip:
Comment: project does not seem necessary after all this time. Better to save the money.

Purpose and Need

First: Donald
Last: Sauvigne
Email:
Home Zip: 06897
Work Zip: 06897
Comment: The interchange must be upgraded to the original intent of proper entrance and exit ramps from all directions to support the traffic patterns on Rt 15 and Rt 7. This is very important to the improved flow of traffic, reducing accident prone area, and enhancing the economic competitiveness of Connecticut and Fairfield country for attractive work environments---which need quality road networks with ease of access. Thank you.

Purpose and Need

First: Martin

Last: Katz

Email:

Home Zip: 06897

Work Zip:

Comment: This project will never improve traffic until you solve the mowing problem! The Merrit is congested daily Spring, Summer, and Fall with delays due to lane closures for mowing. Why not save money and make commuters happy by eliminating mowing efforts/expense and spread grass killer down. Building a new 7/15 interchange will make travel on Merrit any better. Fix the mowing problem and help everyone out!

Purpose and Need

First: Frank

Last: Taylor

Email:

Home Zip: 06896

Work Zip: 06829

Comment: If/When any work is done, it should maintain the "Merritt Parkway" look for design vs the industrial/freeway look of the current rt7/15 bridge or the rt 8/merritt bridge. Before spending time and money on what is a bad design originally, money and time should be spent actually finishing projects that seem to be under construction for months/years or are significant safety maintenance issues. I95 east of New Haven and in Fairfield Cty seem to be continually under construction - barriers, cones and signs up but it can be stretches of months at a time when there is no apparent work actually being done.

When work is done, please cleanup all of the signs, etc about construction vs leaving them for months after work is complete. On RT 53 in Redding there are still construction ahead signs when work has been apparently complete for months.

Purpose and Need

First: CRAIG

Last: ESSLINGER

Email:

Home Zip: 06883

Work Zip: 01597

Comment: PLEASE. PLEASE. Finish this project as it was intended. I have been commuting from CT to Long Island for 30 years. This has turned into a quality of life issue. The Merrit Parkway Historical Society does not represent the users of this major thru fare. They should not hold us hostage. Finish the interchange. Make the parkway accessible going North and South from Route 7. Make it a legitimate choice to go Northbound from I-95/exit 15 when things are not moving. The Grist Mill area is a disaster. Route 7 should be extended into Wilton (Wolfpit Rd).

Purpose and Need

First: Jackie

Last: Slaker

Email:

Home Zip: 06851

Work Zip:

Comment: This was not presented yet, but I can see if happening. The Merritt has done very well without lighting. There is no need to put lights all around the intersections. Does not help safety. Just an electric company sales pitch. Not fair to the neighboring country communities.

Purpose and Need

First: Celeste

Last: Burton

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip:

Comment: Any politician supporting this project will never get the votes of my family again.

Any business that supports this project will never get the support of my family again.

Any person or entity that interferes with the environment that protects the flora and fauna in this area should be run out of our community.

Purpose and Need

First: Art

Last: Petrone Jr

Email:

Home Zip: 06851

Work Zip: 06851

Comment: This is a must have! It will promote a safer road and accelerate passenger car movement.

Purpose and Need

First: Jim

Last: Depasquale

Email:

Home Zip: 06854

Work Zip: 06854

Comment: It is well over do! The minimal impact on a few residence should not superceed the major need of a much larger portion of the community. Commerce, safety and the overwhelming benefit to Fairfield county should come first!

Purpose and Need

First: Holly

Last: Mazzeo

Email:

Home Zip: 06612

Work Zip: 06851

Comment: I work at 801 Main Avenue. This whole corridor is problematic for cars

Traffic & Transportation

First: Marilyn

Last: Slaker

Email:

Home Zip: 06851

Work Zip:

Comment: The Route 7 expressway should remain as such. Adding traffic signals does not make any sense. If you add traffic signals, the road becomes like the existing route 7 main ave. The purpose of the expressway is to avoid the traffic signals. Traffic signals will create further back-up which already exists at certain hours at the grist mill exit.

Traffic & Transportation

First: Kevin

Last: Karl

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip:

Comment: Stoplights on the connector is ridiculous. We need normal free flowing ramps between the two highways.

Traffic & Transportation

First: Michael

Last: Stenger

Email:

HomeZip: 06851

Work Zip: 06851

Comment: As a resident of the area impacted by the currently-faulty 7-15 interchange, I feel the time is finally right to correct the deficient exit situation once and for all. I would strongly discourage the addition of any traffic lights along Route 7; at rush hour, traffic is bad enough, and the Grist Mill terminal

is backed up significantly for over an hour most nights. Essential to the completion of a cohesive and modern interchange is the expansion of Route 7 itself. I have read that there is a proposal to extend Route 7 up into Wilton; that would significantly alleviate local traffic and the entire 7/15 interchange project make much more sense. Placing traffic lights on Route 7 would only further increase congestion on Main Ave., West Rocks Road, and other auxiliary north-south streets in that area of the city. Please take the future into consideration; as Norwalk continues to add apartment buildings and its population increases at a rapid rate, we need to be able to keep our transportation system modern, effective, and efficient for Norwalks citizenry.

Traffic & Transportation

First: Adolph

Last: Neaderland

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip:

Comment: The current expressway 7 was designed to siphon traffic (especially trucks) away from Main Ave. Even tho not completed thru Wilton, it did.

If traffic lights are added at the 15/main ave/7 (to save money), the incentive will be compromised. and traffic on Main Ave will increase. A lost cause!

That intersection design should revert back to the community approved design of a couple of years ago - all without traffic lights.

Traffic & Transportation

First: Janet

Last: Trifero

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip:

Comment: YES, WE NEED A EXIT FOR MERRITT NORTH, AND AND EXIT FROM MERIT TO CONNECTOR. ALSO, THE LITE FROM THE STREET WHEN EXITING NORTH FROM THE MERIT 44? AND CROSS OVER TO MERRIT 7 OFFICES NEEDS TO BE COORDINATED WITH THE NEXT LITE WHEN YOU TAKE A LEFT TO SILVERMINE! IT MAKES NO SENSE TO WAIT A VERY LENGTHY TIME THEN MAKE THE LEFT, ONLY TO HAVE A RED LITE AGAIN! PLSE FIX!!

Traffic & Transportation

First: Cathleen

Last: Lesko

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip: 06850

Comment: I agree that the Rt to Merritt Parkway project is very needed. I oppose the installation of light poles on the Merritt Parkway. I believe it is unnecessary and may lead to higher speeds.

Traffic & Transportation

First: roma

Last: stibravy

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip:

Comment: The interchanges should be completed, taking into account the MINIMAL impact on the abutting Silvermine neighborhoods.

Also, the Route 7 Expressway should be completed to Danbury over the objections of Wilton and Ridgefield. If a survey were taken today you would get many more YES votes from these two towns.

Traffic & Transportation

First: Maureen

Last: DeNunzio

Email:

Home Zip: 06854

Work Zip: 00000

Comment: Norwalk definitely needs a connection from Rt 7 N directly to Merritt Parkway N, and same for South. Too much congestion. Need better traffic flow, less frustration and road rage.

Traffic & Transportation

First: John

Last: Bradley

Email:

Home Zip: 06840

Work Zip: 06840

Comment: This project is decades overdue. I fully support the addition of access points for Routes 7

Traffic & Transportation

First: Elsa

Last: Obuchowski

Email:

Home Zip: 06851

Work Zip: 06851

Comment: The Route 7 / Merritt Parkway interchange should be a regular full cloverleaf. I heard they were talking about adding stop lights on Route 7, which would be counterproductive. Just make it a full cloverleaf. Thank you.

Traffic & Transportation

First: frank

Last: hennessy

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip: 06901

Comment: i agree rt 7 north should connect to merritt north and merritt south should connect to rt 7 south

Traffic & Transportation

First: Frederic

Last: Chiu

Email:

Home Zip: 06880

Work Zip: 06880

Comment: Reducing traffic between 15/Exit 40 and 7/Exit 2 would allow safer turns out of commercial driveways onto 123, particularly left turns. i.e. exiting South out of McDonalds, or exiting North out of Citgo. Currently, one can wait many minutes before being able to exit/turn left.

Traffic & Transportation

First: Karen

Last: Murray

Email:

Home Zip: 06850

Work Zip: 06851

Comment: We need a way to connect Rt 7 N with RT 15 N. Difficult for commuting each day!!!

Emailed Comments

Alternatives

From: Martin Weimer Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2017

2:52 PM

To: Fesenmeyer, Andy A.

Subject: 7/15Norwalk Project

My comment for 7/15 Norwalk Project concerning completion of the Merritt Pkwy and the Rt.7 Connector:

- Complete this important Rt.7 Connector interchange ASAP.

My comments for 7/15 Norwalk Project concerning the Merritt Pkwy and the Main Ave. interchange (exits 40A-40B):

- The 40A-40B interchange will be redundant and should be removed.
- The 40A-40B interchange has a high accident rate.
- The 40A-40B interchange is no longer necessary because the Rt.7 Connector currently provides an interchange at New Canaan Ave and also access at Grist Mill Rd., both about (1) mile from the 40A-40B interchange.

I believe that if you were to "reverse engineer" these interchanges, in other words, if you already had the 7/15 interchange fully completed along with the current Rt.7 Connector interchanges at New Canaan Ave. and Grist Mill Rd.; you could not justify building the current 40A-40B interchange.

If my above comments are implemented, the 7/15 Norwalk project becomes less complex and could be completed more quickly and at a much lower cost.

Also, there will be no need to modify the Merritt Pkwy bridge over Main Ave. since the volume of traffic on Main Ave will be significantly lower and not need to be widened as proposed.

C. Martin Weimer

Alternatives

From: Leigh Grant

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2017 1:28:26 PM

To: Andy.Fesenmeyer@ct.gov; Ken Livingston

Subject: Public Scoping Reply

At the end of the day, I favor "no build." However, in separate project, reengineer the cloverleaf at 40A and B as it is so outdated and dangerous. Originally, because the boulevard design was much less intrusive and costly, I was in favor of it. But it has become evident that the boulevard design will bring development with it - which I am not in favor of. 26 is far too costly and overbuilt for what it is meant to achieve if this highway is never continued to Danbury. It is a waste of money that Connecticut doesn't have.

Purpose and Need

From: frank agostino

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 12:48 PM

To: Fesenmeyer, Andy A.

Subject: Route 7-15 Comments for your review

Andy,

I attended one of the City Hall meetings related to the Route 7-15 proposed work that is under review.

Thank you for taking the time to answer some of my questions.

I am a resident of Lakewood Drive and very concerned about the outcome of this project. I see the good, but I am also worried about the surrounding impact. I realize there is compromise in most of the decisions we make and this project is no different. There is always the challenge of satisfying the want, versus the need. I hope that the needs are addressed properly and the wants do not drive an incorrect outcome.

I reviewed the "Landscape Master Plan for the Merritt Parkway" document. It shares a vision with expectation that the designer wanted allowing the cars passing along to have a beautiful driving experience. I believe that the people who live along the Merritt Parkway desire that same grand vision just from a different perspective.

Attached is a representation of my thoughts/inputs related to the Route 7-15 project showing a concept that may satisfied everyone.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my comments.

Frank Agostino

NOTE: The following two pages are a PowerPoint presentation sent as an attachment to the email from Frank Agostino, November 16, 2017

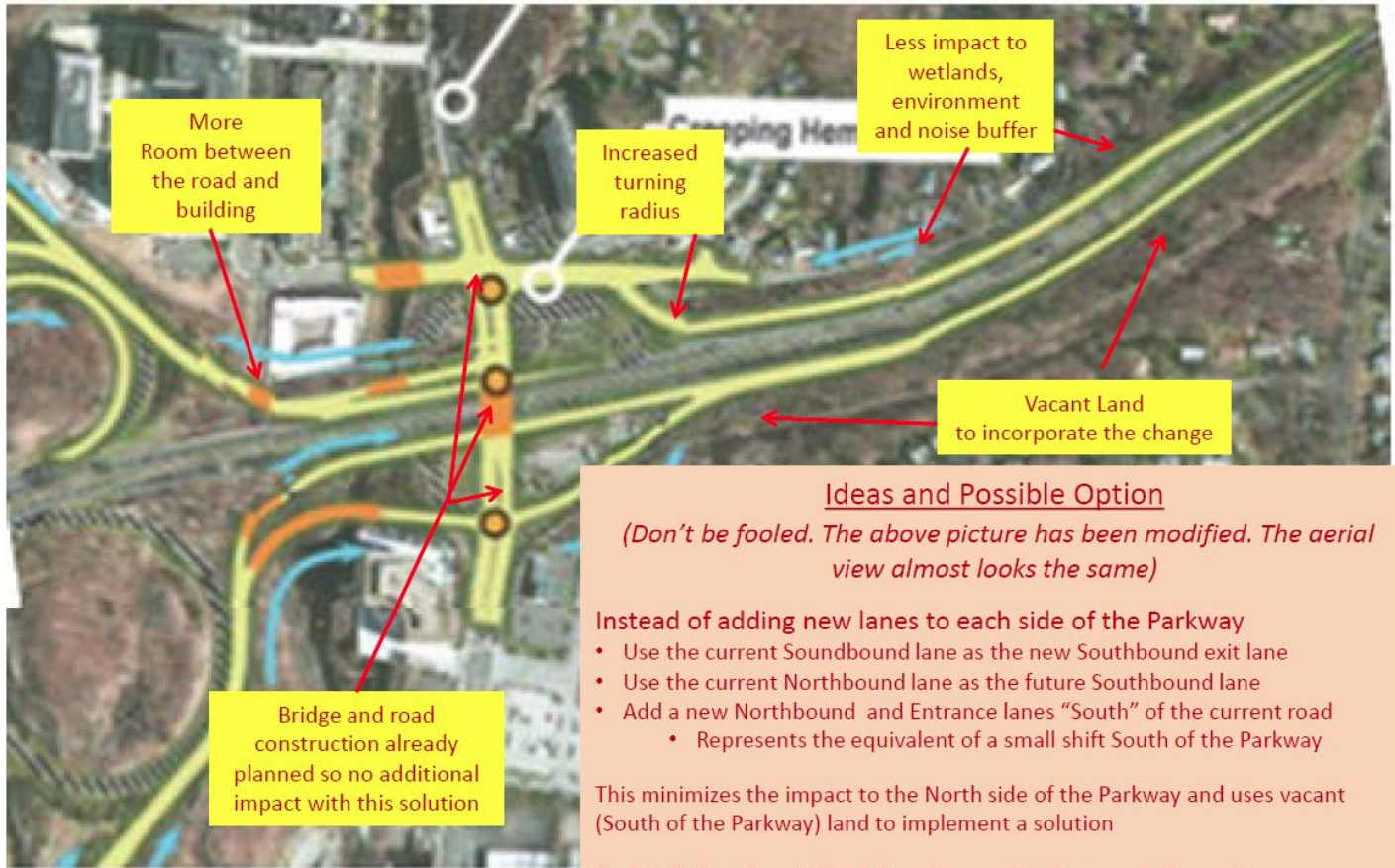
Route 7/15 Norwalk Solution Offering

11-16-2017



**Current Picture was provided at the Town Hall meeting showing
1-proposed option hat capture the intent of most solutions**

Offered Solution "4U"



Ideas and Possible Option

(Don't be fooled. The above picture has been modified. The aerial view almost looks the same)

Instead of adding new lanes to each side of the Parkway

- Use the current Southbound lane as the new Southbound exit lane
- Use the current Northbound lane as the future Southbound lane
- Add a new Northbound and Entrance lanes "South" of the current road
 - Represents the equivalent of a small shift South of the Parkway

This minimizes the impact to the North side of the Parkway and uses vacant (South of the Parkway) land to implement a solution

Back to "Wants" and "Needs" as discussed in the town hall meetings

- A solution that solves the problem with minimal impact to the surrounding environment

Modified View (using current picture with proposed alterations)

Traffic & Transportation

November 7, 2017

From: Mike Armstrong IIDA

Hi.

I understand you are taking comments regarding the potential road construction project. I work at FactSet in Merritt 7 so I drive the area frequently.

I'm sure you've heard most of these already:

1. The traffic backing up onto the Merritt parkway from people trying to get off during rush hour is a big problem. These ramps have to be expanded and improved (including the route 33 exit southbound)
2. The route 7 connector currently goes from 4 lanes down to 2 and then opens back up to three at the stop light. I never understood the pinch down.
3. I agree that the connector should be attached to the Merritt parkway for northbound access as well as the current southbound.
4. Seems like there could be another exit near the end of the route 7 connector that swings down to Glover ave. Maybe feeding onto Glover southbound only. Maybe an entrance to the connector from Glover as well...up and over. That might help all the congestion at the grist mill stop light.

Thanks...

Mike

Michael Armstrong IIDA

Project Manager, Workplace Design

FactSet (NYSE, NASDAQ: FDS)

Office: 203-810-2349

www.factset.com

Traffic & Transportation

From: Sue Prosi

Date: Fri, Nov 3, 2017 at 11:07 AM

Subject: Route 7 and 15 Interchange Comments

To: projectteam@7-15norwalk.com

Re: Comments on Route 7 & 15 Interchange Project

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Route 7 and 15 interchange project . As a south western CT regional transportation planner who worked to identify transportation system deficiencies and evaluate and advance projects to improve transportation system efficiency, connectivity, safety, operations and mobility choices for decades, the Route 7 & at project is essential and long overdue.

Given the uncertainty of funding for any of the currently proposed build options, I recommend that additional alternatives be added to the NEPA and CEPA analyses that promote improvements to the Route 123-Route 719-Route 7 corridor. Any of these strategic improvements will provide benefits to the traveling public, the economy and the environment. Mobility for the public and safety responders will be enhanced. Regardless of which build option is funded and constructed in the future, the identified alternatives are needed and are not “throw away” investments.

1. Corridor safety and operational improvements and enhancement of pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodations between Route 123 at Riverside (Norwalk) to Route 719 and Route 7 at Route 33 (Wilton); and Route 7 Gristmill improvements.
2. Corridor safety and operational improvements and enhancement of pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodations between Route 123 at Riverside Avenue (Norwalk) to Route 719 at Route 7 and Gristmill (Norwalk); and Route 7 Gristmill improvements.
3. Improvement of Route 7 and Gristmill intersections and transitions to Route 7 north of Gristmill, Route 719 south of Gristmill, and Gristmill west to Belden Hill and its intersection with Belden Hill.

In addition, a commuter parking lot on property owned by the state in the vicinity of Route 7 and Gristmill should be included in all designs. Proponents of extension of the Norwalk River Trail and the Route 7 expressway north should realize that the commuter parking lot will not be an obstruction to either the multiuse trail or future expressway. A public commuter lot will provide a location for parking for users of the Norwalk River Trail, rideshare and transit users in the interim period before the multiuse trail is extended or gaps filled. Extension of the Route 7 expressway requires extensive environmental assessment and mitigation as well as significant funding and reversal of the political sentiment of corridor towns and people north of Norwalk who oppose extension of the expressway.

Would you please add my name to the project contact list so I may keep up with the project progress? Also, please confirm receipt and disposition of my comments.

Contact information:

Sue Prosi

Traffic & Transportation

From: Steve Pond Sent: Monday, November 13,

2017 1:38 PM To: Fesenmeyer, Andy A.

Subject: Merritt Pkwy - Route 7 interchange

Hello,

The Merritt Pkwy/Route 7 interchange should be completed with access to north and southbound from both directions. I believe it could be and should be done WITH adequate oversight so that the environmental impact is lessened as much as possible. The DOT CERTAINLY has the capability to figure out how to do this project and at the same time keep the environmental impact to a minimum AND maintain the aesthetic qualities of the parkway.

Let us reason together! The benefits of doing so will be well worth the extra budget needed by the project so that the concerns are addressed.

Thank you,

Steve Pond

11 Getner Trail

Norwalk

Traffic & Transportation

From: Marty Katz

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 8:43 AM

To: Andy.Fesenmeyer@ct.gov; Ken Livingston <klivingston@fhiplan.com>

Subject: Rte 7/15 Interchange Project

Gentlemen:

I have commuted on Merritt Parkway for 40 years and unsure this Project has any value to commuters! Since you live out of area and have not commuted in morning and afternoon rush hours, I don't believe you have any reality of the real problems with traffic! I would advise you and the rest of the Project Team to spend one week traveling south on the Merritt at 7:30 am from Trumbull to Greenwich, and north at 5:15pm from Greenwich to Trumbull. Also, please travel any week day during Spring, Summer, and Fall mid day and explain why the State mows the parkway and closes lanes causing massive traffic delays? Why this expense in labor and equipment to mow Merritt Parkway? Why not spread grass killer down in spring and reduce traffic delays on Merritt? The 7/15 Interchange will not improve anything and you cannot understand unless until you experience commuting on Merritt Parkway!

Thank you,

Martin Katz

Mailed Comments



Route 7-15 Norwalk

October 17, 2017

Let Us Know What You Think!

I think the connections proposed at 39A make no sense. To spend all that money so people travel North on the Connector only to reach the end of the connector less than one mile away. People coming from the East can already access the Connector & get down to I-95. The only connections that need to be made are to allow people heading west access to I-95 via the Connector & people driving from I-95 who want to go West on the Merritt without getting off the highway.

Name: Linda Lee
Email: LINDAMR52@AOL.COM
Address: 6 Rae Lane
Norwalk, CT 06852

Alternatives

Mary D. Campbell
704 Ridgefield Road
Wilton, CT 06897
Meg3057@aol.com
203-858-3569

October 22, 2017

Andy Fesenmeyer
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer,

I regret I was not able to attend the meeting at Norwalk City Hall on October 17th to share my concerns regarding the Merritt Parkway Route 7 redesign. As a lifetime resident of this area and a frequent user of the Route 7 Connector, I have several objections to the project.

First, Alternate 26, a signalized boulevard, is unacceptable. The Route 7 Connector was built to better move traffic on the Route 7 corridor. Installing traffic signals to allow cars to access the Merritt Parkway from the connector is inefficient and will create a traffic nightmare. Look at how the traffic backs up now in the morning and evening during peak commutation times. Adding traffic signals would impede efficient traffic flow, reminiscent of the old Route 7. While it is unfortunate that the project was not done properly the first time and that the connector has not been built any further north, it has improved the flow of traffic on the north/south Route 7 corridor.

Secondly, given the financial state of Connecticut, it is fiscally irresponsible to spend \$100 - \$200 million dollars on either alternative for this project. Access to the Merritt Parkway and the Route 7 Connector is readily available within a reasonable distance via Main Avenue/Route 7. The state should install proper signage to direct people to the current access point on Main Avenue/Route 7.

Lastly, does the State of Connecticut have any idea how many vehicles would use the new interchange?

Please keep me informed of future meetings and updated information as it relates to this project.

Sincerely,


Mary D. Campbell

Mailed Agency Comments

Environmental



79 Elm Street • Hartford, CT 06106-5127

www.ct.gov/deep

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

To: Andy Fesenmeyer, PE, Project Manager
Department of Transportation, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington CT

From: Linda Brunza- Environmental Analyst

Telephone: 860-424-3739

Date: 11/16/2017

Email: Linda.Brunza@ct.gov

Subject: Scoping Notice for Route 7/15 Interchange Project, Norwalk

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) received the Notice of Scoping for the Route 7/15 Interchange project proposed by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The project is an initiative to provide missing connections between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway and improve access and safety.

The following comments are submitted for your consideration.

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses

A map of this area shows that portions of the project may be located in or adjacent to wetlands and watercourses. DEEP recommends that a certified soil scientist perform a reconnaissance of the site in order to determine whether it meets the federal definition of a wetland or watercourse as defined in the [1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual and Regional Supplements](#) for the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit program. If the reconnaissance identifies regulated areas, they should be clearly delineated. Any activity within federally regulated wetland areas or watercourses at the site may require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Further information is available on-line at [Army Corps of Engineers, New England District](#) or by calling the Corps Regulatory Branch in Concord, Massachusetts at 978-318-8338. If a permit is required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Water Quality Certificate will also be required from DEEP pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act. For further information, contact the Land and Water Resources Division at 860-424-3019. A fact sheet regarding 401 Water Quality Certification is available online at [401 Certification](#).

Inland Fisheries

DEEP Fisheries staff are working with the City of Norwalk and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the Flock Process Dam located on the Norwalk River in the next 12 months. Removal of the dam will restore diadromous fish to upstream portions of the watershed. The Flock Process Dam impounds water upstream to the bridge labeled as "E" on the map provided by DOT. DOT project planners should coordinate with DEEP Fisheries Division because the water level will change once the dam is removed, and the project boundaries of the dam removal are located within

the DOT project boundaries. Any instream work must protect stream morphology and habitat quality. DEEP Fisheries will work with the DOT during the permit review process to ensure fisheries resources and habitats are protected. Time of year restrictions and mitigation will be considered if there is direct in-stream work. DEEP Inland Fisheries can be contacted at 860-424-3474.

Stormwater Discharge During Construction

Stormwater discharges from construction sites where one or more acres are to be disturbed, regardless of project phasing, require an NPDES permit from the Permitting & Enforcement Division. The *General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters Associated with Construction Activities* (DEEP-WPED-GP-015) will cover these discharges. Stormwater treatment systems must be designed to comply with the post-construction stormwater performance management requirements of the permit. These include post-construction performance standards requiring retention of the water quality volume and incorporating control measures for runoff reduction and low impact development practices. For further information, contact the division at 860-424-3018. The construction stormwater general permit registrations can now be filed electronically through DEEP's e-Filing system known as ezFile. Additional information can be found on-line at: [Construction Stormwater GP](#).

Threatened and Endangered Species

DEEP Wildlife Division maintains the Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) maps. These maps represent the approximate locations of species listed by the State, pursuant to section 26-306 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as endangered, threatened or special concern. The maps are a pre-screening tool to identify potential impacts to state listed species. The applicant may be required to submit a *Request for Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) State Listed Species Review Form* (DEEP-APP-007) and all required attachments, including maps, to the NDDB for further review. Additional information concerning NDDB reviews and the request form may be found on-line at: [NDDB Requests](#).

Air Quality

DEEP Air Bureau typically recommends the use of newer off-road construction equipment that meets the latest EPA or California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards. If newer equipment cannot be used, equipment with the best available controls on diesel emissions including retrofitting with diesel oxidation catalysts or particulate filters in addition to the use of ultra-low sulfur fuel would be the second choice that can be effective in reducing exhaust emissions. The use of newer equipment that meets EPA standards would obviate the need for retrofits.

DEEP also recommends the use of newer on-road vehicles that meet either the latest EPA or California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards for construction projects. These on-road vehicles include dump trucks, fuel delivery trucks and other vehicles typically found at construction sites. On-road vehicles older than the 2007-model year typically should be retrofitted with diesel oxidation catalysts or diesel particulate filters for projects. Again, the use of newer vehicles that meet EPA standards would eliminate the need for retrofits.

Additionally, Section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) limits the idling of mobile sources to 3 minutes. This regulation applies to most vehicles such as trucks and other diesel engine-powered vehicles commonly used on construction sites. Adhering to the regulation will reduce unnecessary idling at truck staging zones, delivery or truck dumping areas and further reduce on-road and construction equipment emissions. Use of posted signs indicating the three-minute idling limit is recommended. It should be noted that only DEEP

can enforce Section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the RCSA. Therefore, it is recommended that the project sponsor include language similar to the anti-idling regulations in the contract specifications for construction in order to allow them to enforce idling restrictions at the project site without the involvement of DEEP.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

DEEP staff determined that it is likely that there are hazardous or solid waste related concerns due to the historic nature of the site. Any project that has the potential for excavation contaminated soil must adhere to DEEP's laws, regulations, and policies governing such media.

A site-specific hazardous materials management plan should be developed prior to commencement of construction and a health and safety plan for construction workers should also be prepared. The Development plans in urban areas that entail soil excavation should include a protocol for sampling and analysis of potentially contaminated soil. Soil with contaminant levels that exceed the applicable criteria of the Remediation Standard Regulations, that is not hazardous waste, is considered to be special waste. The disposal of special wastes, as defined in section 22a-209-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA), requires written authorization from the Waste Engineering and Enforcement Division prior to delivery to any solid waste disposal facility in Connecticut. If clean fill is to be segregated from waste material, there must be strict adherence to the definition of clean fill, as provided in Section 22a-209-1 of the RCSA. In addition, the regulations prohibit the disposal of more than 10 cubic yards of stumps, brush or woodchips on the site, either buried or on the surface. A fact sheet regarding disposal of special wastes and the authorization application form may be obtained at: [Special Waste Fact Sheet](#).

Flood Management

Portions of the proposed project site are located within FEMA defined floodway and floodplain, Zone AE, on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map. The project must be certified by DOT as being in compliance with flood and stormwater management standards specified in section 25-68d of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) and section 25-68h-1 through 25-68h-3 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA). The DOT project team should coordinate with DEEP to be made aware of the design constraints under the Flood Management Statutes and National Flood Insurance Program regulations. For assistance on the program and additional information, contact the Land and Water Resources Division at 860-424-3019. A fact sheet regarding Flood Management Certification is available online at [Flood Management Certification](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. These comments are based on the reviews provided by relevant staff and offices within DEEP during the designated comment period. They may not represent all applicable programs within DEEP. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions concerning these comments.

cc: Robert Hannon, DEEP/ OPPD



Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.

New Canaan, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, Wilton, CT; Lewisboro, NY

October 25, 2017

Andy Fesenmeyer
Project Manager
Rt. 7-15 Norwalk
CTDOT

Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer

I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association, a non-profit organization that represents over 800 households and works to protect water quality and wildlife habitat in the Norwalk River watershed. We were impressed with the level of diligence and thought that has been given to this project as presented at the scoping presentation on October 17, and we wish you continued success.

We realize public scoping is the initial stage of the project, and we appreciate the chance to offer input at this point before the environmental assessment has been done. Any work in the proposed design areas will impact the Norwalk River. Our main concerns are the effects on water quality and wildlife habitat of any construction done in or near the river and wetlands and of storm water runoff both during the construction process and after. We are especially concerned about threats to water quality because this is one of several large projects planned in the watershed.

The Norwalk River is listed as a class B river, an impaired waterway, and the DOT has in the past used that classification as the starting point for claiming that no impact in water quality will result from its projects. While parts of the river are indeed impaired, it is important to understand that organizations like NRWA, Harbor Watch, Trout Unlimited and Norwalk River Watershed Initiative have been working for the last 20 years to improve water quality in the river. These groups use as a guide the Norwalk River Watershed Action Plan, which was written in 1998 and updated in 2011. Three years ago, these organizations and their volunteers were credited by the EPA with helping to remove two sections of the river from the impaired waterways list. As the EPA report stated, "the watershed approach has improved the river."

The EPA report credits our work, citing how, "Countless volunteers have participated in efforts to monitor water quality, identify pollution problems on the river, restore streamside buffers, and enhance trails and access points." The goal of our work has been and remains to remove more sections of the river from the Impaired Waterways list and to protect the quality of the water entering Long Island Sound. This year alone, NRWA engaged close to 200 volunteers to help improve the watershed. Harbor Watch and Trout Unlimited are larger organizations with even more employees, interns and volunteers.

Harbor Watch has been testing water quality in the river consistently for almost 20 years, so our community has a wealth of data to use as a guide for our work to protect the river as a resource. Additional challenges to water quality from construction or from added storm water runoff from new highway projects in the watershed threaten to set back our community's efforts to improve water quality.

In light of the number of projects in our area, NRWA requests that the CTDOT use a third party independent assessor to conduct its Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE) and that it include an assessment of the cumulative effects, including increases in storm water runoff, of the multiple CTDOT projects planned for the Norwalk River Watershed. The combined effect of the current planned projects makes rigorous storm water controls for each one all the more imperative. The current Walk Bridge EA/EIE does not go far enough in assessing impact; it simply states no permanent impact on water quality. The added storm water outlets will result in increased runoff. It is hard to believe there will be no impact. The current EIE states that to manage runoff, "drainage swales may be used and closed deck approach will be used where applicable." We hope the EIE for the Route 7/15 Interchange will include specific plans for capturing runoff as well as a detailed assessment of damage to water quality, wetlands, wildlife, wildlife habitat and aquatic life during construction and from storm water runoff.

We also request that the DOT add requirements for capturing runoff to its plans for the restoration of the Walk Bridge and the Yankee Doodle Bridge. The repair of these bridges and the Route 7 interchange alone present the CTDOT with a unique opportunity to reduce the amount of contaminated storm water runoff that enters the Norwalk River, the harbor, and the Sound. A concrete commitment to capturing runoff from bridges and highways that pass near wetlands and watercourses should be the baseline from which the CTDOT is working. Our community is owed these protections to water quality at the very least since it is bearing the brunt of the negative impact of years of construction on multiple projects. The Route 7/15 EIE should include consideration of the permanent damage that years of temporary impact from construction can cause to water quality, wetlands and aquatic life.

We ask the CTDOT to clearly specify mitigation measures and erosion and sedimentation controls for any listed construction activities in and over the water and wetlands. We would like the DOT to provide information on what best management practices will be employed and who will oversee adherence to those standards, including who will test water quality during construction and how often. NRWA asks CTDOT to consult with Harbor Watch, which currently conducts regular water quality testing in the river, about how best to monitor impact during construction and protect wildlife habitat and water quality as well as the best ways to carry out mitigation efforts during and after construction.

We hope to see very specific plans for protections to the wetlands and the river during construction. NRWA has had concerns about the effects on water quality and the severe damage to the riverbank at the site of repair work on the Perry Avenue Bridge. Protections of the riverbank vegetation and attempts to avoid compacting the soil are important to

protecting the river from harmful runoff both during construction and after. Neither has been done at the Perry Avenue site.

We hope the DOT will take this opportunity to improve the methods it uses to safeguard the river and surrounding wildlife habitat during construction projects. We also hope this project will be used as an opportunity to improve the mechanisms for capturing runoff from the intersection before it enters wetlands. We were very disappointed that such improvements were not included in the plans to repair the Yankee Doodle Bridge.

Finally, NRWA fully supports the plans for including pedestrian and bike connections to the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT). We see the NRVT as a vital way to connect the community to the Norwalk River and natural resources our community has to offer.

Thank you for considering NRWA's concerns.

Sincerely,

Louise Washer, President
Norwalk River Watershed Association

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor
Nancy Wyman
Lt. Governor

Drinking Water Section

November 16, 2017

Mr. Andy Fesenmeyer, P.E.
Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
PO Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

Re: Notice of Scoping for Route 7/15 Interchange Project

Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer:

In April of 2017, the Department of Transportation provided a Draft of the Purpose and Need Statement for the above noted project to the Department of Public Health (DPH) for review and comment. The purpose and need statement was reviewed by the Drinking Water Section Source Assessment and Protection Unit and the attached comments were provided for your consideration.

The DPH thanks you for the opportunity for early input in this process. At this time, the DPH has no additional comments to offer. If you have any questions, please contact Pat Bisacky of my staff at 860-509-7333 or via email at Patricia.Bisacky@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori J. Mathieu".

Lori J. Mathieu
Public Health Section Chief
Drinking Water Section

Cc: Dominick Di Gangi, P.E., Norwalk First Taxing District



Phone: (860) 509-7333 • Fax: (860) 509-7359
410 Capitol Avenue, MS#12DWS, P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, Connecticut 06134-0308
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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor
Nancy Wyman
Lt. Governor

Drinking Water Section

July 11, 2017

Mr. Andy Fesenmeyer
Transportation Supervising Engineer
State of Connecticut
Department of Transportation
Bureau of Engineering and Construction
2800 Berlin Turnpike, PO Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation
Route 7/Route 15 Interchange
Norwalk, Connecticut
State Project No. 102-358
DPH Project No. 2017-0166

Dear Mr. Fesenmeyer:

The Department of Public Health (DPH) Drinking Water Section (DWS) is in receipt of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement for the subject EA/EIE. The proposed project area is partially within the Level A Aquifer Protection Area (APA) of the Kellogg Deering Wellfield, a source of public drinking water for the customers of the Norwalk First Taxing District.

Planning, construction and long term maintenance of the proposed interchange improvements should take into consideration protection of the source of public drinking water. Please consider addressing the following items in the EA/EIE:

1. During the planning phase the following should be addressed:
 - a. The Norwalk First Taxing District should be consulted to provide the delineation of the Level A APA and specific source protection recommendations.
 - b. The storm water system should be designed to minimize impacts to the water quality of the source of public drinking water.



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Mr. Fesenmeyer
July 11, 2017
Page 2

2. Construction should be conducted in accordance with the DPH's "[General Construction Best Management Practices for Sites within a Public Drinking Water Supply Area](#)"
3. Long term maintenance of the proposed project should include measures that protect the long term purity of the public drinking water source of supply. Such measures include but may not be limited to:
 - a. Utilizing mechanical means to control vegetation rather than applying pesticides.
 - b. Reducing application rates of deicing chemicals to the road surfaces in the winter in a manner that balances the needs for public safety with the potential public health impacts resulting from increasing sodium and chloride concentrations in the source water for public drinking water supplies.
 - c. Maintaining the storm water system in accordance with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's [General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Department of Transportation Separate Storm Sewer Systems](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide early input into this draft document.

Sincerely,



Lori J. Mathieu
Public Health Section Chief
Drinking Water Section

Cc: Dominick Di Gangi, P.E., Norwalk First Taxing District

Environmental



Norwalk River Valley Trail

P.O. Box 174
Georgetown, CT 06829
www.NRVT-Trail.com

Statement for The 7/15 Norwalk Project Public Scoping Comments

From: Norwalk Valley River Trail Steering Committee
To: ConnDOT

The Steering Committee of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) strongly supports the accommodation of the NRVT in the new, planned 7/15 interchange. The NRVT is a 38 mile regional trail network traversing Fairfield County from Norwalk to Danbury and is identified in Gov. Malloy's 5 year transportation plan as a trail of regional significance. Portions of the trail are now complete in Norwalk and Wilton and active design and construction is currently underway in both communities. These projects will bring the NRVT to the Merritt Parkway Corridor – the only barrier to a viable alternative transportation artery and valuable recreational and tourist resource.

The 7/15 interchange project comes into contact with the NRVT in three locations – the NRVT West Branch follows the Eversource powerlines and will cross the Merritt near Perry Ave; the NRVT East Branch follows Glover Ave. and will cross under the Merritt near Main Ave (or TBD). The West Branch also will cross the reconfigured Grist Mill interchange near Belden Hill Rd. Completion of each of these three trail intersections is crucial to public safety. Otherwise, pedestrians, cyclists, commuters and tourists coming from the north and south will encounter abrupt dead-ends and be forced onto dangerous stretches of busy commercial thoroughfares.

To summarize, the NRVT Steering Committee respectfully requests ConnDOT complete these three essential trail accommodations to:

- a) improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists on an existing and expanding regional trail network for commuting, tourism, and recreational use;
- b) improve public safety;
- c) satisfy the goal of ConnDOT to improve multi-modal transportation options in dense urban areas;
- d) enhance both commercial and residential property values along the trail as well as further leverage the state and federal investment in the trail, redevelopment projects and incentives to businesses in proximity to the trail; and
- e) comply with FHWA's policy of accommodating all users in federally funded projects [reference 23 U.S.C. 217 (e) (g)]

Thank you,

Jim Carter
Norwalk Representative, Norwalk River Valley Trail Steering Committee

Connecticut State Council on Environmental Quality

(/ceq)

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June 16, 2020

Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) **Project Inventory** now available

All submissions to the Council should be sent electronically to: peter.hearn@ct.gov (<mailto:peter.hearn@ct.gov>).

Scoping Notice

No Scoping Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Scoping Notice - Post-Scoping Notice (Need More Time)

No notice for additional time has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Post-Scoping Notice

1. **NEW!** Post-Scoping Notice for Route 7 and Route 15 Interchange Project, Norwalk.

Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)

No EIE Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Agency Record of Decision

No Agency Record of Decision Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

OPM Determination of Adequacy

No Determination of Adequacy Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

State Land Transfer

No State Land Transfer Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

The next edition of the Environmental Monitor will be published on **July 7, 2020**.

Subscribe (<https://confirmsubscription.com/h/j/ED852A9EE7823EDF>) to **e-alerts** to receive an e-mail when the Environmental Monitor is published.

Inquiries and requests to view or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring state agency.

Scoping Notice

"Scoping" is for projects in the earliest stages of planning. At the scoping stage, detailed information on a project's design, alternatives, and environmental impacts does not yet exist. Sponsoring agencies are asking for comments from other agencies and from the public as to the scope of alternatives and environmental impacts that should be considered for further study. Send your comments to the contact person listed for the project by the date indicated. [Read More \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-6\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-6)

No Scoping Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Scoping Notice - Post-Scoping Notice (Need More Time)

If an agency is unable to publish a Post-Scoping Notice within six months after the comment period for scoping, the agency will publish an update with an action status and an estimate as to when a Post-Scoping Notice will be published. Such an update will be published by the agency at six-month intervals until the Post-Scoping Notice is published. [Read More \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7) [.\(http:\)](http://)

No notice for additional time has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Post-Scoping Notice

A Post-Scoping Notice is the determination by a sponsoring agency, after publication of a Scoping Notice and consideration of comments received, whether an [Environmental Impact Evaluation \(EIE\)](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b) [needs to be prepared for a proposed State action. \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations) [Read More \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7)

The following Post-Scoping Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

1. Post-Scoping Notice for Route 7 and Route 15 Interchange Project

Municipality where it would be located: Norwalk

CEPA Determination: On October 3, 2017 the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) published a [Notice of Scoping \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2017/October-3-2017#Scoping\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2017/October-3-2017#Scoping) to solicit public comments for this proposed action in the *Environmental Monitor*. A public scoping meeting was held on October 17, 2017 at Norwalk City Hall. Comments were received during the public comment period and at the Public Scoping Meeting. Comments and general responses to the comments received are found in the [Scoping Summary Report](#). After consideration of the comments, CTDOT has determined: **to proceed with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE).**

Agency contact:

Name: Mr. Andy Fesenmeyer, Supervising Engineer

Agency: Connecticut Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering and Construction

Address: 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131

Phone: (860) 594-3228

E-Mail: Andy.Fesenmeyer@ct.gov (<mailto:Andy.Fesenmeyer@ct.gov>)

Inquiries and requests to view and or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring State Agency.

Agency contact:

Name: Ms. Alice M. Sexton

Agency: Connecticut Department of Transportation, Office of Legal Services

Address: 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131

Phone: (860) 594-3045

E-Mail: Alice.Sexton@ct.gov

What Happens Next: CTDOT expects the proposed action to go forward. The EIE will be published in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*. Currently, it is expected that the EIE will be circulated for public review and appear in the *Environmental Monitor* in Late 2020/ Early 2021.

EIE Notice

After Scoping, an agency that wishes to undertake an action that could significantly affect the environment must produce, for public review and comment, a detailed written evaluation of the expected environmental impacts. This is called an **Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)** (https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b). **Read More** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-8>)

No EIE Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Agency Record of Decision

After an **Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)** (https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b) is developed, an agency will prepare a concise public record of decision, which takes into consideration the agency's findings in the EIE, and any comments received on that evaluation. **Read More** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-10>)

No Record of Decision Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

OPM's Determination of Adequacy

After an **Environmental Impact Evaluation** (https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b) (EIE) is developed, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will determine if the EIE is adequate. If not, OPM will specify the areas of inadequacy with reference to CEPA or the CEPA regulations and specify the corrective action required. **Read More** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-10>)

No Determination of Adequacy Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

State Land Transfer Notice

Connecticut General Statutes **Section 4b-47** (https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_059.htm#sec_4b-47) requires public notice of most proposed sales and transfers of state-owned lands. The public has an opportunity to comment on any such proposed transfer. Each notice includes an address where comments should be sent. **Read more about the process** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/State-Lands-Transfer-Process>).

No State Land Transfer Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

CEPA Project Inventory

The Office of Policy and Management maintains a list of projects they have entered the CEPA process. It shows each project's status. The inventory can be found at <ftp://ftp.ct.gov/opm/CEPA/CEPA%20Project%20Inventory.xlsx> .

The Adobe Reader is necessary to view and print Adobe Acrobat documents, including some of the maps and illustrations that are linked to this publication. If you have an outdated version of Adobe Reader, it might cause pictures to display incompletely. To download up-to-date versions of the free , click on the Get Acrobat button, below. This link will also provide information and instructions for downloading and installing the reader.

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Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project

State Project 0102-0358

CEPA Record of Decision

Appendix D

EA/EIE Notice of Availability

Public Hearing Notices



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06131-7546



TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Kevin Carifa
Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
Bureau of Policy and Planning

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Kevin Carifa, the Transportation Planning Director.

DATE: July 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability
Environmental Assessment / Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE)
Route 7/15 Norwalk Project
City of Norwalk, Connecticut
State Project No. 102-358

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to construct improvements to the interchange of Route 7 and Route 15 and to improve interconnections with local roads in the City of Norwalk (Norwalk), Connecticut. An Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE) was conducted to determine if any significant environmental impacts would result from the proposed action.

Purpose and Need

The proposed project will address the missing connections on the existing Route 15 and Route 7 Interchange and would consequently improve the mobility for motorists at the following connections:

- Southbound Route 15 to northbound Route 7
- Southbound Route 15 to southbound Route 7
- Northbound Route 7 to northbound Route 15
- Southbound Route 7 to northbound Route 15

Additionally, improvements to the Route 15 and Main Avenue ramps will address the substandard acceleration lanes, steep changes in grade, sharp curves, and limited sight distance. These factors contribute to a high number of crashes on the Merritt Parkway.

On local networks, Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock Drive will be upgraded to expand mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists. The upgrade will include installing bicycle facilities and adequate shoulder widths, where there are none today. Sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks will be installed in compliance with the U.S. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Project Location

The Project is in the northern portion of Norwalk at the interchange of Routes 7 and 15 (Interchange 39) and includes the interchange of Route 15 and Main Avenue (Interchange 40); Route 719 (Main Avenue); and Glover Avenue/Creeping Hemlock Drive in the vicinity of Main Avenue. The proposed limits of construction (Project Site) extend along Route 15 from approximately 0.5 miles west of Route 7 to approximately 0.5 miles east of Main Avenue and along Route 7 from approximately 0.5 miles south to approximately 0.5 miles north of Route 15.

The EA/EIE, including a proposed project location map, drawings, analyses of potential impacts, project commitments and mitigation, and additional information about the proposed project is available for inspection at:

CTDOT
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

FHWA CT Division Office
450 Main Street, Suite 612
Hartford, CT 06103

Connecticut State Library
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

Norwalk Public Library
Main Branch
1 Belden Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06850

Norwalk Public Library
South Norwalk Branch
10 Washington Street
Norwalk, CT 06854

WestCOG
1 Riverside Road
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

The EA/EIE is also available online at: www.ct.gov/environmentaldocuments or on the Route 7/15 Interchange project website at: <http://7-15norwalk.com>.

A public hearing will be held for the project on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 7:00 to 9:00 pm in the Community Room of Norwalk City Hall at 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851. There will be an open house held from 6:00 to 7:00 pm in the Community Room before the Public Hearing begins. The public hearing will be recorded and a copy of the recording will be made available on the project website: <http://7-15norwalk.com>.

In accordance with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA), the project was scoped in the Environmental Monitor on October 3, 2017; and a notice of availability of the EA/EIE was posted in the Environmental Monitor on July 18, 2023.

Please address any written comments, and/or requests for document hardcopies to Mr. Kevin Carifa, Transportation Planning Director, CTDOT, Bureau of Policy and Planning, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131 or by email at dot.environmentalplanning@ct.gov by August 31, 2023.

Alternatively, comments may also be submitted through the project website at <http://7-15norwalk.com/ea-comments> prior to the close of business on August 31, 2023.

Route 7 and 15 Interchange Project Environmental Assessment – Interested Parties Mailing List:

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Ms. Mandy Ranslow
401 F Street NW, Suite 308
Washington, DC 20001

American Society of Landscape Architects,
--Connecticut Chapter
34 Wall Street
Norwalk, CT 06850

City of Norwalk
Mr. Steven Kleppin
125 East Ave., Room 223
Norwalk, CT 06856

CT Dep't of Energy & Environmental Protection
(CTDEEP)
Mr. Frederick Riese
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

CT Department of Public Health
Ms. Lori Mathieu
410 Capitol Avenue, MS #12 DWS
P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

CT Office of Policy & Management
Ms. Rebecca Augur
450 Capitol Avenue MS #54 ORG
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

CT State Historic Preservation Office
Mr. Jonathan Kinney
450 Columbus Blvd., #5
Hartford, CT 06103

Delaware Nation
Ms. Carissa Speck
31064 SH 281
P.O. Box 825
Anadarko, OK 73005

Delaware Tribe of Indians
Ms. Susan Bacher
126 University Circle
Stroud Hall, Room 437
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Federal Transit Administration
Ms. Mary Mello
55 Broadway, Suite 920
Cambridge, MA 02142-0193

First District Water Department
12 New Canaan Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Tribal Nation
Mr. Michael Kicking Bear Johnson
550 Trolley Line Blvd.
P.O. Box 3202
Mashantucket, CT 06338-3202

Merritt Parkway Conservancy
Mr. Wes Haynes
P.O. Box 17072
Stamford, CT 06907

The Mohegan Tribe
Mr. James Quinn
Mohegan Community & Government Center
13 Crow Hill Road
Uncasville, CT 06382

Narragansett Indian Tribe
Mr. E.A. Cam
344 Audubon Court
New Haven, CT 06510
Mr. John Brown III
4425A South County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Ms. Betsy Merritt
600 14th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

Norwalk Association of Silvermine Homeowners
Ms. Heather Dunne
PMB 731
Norwalk, CT 06850

Norwalk Historical Commission
Ms. Dana Laird
41 N. Main Street
Norwalk, CT 06854

Norwalk Historical Society
Ms. Diane Jellerette
P.O. Box 1640
Norwalk, CT 06852

Norwalk Land Trust
Ms. Lisa Shanahan
P.O. Box 34
Norwalk, CT 06853

Norwalk Preservation Trust
Mr. Tod Bryant
P.O. Box 874
Norwalk, CT 06852

Norwalk River Watershed Association
Louise Washer
P.O. Box 7114
Wilton, CT 06897

Office of Senator Duff
Sen. Bob Duff
Mr. Ken Saccente
210 Capitol Ave., Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Preservation Connecticut
Ms. Jane Montanaro
Mr. Christopher Wigren
940 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, CT 06517-4002

Sierra Club CT
Ms. Susan Eastwood
30 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Silvermine Community Association
Mr. Peter Viteretto
115 New Canaan Ave., PMB #704
Norwalk, CT 06850

Town of Wilton
Mr. Michael Wrinn
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

US Army Corps of Engineers
New England District
Mr. Daniel Breen
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

US Department of the Interior
Ms. Carol Braegelmann, Division Chief
Mr. Shawn K. Alam
1849 C Street, NW (MS 2629-MIB)
Washington, DC 20240

US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1
Mr. Timothy Timmerman
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109

US Fish & Wildlife Service,
New England Field Office
Mr. John Warner
Mr. David Simmons
70 Commercial Street, Suite 308
Concord, NH 03301

Western Connecticut Council of Governments
Mr. Frances Pickering
Ms. Kristin Hadjstylianos
One Riverside Road
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

MLB

Yankees' veterans starting to make strides at the plate

Gary Phillips
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

As Anthony Rizzo returned to the Yankees' dugout following a home run on Sunday, his teammates initially gave him the silent treatment. It was a fitting response for a player whose quiet bat had not hit a home run in over two months.

Rizzo produced a third-inning solo shot in a win over Kansas City for his first home run since May 20. The much-needed dinger was the highlight of Rizzo's first four-hit game of the season. He also scored three runs, drove in two and hit a double.

"It's easy to look at it and say I'm drowning and I'm in the water, but I just kept saying I'm on the boat and just waiting for the winds to pick up and the sails to set," said Rizzo, who hit .182/.274/.281 in the 45 games between longballs. "You've got to have fun with it. I think the reaction from the dugout and the guys shows that through a down (time), you've got to try to find highs as far as keeping yourself up, staying positive. You got to keep working."

The Yankees are hoping that Rizzo's Sunday outburst — which helped complete a sweep of the lowly Royals — marks the start of a hot streak for the first baseman, who is hitting .253/.338/.398 with 12 home runs and 41 RBI overall. If so, Rizzo would become the team's latest veteran hitter to show signs of life following a prolonged slump.

For example, DJ LeMahieu has quietly gone 13-for-40 (.325) with a .372 on-base percentage and a .500 slugging percentage over his last 10 games. That span includes four extra-base hits and a Saturday home run, the infielder's first since June 13.

Prior to that stretch, LeMahieu hit .258/.335/.337 over his last 22 games. The former batting champion is slashing just .233/.297/.375 this year.



Michael Ciaglo/TNS

The Yankees' Anthony Rizzo (48) celebrates with Giancarlo Stanton (37) after Stanton hit a three-run home run at Colorado on July 15.

Even before replacing hitting coach Dillon Lawson with Sean Casey, the Yankees have attributed LeMahieu's struggles to his load at the plate. Aaron Boone said that a "little adjustment" has allowed LeMahieu to be more "explosive" and "dynamic" lately. Recent results back that up.

"Just trying to simplify, but also staying loose and aggressive," LeMahieu said. "Some stuff I was working on right before the break, I kind of took it into the break and just was really excited to get back after the break and get after it. Now I feel like I'm on the right track."

Giancarlo Stanton is another seasoned vet who could say the same.

While the slugger is only hitting .222 since the second half began, he has six homers and 13 RBI over his last 10 games. That includes four RBI and to HR in nine games since the break ended.

Stanton is now hitting .207/.281/.457 with 13 home runs and 33 RBI over 50 games.

Whether it be Rizzo's Sunday or Stanton or LeMahieu's 10-game stretches, these are small sample sizes we're talking about, and the production has come against a handful of subpar pitching staffs. However, the lineup will take whatever it can get with Aaron Judge still on the mend, as the Yankees have the worst average, third-worst on-base

percentage, fourth-worst wRC+ and sixth-worst slugging percentage since losing the reigning MVP to a torn ligament in his right big toe on June 3.

Judge participated in a simulated game on Sunday at Yankee Stadium.

Even with their sweep over the Royals, the Yankees have been a sub-.500 team without their captain, going 10-22 during Judge's current stint on the injured list. The Bombers also experienced an offensive drought while going 4-6 when a hip injury sidelined Judge earlier this season.

Judge's absences have made it clear that the Yankees, tied with Boston for last place, need to add to their lineup before next week's trade deadline. But even multiple moves won't save a season that still has New York in the Wild Card race.

For that to happen, the Yankees are also going to need the likes of Rizzo, LeMahieu and Stanton to hit like they have over the last few days and weeks. The team has maintained confidence in the trio being able to do that, with Boone often citing the former All-Stars' track records.

"It's been a bit of a grind for sure, as a team and personally," LeMahieu said. "But I think it's going to make us stronger in the long run, personally and as a team. I truly believe that it's going to make us better in the long run."

NBA

Bronny James, son of LeBron, in stable condition after cardiac arrest at USC basketball practice

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bronny James, the oldest son of NBA superstar LeBron James, was hospitalized after going into cardiac arrest while participating in a practice at the University of Southern California, a family spokesman said Tuesday.

The spokesman said medical staff treated the 18-year-old James on site at USC's Galen Center on Monday morning. He was transported to a hospital, where he was in stable condition Tuesday after leaving the intensive care unit.

"We ask for respect and privacy for the James family and we will update media when there is more information," the spokesman said. "LeBron and Savannah wish to publicly send their deepest thanks and appreciation to the USC medical and athletic staff for their incredible work and dedication to the safety of their athletes."

USC spokesman Jeremy Pepper declined a request from The Associated Press for comment or additional details, citing student privacy concerns. The AP also left a message seeking comment from the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin, who suffered cardiac arrest during an NFL game last season, tweeted his support: "Prayers to Bronny & The James Family as well (prayer emoji) here for you guys just like you have been for me my entire process."

Bronny James announced in May that he would play college basketball for the Trojans, whose campus is less than two miles from the downtown arena of his father's Los Angeles Lakers. USC's basketball team is holding offseason practices in preparation for a two-week European tour next month.

His father is the leading scorer in NBA history and a four-time champion, but Bronny James is an elite talent in his own right, ranking as one of the nation's top point guard recruits before he chose the Trojans late in the commitment cycle.

With his family fame and huge social media following, Bronny James has the top name, image and likeness valuation in sports at \$6.3 million, On3.com estimates.

Bronny's decision to stay close to home was a coup for USC, which is expected to have one of college basketball's most compelling teams next season after making its third straight NCAA



Alex Bierens de Haan/Getty Images

Bronny James of the West team talks to his father, LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers, after the 2023 McDonald's High School Boys All-American Game on March 26 at Toyota Center in Houston.

Tournament appearance last March. LeBron James has spoken frequently about his desire to play a season in the NBA with Bronny, the first of his three children with his wife, Savannah. The elder James recently confirmed he will play his 21st NBA season in the fall with the Lakers, his home since 2018.

Bronny, whose name is LeRon James Jr., was one of the top college prospects in the country last season as a star guard at Sierra Canyon school in suburban Chatsworth. His younger brother, 16-year-old Bryce, played at Sierra Canyon last season before transferring to Campbell Hall School in Studio City for the upcoming high school season.

Bronny James was stricken just over a year after USC freshman 7-footer Vincent Ivuchukwu collapsed during a practice, but he survived and returned to play for the Trojans in the second half of the season.

SWIMMING

Katie Ledecky wins gold in 1,500 at the swimming worlds

By Stephen Wade
AP SPORTS WRITER

FUKUOKA, Japan — Katie Ledecky won the 1,500-meter freestyle with ease on Tuesday at the World Aquatics Championships in a landmark victory which made her the most decorated female swimmer at the worlds with 20 golds overall, 15 of which have come in individual events.

That ties Michael Phelps' record at the worlds for individual gold medals.

American Ryan Murphy added the second American gold medal on Tuesday, winning the 100-meter backstroke. But as usual when the 26-year-old Ledecky swims, she's the story.

Ledecky has won seven Olympic golds, the first coming more than a decade ago in London. And she's talking about racing not just in next year's Paris Olympics, but perhaps also in Los Angeles in 2028.

"I never dreamed of winning one Olympic gold," Ledecky said. "So after I did it, it was like, 'OK, the rest is icing on the cake, a cherry on top,' whatever you call it. I'm just trying to build a really big cake, I guess."

That cake is getting big-

ger for one of the greatest freestylers the sport has ever seen.

She won Tuesday in 15 minutes, 26.27 seconds, the third quickest time of her career.

"The last couple of years I've just tried to be really locked in on my stroke," Ledecky said, improving quickly post-pandemic. "That was a really good performance from me very pleased."

Italy's Simona Quadrella finished 17 seconds behind Ledecky in 15:43.31, with Li Bingjie of China third in 15:45.71.

Ledecky will compete in the 800 on Saturday — her favorite race — and is set to become the only person to win six titles at the worlds in the same event.

Murphy, a four-time Olympic gold medalist and the defending world champion in the 200 backstroke, edged Italian Thomas Ceccon by .05 seconds. Murphy clocked 52.22, and Ceccon 52.27, with bronze for American Hunter Armstrong in 52.58.

"It's awesome to go against a great field, and it's awesome to get two Americans on the podium," Murphy said. "The USA is off to a start. We're starting to build some momentum and we can just keep it rolling from here."

The big shock was 18-year-old Romanian David Popovici, who was a clear favorite in the 200 free. He finished fourth behind two British swimmers. Matthew Richards in 1:44.30, and Tom Dean in 1:44.32. South Korean Hwang Sunwoo took bronze (1:44.42) with Popovici finishing fourth in 1:44.90.

"It felt awful," Popovici said. "But that means that we can improve something and that's a good thing. Because if you have the absolute perfect race... you have nothing else to improve."

"I'm glad it happened now and I'm sure it has a meaning and I'm going to learn from it."

Ruta Meiliute of Lithuania captured gold in the women's 100 breaststroke in 1:04.62, ahead of Tatjana Schoenmaker of South Africa and third-place Lydia Jacoby of the U.S. World-record holder Lilly King was fourth. The American finished in 1:06.02.

Kaylee McKeown of Australia won the women's 100 backstroke in 57.53, edging Regan Smith of the United States by 0.25. American Katharine Berkoff took third in 58.25. McKeown was disqualified earlier in the 200 IM for a violation on the backstroke leg, infuriating her and her team.

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PUBLIC NOTICES	PUBLIC NOTICES	PUBLIC NOTICES
<p style="text-align: center;">LEGAL NOTICE</p> <p>The Connecticut Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, will hold a public hearing for the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project in Norwalk, Connecticut. State Project No. 102-358 Federal Aid Project No. 60161(33).</p> <p>The hearing concerns the Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation for the referenced project, prepared pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, 23 CFR 771.</p> <p>The public hearing will be held on: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room, Norwalk City Hall, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851.</p> <p>The Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation is available for inspection at:</p> <p>Connecticut Department of Transportation 2800 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06131</p> <p>FHWA Connecticut Division Office 450 Main Street, Suite 612 Hartford, CT 06103</p> <p>Connecticut State Library 231 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106</p> <p>Norwalk City Hall 125 East Avenue Norwalk, CT 06851</p> <p>Norwalk Public Library - Main Branch 1 Belden Ave Norwalk, CT 06850</p> <p>Norwalk Public Library - South Norwalk Branch 10 Washington St Norwalk, CT 06854</p> <p>Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) Riverside Rd Sandy Hook, CT 06482</p> <p>The document is also available online at: www.ct.gov/environmentalaidocuments http://7-15norwalk.com/</p> <p>Written comments may be submitted either at the public hearing or may be mailed or emailed to comment@7-15norwalk.com on or before August 31, 2023 to the attention of:</p> <p>Mr. Kevin Carilla, Transportation Planning Director Connecticut Department of Transportation 2800 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06131</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACCESSIBILITY</p> <p>Language assistance may be requested by contacting CTDOT's Language Assistance Call Line (860) 594-2109. Requests should be made at least five business days prior to the meeting. Language assistance is provided at no cost to the public and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance.</p>		

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PUBLIC NOTICES**PUBLIC NOTICES****Notice of Public Sale**

Notice is hereby given that the following individuals are indebted to Secure Self Storage 4 Willard Road, Norwalk CT 06851; for past due rent and other charges.
Auction will be conducted online at Bid4Storage.com on August 10th, 2023 at 11:00AM.
The Contents of the units will be sold online to the highest bidder. This is a cash sale and all sales are final.
Nicholas Cimino Unit #3237 Furniture, tools, Bags.

WESTY SELF STORAGE
50 Keeler Ave
Norwalk, CT 06854

Notice is hereby given that Westy Self Storage has a self-storage lien against the property and owned by

Space #	Name
03723	Fitzgerald Francois
02A06	Lauren Roach
04A24	Luz Sanchez

All such properties will be sold unless the lien is satisfied. Such liens are claimed for occupancy charges, processing fees, cleaning and miscellaneous services of the total reasonable value agreed upon price now due and owing and that a detailed statement of such charges, services and storage with a statement of dates have been previously mailed to the said accounts by certified letters, the said accounts are further notified that if said balance is not paid the personal property above described will be sold by Absolute Auction & Realty on August 17, 2023 at 11:15 am; all as provided for by Chapter 743 of the Lien Law of the State of Connecticut.

LEGAL NOTICE

The Connecticut Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, will hold a public hearing for the
Route 7/15 Norwalk Project
in Norwalk, Connecticut
State Project No. 102-586
Federal Aid Project No. 0015(133)

The hearing concerns the Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Impact Evaluation for the referenced project, prepared pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, 23 CFR 771.

The public hearing will be held on:
Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
in the Community Room
Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue,
Norwalk CT 06851

The Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Impact Evaluation is available for inspection at:

Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

FHWA Connecticut Division Office
450 Main Street, Suite 612
Hartford, CT 06103

Connecticut State Library
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Norwalk City Hall
125 East Ave
Norwalk, CT 06851

Norwalk Public Library- Main Branch
1 Belden Ave
Norwalk, CT 06850

Norwalk Public Library- South Norwalk Branch
10 Washington St
Norwalk, CT 06854

Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG)
1 Riverside Rd
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

The document is also available online at:
www.ct.gov/environmentaldocuments
<http://7-15norwalk.com/>

Written comments may be submitted either at the public hearing or may be mailed or emailed to comments@7-15norwalk.com on or before August 31, 2023 to the attention of:

Mr. Kevin Carfia,
Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

ACCESSIBILITY

Language assistance may be requested by contacting CT DOT's Language Assistance Call Line (860) 594-2109. Requests should be made at least five business days prior to the meeting. Language assistance is provided at no cost to the public and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance.

PUBLIC NOTICES**PUBLIC NOTICES****PUBLIC NOTICES****LEGAL NOTICE**

A certified list of Democratic party-endorsed candidates for the City of Norwalk

for election as :

Mayor
City Treasurer
City Sheriff
Town Clerk
Selectmen
Constables
Board of Education A,B,C,D,E
Councilmen at Large
Councilmen
1st. Taxing District Commissioner
1st. Taxing District Treasurer
2nd. Taxing District Commissioner
2nd. Taxing District Treasurer
3rd. Taxing District Commissioner
3rd. Taxing District Treasurer
6th. Taxing District Commissioner
6th. Taxing District Treasurer

is on file in my office at City Hall Room 102, 125 East Avenue Norwalk, Ct., and copies thereof are available for public distribution.

The certified list as received includes fewer names of party-endorsed candidates than the party is entitled to nominate for the following offices:

Office	Number of Names Certified	Number Entitled to be Nominated
1st. Taxing District Commissioner	0	1
3rd. Taxing District Treasurer	0	1
6th. Taxing District Treasurer	0	1

A Primary will be held September 12, 2023, if, for a particular office, the number of party-endorsed candidates plus the number of candidates filing petitions pursuant to Sections 9-382 to 9-450 of the Connecticut General Statutes exceeds the maximum number which the party is entitled to nominate for that office. Petitions must be filed not later than 4:00 p.m. of August 9, 2023. Petition forms, instructions and information concerning the procedure for filing of opposing candidates, including schedules, may be obtained from:

Stuart Wells II Democrat Registrar of Voters at City Hall Room 103, 125 East Avenue Norwalk Connecticut 06851

Richard A. McQuaid
Municipal Clerk of Norwalk
Dated August 31, 2023

LEGAL NOTICE

A certified list of Republican party-endorsed candidates for the City of Norwalk

For election as;

Mayor
City Treasurer
City Sheriff
Town Clerk
Selectmen
Constables
Board of Education District A,B,C,D,E
Councilmen at Large
Councilmen
1st. Taxing District Commissioner
1st. Taxing District Treasurer
2nd. Taxing District Commissioner
2nd. Taxing District Treasurer
3rd. Taxing District Commissioner
3rd. Taxing District Treasurer
6th. District Commissioner
6th. Taxing District Treasurer

is on file in my office at City Hall 125 Room 102, East Avenue Norwalk, Ct., and copies thereof are available for public distribution.

The certified list as received includes fewer names of party - endorsed candidates than the party is entitled to nominate for the following offices:

Office	Number of Names Certified	Number Entitled to be Nominated
Councilman (District A)	1	2
Councilman (District B)	1	2
Councilman (District C)	1	2
Board of Education	3	5
2ND. Taxing District Commissioner	1	2
2nd. Taxing District Treasurer	0	1
6th. Taxing District Commissioner	0	1

A Primary will be held September 9, 2023, if, for a particular office, the number of party-endorsed candidates plus the number of candidates filing petitions pursuant to Sections 9-382 to 9-450 of the Connecticut General Statutes exceeds the maximum number which the party is entitled to nominate for that office. Petitions must be filed not later than 4:00 p.m. of August 9, 2023. Petition forms, instructions and information concerning the procedure for filing of opposing candidates, including schedules, may be obtained from:

Brian J. Smith, Republican Registrar of Voters at City Hall Room 122, 125 East Avenue Norwalk Connecticut 06851

Richard A. McQuaid
Municipal Clerk of Norwalk
Dated July 31, 2023

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Weston, Stamford, Greenwich, Rowayton, Easton, Georgetown

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Did you know...

Outdoor remodels and landscaping projects can add valuable curb appeal to homes. The National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Landscape Professionals agree that certain projects offer significant returns when selling a home. The NAR says these are the 10 most appealing outdoor features to buyers.

- Standard lawn care
- Overall landscape upgrade
- New patio
- New wood deck
- Softscaping
- Sod lawn
- Seed lawn
- Outdoor firepit
- Outdoor fireplace
- New pool

PROJECT COST ENGINEER

C.J. Fucci, Inc., a CT based construction firm, has an immediate opening for a Project Cost Engineer. Applicants must have experience quantifying completed work installed in the field including but not limited to the installation of underground storm, sewer, water piping and structures of all types including Concrete, PVC, Ductile Iron, etc. in the performance of site and road construction. Minimum of 10 years or equivalent experience.

Fax Resumes to 203-468-6256 or email vfederico@cjfucci.com.

C.J. Fucci, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER

C.J. Fucci, Inc., a CT based construction firm, has an immediate opening for a Quality Control Manager. Applicants must have experience performing construction quality control on Department of Transportation Projects in accordance with the CT Form 818 Quality Control Manager Specifications.

Fax Resumes to 203-468-6256 or email vfederico@cjfucci.com.

C.J. Fucci, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PROJECT MANAGER

C.J. Fucci, Inc., a CT based construction firm has and immediate opening for a Project Manager. Applicants must have experience managing work including but not limited to the installation of underground storm, sewer, water piping and structures of all types including Concrete, PVC, Ductile Iron, etc. in the performance of site and road construction. Minimum of 10 years or equivalent experience.

Fax Resumes to 203-468-6256 or email vfederico@cjfucci.com.

C.J. Fucci, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AVISO LEGAL SOBRE EL INICIO DEL PERÍODO DE COMENTARIOS PÚBLICOS

Como anfitrión de Housatonic Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (HVMPO) y South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization la (SWRMPO), el Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), abre un período de comentarios públicos de 45 días para modificar el Plan de Participación Pública (PIP).

Los comentarios públicos sobre el PIP modificado se aceptarán desde **agosto 1, 2023 hasta las 12:00 p. m. de septiembre 15, 2023**. Las reuniones de información pública se llevarán a cabo **septiembre 7 y 12, 2023**.

Reunión de la junta de WestCOG en septiembre 21, 2023.

Toda la información sobre los horarios de las reuniones, los lugares y la accesibilidad, así como también cómo acceder al PIP y enviar comentarios, se puede encontrar en el sitio web de WestCOG: <https://westcog.org/>

Las personas con acceso limitado a Internet pueden comunicarse con WestCOG por teléfono: 475-323-2060, por correo electrónico: plan@westcog.org, o por correo postal a la oficina de WestCOG (1 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482).

SAVIN ROCK COMMUNITIES LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS SPRING HEIGHTS APARTMENTS WINDOW AND DOOR REPLACEMENT

Savin Rock Communities is seeking sealed bids for the following:
Window and Door Replacement at Spring Heights Apartments in West Haven CT.

A Public Bid Opening will be held at the Administration Office of said Authority located at 15 Glade Street, West Haven, CT on THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. local time.

A pre-bid walk thru will be held on JULY 31, 2022 at 2:00 pm at Spring Heights Apartments located at 15 Glade Street, West Haven CT.

Contract documents including plans & specifications can be viewed on-line and purchased from Digiprint's website beginning on July 24, 2022. Visit www.digiprintplanroom.com.

5% Bid Security (Over \$25K ONLY) and 100% Performance/Payment Bonds (Over \$100K ONLY) are required. Bidders will note requirements of minimum wage rates, nondiscrimination/equal opportunity rules (Executive Order 11246) and related provisions in the General Conditions. No bid shall be withdrawn for ninety (90) days. Complete bidding requirements are noted in the Contract Documents. This project is federally assisted. Therefore, bidders must comply with the following requirements: Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968; Equal Opportunity provisions of Executive Order 11246; Non-Discrimination provision of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Labor Standards provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act and related acts and Contract Work Hours Standards Act; prevailing wage determinations as issued by the United States Department of Labor; and all applicable provisions under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Savin Rock Communities is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Housing Provider.

John P. Counter, Executive Director Savin Rock Communities
15 Glade Street
West Haven, CT 06516 203-934-8671



AVISO LEGAL

El Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut (CTDOT, por sus siglas en inglés), en cooperación con la Administración Federal de Carreteras (FHWA, por sus siglas en inglés), celebrará una audiencia pública para
Proyecto Ruta 7/15 de Norwalk
en Norwalk, Connecticut
Proyecto Estatal No. 102-358
Proyecto de Ayuda Federal No. 0015(133)

La audiencia se refiere a la Evaluación Ambiental/Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental para el proyecto de referencia, preparado de conformidad con el Código de Regulaciones Federales, 23 CFR 771.

La audiencia pública se celebrará el:
Miércoles, 16 de agosto de 2023 a las 6:00 p.m.
en la Sala Comunitaria (Community Room)
Ayuntamiento de Norwalk (Norwalk City Hall)
125 East Avenue, Norwalk CT 06851

La Evaluación Ambiental/Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental puede consultarse en:
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

Oficina de la División de Connecticut de la FHWA
450 Main Street, Suite 612
Hartford, CT 06103

Biblioteca Estatal de Connecticut
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
Ayuntamiento de Norwalk (Norwalk City Hall)
125 East Ave
Norwalk, CT 06851

Biblioteca Pública de Norwalk - Sucursal Principal
1 Belden Ave
Norwalk, CT 06850

Biblioteca Pública de Norwalk - Sucursal de South Norwalk
10 Washington St
Norwalk, CT 06854

Consejo de Gobiernos del Oeste de Connecticut (WestCOG, por sus siglas en inglés)
1 Riverside Rd
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

El documento también está disponible en línea en:
www.ct.gov/environmentaldocuments
<http://7-15norwalk.com/>

Los comentarios escritos pueden ser presentados en la audiencia pública o pueden ser enviados por correo o por correo electrónico a comments@7-15norwalk.com el 31 de agosto de 2023 o antes, a la atención de:

Sr. Kevin Carifa,
Director de Planificación del Transporte
Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

ACCESIBILIDAD

Puede solicitar asistencia lingüística llamando a la línea de asistencia lingüística de CTDOT (860) 594-2109. Las solicitudes deben realizarse al menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión. La asistencia lingüística se proporciona sin costo alguno para el público y se hará todo lo posible por responder a las solicitudes de asistencia a tiempo.



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Norma Rodríguez-Reyes
203-376-0864 • 203-865-2272
norma@lavozhispana.com

STATE OF CONNECTICUT NOTARY PUBLIC



Estoy **CERTIFICADA** por el Departamento de Motores y Vehículos de CT (DMV) para hacer **TRADUCCIONES**.
Norma Rodríguez-Reyes
203-376-0864 • 203-865-2272

APARTAMENTO PARA ALQUILAR EN SPRINGFIELD, MASS

BORINQUEN APARTMENTS

Estamos aceptando aplicaciones para apartamentos recién renovados de 1, 2, 3, y 4 cuartos de dormitorio en Springfield. Estos hermosos apartamentos están subsidiados por el gobierno federal, y ofrecen estufa de cocinar de cinco hornillas, microonda, lavadora de platos, ventilador de techo, sistema de aire y calefacción central. Buena ubicación, cerca del hospital y autobús que le lleva al centro de la ciudad, servicio de lavandería, con oficinas de administradores y seguridad después de ciertas horas. La familia debe beneficiarse de la Vivienda de Bajos Ingresos bajo el Programa de Crédito Fiscal.

Por favor aplique en 2460 Main St., Suite 112, Springfield MA 01107 o visite www.morgankaylee.com o llame al 413-734-1745 o TDD 800-439-2370

APARTAMENTO PARA ALQUILAR EN SPRINGFIELD, MASS

VILLA TAINO TOWN HOMES

Estamos aceptando aplicaciones para apartamentos de 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 cuartos de dormitorios y apartamentos con acceso para personas con incapacidades físicas de 1, 2, 3 cuartos de dormitorios. Estos apartamentos están subsidiados por el gobierno federal. Una porción sustancial de los ingresos de la familia deben provenir de trabajadores agrícolas. Las viviendas son luminosas y espaciosas y ofrecen servicios de lavandería, estacionamiento, área de jardín privada y servicios de emergencia 24 horas. Situados en las calles de Carew, Dwight y Church. Están convenientemente ubicados cerca del hospital y autobús que le lleva al centro de la ciudad.

Por favor aplique en 2748 Main St., Springfield MA 01107 o visite www.morgankaylee.com o llame al 413-734-1745 o TDD (800) 439-2370



WATERBURY AVISO LEGAL

Una lista certificada de los candidatos apoyados por el **PARTIDO DEMÓCRATA** para la Ciudad de Waterbury para la elección como Alcalde, Archivista del Pueblo, Archivista Municipal, Alguacil Municipal, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 1, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 2, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 3, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 4, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 5 y Junta de Educación está archivada en mi oficina en 235 Grand St., Waterbury, Connecticut y copias de la misma están disponibles para distribución pública. Se celebrará una Primaria el 12 de septiembre de 2023, si la(s) petición(es) primaria(s) requerida(s) para candidato(s) opositor(es) se presenta(n), de conformidad con las Secciones 9-382 a 9-450 de los Estatutos Generales de Connecticut, a más tardar a las 4:00PM del 9 de agosto de 2023. Los formularios de petición, las instrucciones y la información relativa al procedimiento de presentación de candidaturas de oposición, incluidos los calendarios, pueden obtenerse de Teresa Bengal, Democratic Registrar of Voters, 236 Grand St., Waterbury.

Una lista certificada de los candidatos respaldados por el **PARTIDO REPUBLICANO** para la Ciudad de Waterbury para la elección de Alcalde, Z, Archivista del Pueblo, Archivista de la Ciudad, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 1, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 2, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 3, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 4, Junta de Concejales-Distrito 5 y Junta de Educación está archivada en mi oficina en 235 Grand St., Waterbury, Connecticut y copias de la misma están disponibles para distribución pública. Se celebrará una Primaria el 12 de septiembre de 2023, si la(s) petición(es) primaria(s) requerida(s) para candidato(s) opositor(es) se presenta(n), de conformidad con las Secciones 9-382 a 9-450 de los Estatutos Generales de Connecticut, a más tardar a las 4:00PM del 9 de agosto de 2023. Formularios de petición, instrucciones e información concerniente al procedimiento para la presentación de candidaturas opositoras, incluyendo horarios, pueden obtenerse de Timothy T. DeCarlo, Republican Registrar of Voters, 236 Grand St., Waterbury.

Antoinette C. Spinelli
Town Clerk, Waterbury

AVISO LEGAL

El Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut (CTDOT, por sus siglas en inglés), en cooperación con la Administración Federal de Carreteras (FHWA, por sus siglas en inglés), celebrará una audiencia pública para **Proyecto Ruta 7/15 de Norwalk** en Norwalk, Connecticut Proyecto Estatal No. 102-358 Proyecto de Ayuda Federal No. 0015(133)

La audiencia se refiere a la Evaluación Ambiental/Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental para el proyecto de referencia, preparado de conformidad con el Código de Regulaciones Federales, 23 CFR 771.

La audiencia pública se celebrará el:
Miércoles, 16 de agosto de 2023 a las 6:00 p.m.
en la Sala Comunitaria (Community Room)
Ayuntamiento de Norwalk (Norwalk City Hall)
125 East Avenue, Norwalk CT 06851

La Evaluación Ambiental/Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental puede consultarse en:
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

Oficina de la División de Connecticut de la FHWA
450 Main Street, Suite 612
Hartford, CT 06103

Biblioteca Estatal de Connecticut
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
Ayuntamiento de Norwalk (Norwalk City Hall)
125 East Ave
Norwalk, CT 06851

Biblioteca Pública de Norwalk - Sucursal Principal
1 Belden Ave
Norwalk, CT 06850

Biblioteca Pública de Norwalk - Sucursal de South Norwalk
10 Washington St
Norwalk, CT 06854

Consejo de Gobiernos del Oeste de Connecticut (WestCOG, por sus siglas en inglés)
1 Riverside Rd
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

El documento también está disponible en línea en:
www.ct.gov/environmentaldocuments
<http://7-15norwalk.com/>

Los comentarios escritos pueden ser presentados en la audiencia pública o pueden ser enviados por correo o por correo electrónico a comments@7-15norwalk.com el 31 de agosto de 2023 o antes, a la atención de:

Sr. Kevin Carifa,
Director de Planificación del Transporte
Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

ACCESIBILIDAD

Puede solicitar asistencia lingüística llamando a la línea de asistencia lingüística de CTDOT (860) 594-2109. Las solicitudes deben realizarse al menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión. La asistencia lingüística se proporciona sin costo alguno para el público y se hará todo lo posible por responder a las solicitudes de asistencia a tiempo.

Clasificados *LaVozHispana*

Tel: 203-865-2272

SAVIN ROCK COMMUNITIES LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS SPRING HEIGHTS APARTMENTS WINDOW AND DOOR REPLACEMENT

Savin Rock Communities is seeking sealed bids for the following:
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A pre-bid walk thru will be held on JULY 31, 2022 at 2:00 pm at Spring Heights Apartments located at 15 Glade Street, West Haven CT.

Contract documents including plans & specifications can be viewed on-line and purchased from Digiprint's website beginning on July 24, 2022. Visit www.digiprintplanroom.com.

5% Bid Security (Over \$25K ONLY) and 100% Performance/Payment Bonds (Over \$100K ONLY) are required. Bidders will note requirements of minimum wage rates, nondiscrimination/equal opportunity rules (Executive Order 11246) and related provisions in the General Conditions. No bid shall be withdrawn for ninety (90) days. Complete bidding requirements are noted in the Contract Documents. This project is federally assisted. Therefore, bidders must comply with the following requirements: Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968; Equal Opportunity provisions of Executive Order 11246; Non-Discrimination provision of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Labor Standards provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act and related acts and Contract Work Hours Standards Act; prevailing wage determinations as issued by the United States Department of Labor; and all applicable provisions under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Savin Rock Communities is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Housing Provider.

John P. Counter, Executive Director Savin Rock Communities
15 Glade Street
West Haven, CT 06516 203-934-8671



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Estamos en el corazón de la ciudad de Milford cerca de las paradas del auto bus y ferrocarril.



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AVISO LEGAL

El Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut (CTDOT, por sus siglas en inglés), en cooperación con la Administración Federal de Carreteras (FHWA, por sus siglas en inglés), celebrará una audiencia pública para
Proyecto Ruta 7/15 de Norwalk
en Norwalk, Connecticut
Proyecto Estatal No. 102-358
Proyecto de Ayuda Federal No. 0015(133)

La audiencia se refiere a la Evaluación Ambiental/Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental para el proyecto de referencia, preparado de conformidad con el Código de Regulaciones Federales, 23 CFR 771.

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Miércoles, 16 de agosto de 2023 a las 6:00 p.m.
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2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

Oficina de la División de Connecticut de la FHWA
450 Main Street, Suite 612
Hartford, CT 06103

Biblioteca Estatal de Connecticut
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
Ayuntamiento de Norwalk (Norwalk City Hall)
125 East Ave
Norwalk, CT 06851

Biblioteca Pública de Norwalk - Sucursal Principal
1 Belden Ave
Norwalk, CT 06850

Biblioteca Pública de Norwalk - Sucursal de South Norwalk
10 Washington St
Norwalk, CT 06854

Consejo de Gobiernos del Oeste de Connecticut (WestCOG, por sus siglas en inglés)
1 Riverside Rd
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

El documento también está disponible en línea en:
www.ct.gov/environmentaldocuments
<http://7-15norwalk.com/>

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Sr. Kevin Carifa,
Director de Planificación del Transporte
Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

ACCESIBILIDAD

Puede solicitar asistencia lingüística llamando a la línea de asistencia lingüística de CTDOT (860) 594-2109. Las solicitudes deben realizarse al menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión. La asistencia lingüística se proporciona sin costo alguno para el público y se hará todo lo posible por responder a las solicitudes de asistencia a tiempo.

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MECÁNICO**

**EN NEW
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CON O SIN HERRAMIENTAS

Llame **203-410-4364**

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Connecticut State Council on Environmental Quality

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July 18, 2023

Scoping Notice

1. Notice of Scoping for Pleasant View Water Main Interconnection Project, New Milford.
2. Notice of Scoping for Fellowship Housing Redevelopment Phase I, West Hartford.
3. Notice of Scoping for Ellis Street Commons, New Britain.
4. Notice of Scoping for Whitney House Demolition, Mansfield.
5. Notice of Scoping for Oak Woods, Plymouth.

Scoping Notice - Post-Scoping Notice (Need More Time)

1. **NEW!** Notice of Time Extension for Post-Scoping Notice for Safety Improvements on Route 82 (Phase 1), Norwich.

Post-Scoping Notice

No Post-Scoping Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)

1. **NEW!** Notice of an Environmental Impact Evaluation for Route 7 / Route 15 Interchange, Norwalk

Agency Record of Decision (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor---Current-Issue#ROD>)

No Record of Decision Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

OPM Determination of Adequacy (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor---Current-Issue#DOA>)

No Determination of Adequacy Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

State Land Transfer (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor---Current-Issue#state>)

No State Land Transfer Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

The next edition of the Environmental Monitor will be published on **August 8, 2023**.

Subscribe (<https://confirmsubscription.com/h/j/ED852A9EE7823EDF>) to e-alerts to receive an e-mail when the Environmental Monitor is published.

Notices in the Environmental Monitor are written and formatted by the sponsoring agencies and are published unedited. Questions about the content of any notice should be directed to the sponsoring agency.

Inquiries and requests to view or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring state agency.

Scoping Notice

"Scoping" is for projects in the earliest stages of planning. At the scoping stage, detailed information on a project's design, alternatives, and environmental impacts does not yet exist. Sponsoring agencies are asking for comments from other agencies and from the public as to the scope of alternatives and environmental impacts that should be considered for further study. Send your comments to the contact person listed for the project by the date indicated. [Read More](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-6) (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-6>).

The following Scoping Notices have been submitted for publication in this edition.

1. Notice of Scoping for Pleasant View Water Main Interconnection Project

Address of possible location: Prospect Hill Road (CT Route 67), Legion Road, Dorwin Hill Road and Pleasant View Road

Municipality where proposed action might be located: New Milford

Project Description: Aquarion Water Company (Aquarion) proposes to interconnect the Aquarion New Milford Regional (PWSID# CT0960011) water system with the Aquarion Pleasant View (PWSID# CT0960301) water system. This proposal includes installation of approximately 4,260 feet (ft) of water main on Prospect Hill Road, 150 ft of new water main on Legion Road, 4,425 ft of new water main on Dorwin Hill Rd, and 70 ft of new water main on Pleasant View Rd. Aquarion proposes that completing the interconnection between the two systems will eliminate existing water quality concerns, increase capacity, improve reliability and ensure an adequate margin of safety for the Pleasant View water system.

Project Map: [Click here](#) to view a map of the project area.

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: **July 20, 2023.**

Any person may ask the sponsoring agency to hold a public scoping meeting by sending such a request to the address below. If a public scoping meeting is requested by 25 or more individuals, or by an association that represents 25 or more members, the sponsoring agency shall schedule a public scoping meeting. Such requests must be made by: **June 30, 2023.**

Written comments and/or requests for a public scoping meeting should be sent to:

Name: Eric McPhee

Agency: Department of Public Health, Drinking Water Section

Address: 410 Capitol Avenue, MS #12DWS, PO Box 340308, Hartford, CT 06134-0308

E-Mail: dph.sourceprotection@ct.gov (<mailto:dph.sourceprotection@ct.gov>).

If you have questions about the scoping for this project, contact:

Name: Eric McPhee

Agency: Department of Public Health, Drinking Water Section

Address: 410 Capitol Avenue, MS #12DWS, PO Box 340308, Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Phone: 860-509-7333

E-Mail: dph.sourceprotection@ct.gov (<mailto:dph.sourceprotection@ct.gov>).

Inquiries and requests to view and or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring state agency:

Agency: Department of Public Health, Hearing Office

Address: 410 Capitol Avenue, MS #13PHO Hartford, CT 06134-0308

E-Mail: DPH.foi@ct.gov (<mailto:DPH.foi@ct.gov>).

Phone: 860-566-5682

What Happens Next: The sponsoring agency will make a determination whether to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) or that the project does not require the preparation of an EIE under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). A Post-Scoping Notice of its decision will appear in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*.

2. Notice of Scoping for West Hartford Fellowship Housing Redevelopment Phase I

Address: 10-30 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT 06117

Municipality: West Hartford

Project Description: Project plans of demolition and re-development for 4 phases and consist of the demolition of 22 of the existing apartment building and construction of six apartment buildings with 300 apartment units and a garage/maintenance building. Phase I includes the demolition of three of the existing one-story buildings consisting of twenty-two apartment units. The re-development and construction consist of two 3-story apartment buildings. Building 1 will consist of 3 studio and 22 one-bedroom apartment units. Building 2 will consist of 4 studios, 30 1-BR, and 6 2-BR units. Phase II consists of the demolition of 6 buildings and the construction of two 3-story buildings. Phase III will consist of the demolition of 8 buildings and construction of one 4-story building Phase IV will consist of the demolition of 4 buildings and construction of one 3-story building and a garage/maintenance building. The assistance anticipated at this time is \$1,201,102, which is considered necessary for completion of Phase I and the State has considered the potential impact of the subsequent phases previously described as well.

Project Map: https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/-/media/DOH/CEPA-Scoping-2023_West-Hartford-Fellowship-Housing-Redevelopment-Phase-I/West-Hartford-Fellowship-Housing-Redevelopment-Phase-I.png?sc_lang=en&hash=D792B9E228211DB6DA521B4C52919B32

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: **August 3, 2023**

Any person may ask the sponsoring agency to hold a public scoping meeting by sending such a request to the address below. If a public scoping meeting is requested by 25 or more individuals, or by an association that represents 25 or more members, the sponsoring agency shall schedule a public scoping meeting. Such requests must be made by: **July 13, 2023**

Written comments and/or requests for a public scoping meeting should be sent to

Name: Mithila Chakraborty

Agency: Department of Housing

Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106-7106

E-Mail: mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov (<mailto:mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov>)

Inquiries and requests to view and or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring state agency:

Name: Mithila Chakraborty

Agency: Department of Housing

Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106-7106

E-Mail: mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov (<mailto:mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov>)

What Happens Next: The sponsoring agency will make a determination whether to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) or that the project does not require the preparation of an EIE under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). A Post-Scoping Notice of its decision will appear in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*.

3. Notice of Scoping for Ellis Street Commons

Address: 321 Ellis Street, New Britain, CT 06051

Municipality: New Britain, CT

Project Description: The 321 Ellis Street project consists of the gut rehabilitation of a six-story structure formerly used as an electric mill that was built in 1920. The 7-acre site is located at 321 Ellis Street in the city of New Britain, Connecticut. Ellis Street Commons will comprise a total of One Hundred Fifty-Four (154) residential units to be outfitted with a mix of 79 one-bedroom, 59 two-bedroom, and 16 three-bedroom units serving individuals at 30%, 50%, 60% and 80% area median income. The unit mix in addition to the number of one-bedroom units, will be marketed to senior households, owing to the high demand for affordable senior housing in the city. The 222,030 sq ft building will feature a leasing and management office as well as amenity spaces for residents. The site will be improved to include new open space and include 230 surface parking.

Project Map: https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/-/media/DOH/CEPA-Scoping-2023_Ellis-Street-Commons/321-Ellis-St.png?sc_lang=en&hash=479E2E98B6807E26E287AB3D3BAE25C3

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: **August 3, 2023**

Any person may ask the sponsoring agency to hold a public scoping meeting by sending such a request to the address below. If a public scoping meeting is requested by 25 or more individuals, or by an association that represents 25 or more members, the sponsoring agency shall schedule a public scoping meeting. Such requests must be made by: **July 13, 2023**

Written comments and/or requests for a public scoping meeting should be sent to

Name: Mithila Chakraborty

Agency: Department of Housing

Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106

E-Mail: mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov (<mailto:mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov>).

Inquiries and requests to view and or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring state agency:

Name: Mithila Chakraborty

Agency: Department of Housing

Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106

E-Mail: mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov (<mailto:mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov>).

What Happens Next: The sponsoring agency will make a determination whether to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) or that the project does not require the preparation of an EIE under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). A Post-Scoping Notice of its decision will appear in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*.

4. Notice of Scoping for Whitney House Demolition at the University of Connecticut

Address of possible location: 1315 Storrs Road

Municipality where proposed action might be located: Mansfield

Project Description: Built between 1802 and 1807, Whitney House is one of the oldest structures on campus and has been a contributing resource to the University of Connecticut Historic District since 1989. Damaged by fire, smoke, and water earlier this year, the building is unsafe for occupancy and beyond reasonable repair. This project will plan, design, and decommission the building for demolition, and will eliminate present hazards and liabilities associated with the existing structure and site.

Project Map: [Click here](#) to view a map of the project area.

Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until 5:00 PM EST on: **Friday, August 4, 2023**

There will be a public scoping meeting online for this proposed action:

DATE: Tuesday, July 25, 2023

TIME: 6:00 PM EST

Register in advance at:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aBU9fGcXRUKzXAGGDVgusw
(https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aBU9fGcXRUKzXAGGDVgusw)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Additional information about the project, including a recording of the public scoping meeting, will be available online at: <http://updc.uconn.edu/whitney-house> (<http://updc.uconn.edu/whitney-house>)

Written comments and/or questions about the public scoping meeting, or other questions about the scoping for this project, should be sent to:

Name: James Libby, Sr. Project Manager

Agency: University Planning, Design & Construction

Address: 3 Discovery Drive, U-6038, Storrs, CT 06269

E-Mail: james.libby@uconn.edu

Inquiries and requests to view and or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to: <https://publicrecords.uconn.edu/make-a-request/> (<https://publicrecords.uconn.edu/make-a-request/>)

What Happens Next: The University will make a determination whether to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) or that the project does not require the preparation of an EIE under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). A Post-Scoping Notice of its decision will appear in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*.

5. Notice of Scoping for Oak Woods

Address: 9 Scott Road, Terryville, CT 06786

Municipality: Plymouth

Project Description: Oak Woods is located in Terryville (Plymouth), CT - the development will be built on +/- 8 acres. The proposed 59-unit development will be located at 9 Scott Road. The 59-unit development has already attained site plan approval from the town. In fact, much of the infrastructure (e.g., roads and underground plumbing) already been "roughed-in" by the current owner. Therefore, the project is capable of commencing immediately upon funding. The development will be comprised of all 2-bedroom units. Oak Woods Condominiums will service residents at the 25%, 50%, 80% & market rate rent levels. Moreover, the development will enhance the affordable housing stock in Terryville (Plymouth), CT which currently has 7.73% affordable housing units.

There are no floodplain encroachments on the proposed site. There are wetlands, on the site - the site has received wetland approvals from the Town. CT DEEP opined that wetlands approvals is on the local level - no additional review from CT DEEP regarding wetlands. Utility infrastructure, including the access road off of Scott Road, have been installed to the site. The neighborhood for the proposed Oak Woods is within walking distance to a high concentration of residential related services, including, but not limited to, recreational areas, green spaces, medical facilities, banks, schools, grocery stores, sports facilities, library.

Project Map: Map of Oak Woods (https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/-/media/DOH/CEPA-Scoping-2023_Oak-Woods/Map-of-Oak-Woods.PNG?sc_lang=en&hash=FFB006A8840B90A1F4AE68E2A15152C0).

(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor/-/media/DOH/CEPA-Scoping-2023_Oak-Woods/Map-of-Oak-Woods.PNG?sc_lang=en&hash=FFB006A8840B90A1F4AE68E2A15152C0)Written comments from the public are welcomed and will be accepted until the close of business on: **August 3, 2023**

Any person may ask the sponsoring agency to hold a public scoping meeting by sending such a request to the address below. If a public scoping meeting is requested by 25 or more individuals, or by an association that represents 25 or more members, the sponsoring agency shall schedule a public scoping meeting. Such requests must be made by: **July 13, 2023**

Written comments and/or requests for a public scoping meeting should be sent to

Name: Mithila Chakraborty

Agency: Department of Housing

Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106-7106

E-Mail: mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov (<mailto:mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov>).

Inquiries and requests to view and or copy documents, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, must be submitted to the sponsoring state agency:

Name: Mithila Chakraborty

Agency: Department of Housing

Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106-7106

E-Mail: mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov (<mailto:mithila.chakraborty@ct.gov>).

What Happens Next: The sponsoring agency will make a determination whether to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) or that the project does not require the preparation of an EIE under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). A Post-Scoping Notice of its decision will appear in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*.

Scoping Notice - Post-Scoping Notice (Need More Time)

If an agency is unable to publish a Post-Scoping Notice within six months after the comment period for scoping, the agency will publish an update with an action status and an estimate as to when a Post-Scoping Notice will be published. Such an update will be published by the agency at six-month intervals until the Post-Scoping Notice is published. **[Read More](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7)**

(<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7>)

1. Notice of Time Extension for Post-Scoping Notice for Safety Improvements on Route 82 (Phase 1)

Address of Possible Project Location: Route 82 (West Main Street) and runs, approximately, from Banas Court (mile point 27.23) to Fairmount Street (mile point 28.13).

Municipality where proposed action would be located: Norwich

Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) Determination: On June 7, 2022, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) published a **Notice of Scoping** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2022/June-7-2022>) to solicit public comments for this action in the *Environmental Monitor*. A public scoping meeting took place on June 23, 2022. On January 3, 2023, CTDOT published a **notice of time extension** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2023/January-3-2023#needmoretime>) since further analysis was needed to make a final CEPA determination. The CTDOT is unable to publish its determination regarding this action at this time.

Action Status: CTDOT is awaiting additional information and performing additional analyses. An additional public informational meeting is anticipated in 2023.

Estimated Publication Date: The CTDOT estimates that a Post-Scoping Notice will be published in the *Environmental Monitor* on or before **January 2, 2024**.

If you have questions about the proposed action, contact:

Name: Mr. Scott Bushee, Transportation Principal Engineer

Agency: Connecticut Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering and Construction

Address: 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131

Phone: 860-594-2079

E-Mail: Scott.Bushee@ct.gov (<mailto:Scott.Bushee@ct.gov>)

What Happens Next: The CTDOT will make a determination whether to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) or that the project does not require the preparation of an EIE under the CEPA. A Post-Scoping Notice of its decision will appear in a future edition of the *Environmental Monitor*.

Post-Scoping Notice

A Post-Scoping Notice is the determination by a sponsoring agency, after publication of a Scoping Notice and consideration of comments received, whether an **Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)**

(https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b) needs to be prepared for a proposed State action.

(<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations>) **Read More** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-7>)

No Post-Scoping Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

EIE Notice

After Scoping, an agency that wishes to undertake an action that could significantly affect the environment must produce, for public review and comment, a detailed written evaluation of the expected environmental impacts. This is called

an **Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)** (https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b). **Read More** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-8>)

The following EIE Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

1. Notice of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for Route 7 / Route 15 Interchange

Address of Possible Project Location: The proposed project is located in the northern portion of Norwalk at the interchange of Routes 7 and 15 (Interchange 39) and includes the interchange of Route 15 and Main Avenue (Interchange 40); Route 719 (Main Avenue); and Glover Avenue/Creeping Hemlock Drive in the vicinity of Main Avenue. The proposed limits of construction extend along Route 15 from approximately 0.5 miles west of Route 7 to approximately 0.5 miles east of Main Avenue and along Route 7 from approximately 0.5 miles south to approximately 0.5 miles north of Route 15.

Municipality where proposed action is to be located: Norwalk

Project Description: The proposed project will address the missing connections on the existing Route 15 and Route 7 interchange and would consequently improve the mobility for motorists at the following locations:

- Southbound Route 15 to northbound Route 7
- Southbound Route 15 to southbound Route 7
- Northbound Route 7 to northbound Route 15
- Southbound Route 7 to northbound Route 15

Additionally, improvements to the Route 15 and Main Avenue ramps will address the substandard acceleration lanes, steep changes in grade, sharp curves, and limited sight distance. These factors contribute to a high number of crashes on the Merritt Parkway.

Project Map: [Click here](#) to view a map of the project area.

Scoping Notice and Post Scoping Notice: The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) published a Scoping Notice on **October 3, 2017** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2017/October-3-2017>), and a Post-Scoping Notice on **June 16, 2020** (<https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2020/June-16-2020>), for the proposed project in the Environmental Monitor.

Comments on this EIE will be accepted until the close of business on: **August 31, 2023**

The public can view a copy of this EIE on the project website at www.7-15norwalk.com (<http://www.7-15norwalk.com/>) or on CTDOT's Environmental Document's page by clicking [here](https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Bureau-of-Policy/Environmental-Impact-Evaluations/EnvironmentalIntermodal-Documents) (<https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Bureau-of-Policy/Environmental-Impact-Evaluations/EnvironmentalIntermodal-Documents>). The document is also available in hardcopy at the following locations:

- CTDOT, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131
- FHWA CT Division Office, 450 Main Street, Suite 612, Hartford, CT 06103
- CT State Library 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
- Norwalk City Hall (City Clerk Office), 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851
- Norwalk Public Library (Main Branch), 1 Belden Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06850
- Norwalk Public Library (South Norwalk Branch), 10 Washington Street, Norwalk, CT 06854
- Western CT Council of Governments, 1 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Other information: Since the project involves Federal funding through FHWA, the project must also comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Therefore, the document is a joint NEPA/CEPA Environmental Assessment (EA)/ EIE. Additional project information is available on the project website: www.7-15norwalk.com (<http://www.7-15norwalk.com/>).

There is a public hearing scheduled for this EIE on:

DATE: August 16, 2023

TIME: Open House at 6:00 p.m. Hearing to begin at 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Norwalk City Hall, Community Room, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851

NOTES: The hearing location is ADA accessible. Persons needing ADA accommodations or language assistance, including American Sign Language, may contact CTDOT's Language Assistance Call Line at (860) 594-2109. Requests should be made at least 5 business days prior to the hearing. ADA accommodations and/or language assistance is provided at no cost to the public and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance. Persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities may dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS).

Send your written questions or comments (E-Mail preferred) about this EIE to:

Name: Mr. Kevin F. Carifa, Transportation Planning Director

Agency: CT Department of Transportation, Bureau of Policy and Planning

Address: 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131

E-Mail: comments@7-15norwalk.com

What happens next: The CTDOT will review the comments received and may conduct further environmental study and analysis or amend the evaluation. The CTDOT will prepare responses to the substantive issues raised in review of and comment on the EIE and any supplemental materials or amendments. Those responses and all supplemental materials and comments shall be made available in a "Record of Decision" which will appear in the *Environmental Monitor* for public inspection.

Agency Record of Decision

After an [Environmental Impact Evaluation \(EIE\) \(https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b\)](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b) is developed, an agency will prepare a concise public record of decision, which takes into consideration the agency's findings in the EIE, and any comments received on that evaluation. [Read More \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-10\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-10)

No Record of Decision Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

OPM's Determination of Adequacy

After an [Environmental Impact Evaluation \(https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b\)](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_439.htm#sec_22a-1b) (EIE) and record of decision are developed, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will determine if the EIE and the associated process are adequate. If not, OPM will specify the areas of inadequacy with reference to CEPA or the CEPA regulations and specify the corrective action required. [Read More \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-10\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/CEPA-Regulations#22a-1a-10)

No Determination of Adequacy Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

State Land Transfer Notice

Connecticut General Statutes [Section 4b-47 \(https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_059.htm#sec_4b-47\)](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_059.htm#sec_4b-47) requires public notice of most proposed sales and transfers of state-owned lands. The public has an opportunity to comment on any such proposed transfer. Each notice includes an address where comments should be sent. [Read more about the process \(https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/State-Lands-Transfer-Process\)](https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/State-Lands-Transfer-Process).

No State Land Transfer Notice has been submitted for publication in this edition.

CEPA Project Inventory

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) maintains a list of projects that have entered the CEPA process. It shows each project's status. The inventory can be found [here](#) .

CEQ Contact Information

All inquiries and requests of the Council should be sent electronically to: paul.aresta@ct.gov (<mailto:paul.aresta@ct.gov>).

Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project

State Project 0102-0358

CEPA Record of Decision

Appendix E

EA/EIE Comments and Responses

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
1	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I am Anthony Costanzo from Stamford here representing myself as a member of the public. I am glad that we have the crash specific slide here, because this really supports my point. Currently, Exit 40 has over 300 crashes in the 2015 to 2018 timeframe. It is statistically the most dangerous interchange on the parkway. Right next door, Exit 39, only had 65 in the same time period, which is rather impressive considering the volume of traffic that moves through that interchange, so it's really one of the safest interchanges on the parkway. But that's not as in jeopardy with the preferred alternative, because there is a proposal to add two traffic signals which means conflict points where vehicles will be crossing each other's paths which creates opportunities for more crashes. Now, in the statement of purposes and need talks about improving safety, so why are we doing this change to Exit 39 that going to make it less safe. Yes, it will create connections, but it's not worth it. You're going -- you're playing with peoples' lives here. So I would say that the alternative that I haven't seen considered, but I really think should be considered is that Exit 40 should be fixed, it needs to be fixed, it's old and dangerous, but if we can't come up with an alternative to do something to Exit 39 to create the missing connections in a free flowing matter that preserves the safety that's already there, just leave it alone. Fix 40, leave 39 alone.</p>	<p>Addressing the missing connections at Exit 39 improves mobility and shifts some of the traffic demand at the Exit 40 interchange to the completed Exit 39 interchange resulting in improved safety at the Exit 40 interchange. The two interchanges must be designed together, given the proximity and operations of the two closely spaced interchanges. The design of the proposed intersections will meet the Department's standards to ensure they are designed safely. Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p>
2	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I just want to say the alternative that will have additional traffic lights if it's being considers like to make them kind of like smart lights not add additional driving time for the people in the project. So, I didn't really see how much information on how much travel time would be impacted, so it's important to be included maybe for future.</p>	<p>When traffic conditions were modeled, all alternatives impacted travel time due to the change in traffic flows. Overall, Alternative 26 is projected to improve travel times for the missing interchange movements when compared to the No Build Alternative. All traffic signals under the Build Alternative will be coordinated to reduce stoppage time and improve traffic flow along the Main Avenue and Rte. 7 corridors. Cameras and other technology will be implemented to allow traffic signals to detect traffic and therefore operate the most efficiently and effectively in real-time.</p>
3	Public Hearing- Transcript	PAC	<p>I am a member of the Merritt Parkway Advisory Committee for the 7/15 project. I have been working on this project since 1990 and have had many conversations with numerous DOT engineers about this. Currently, the state DOT has put forward alternate 26 as a preferred choice for the 7/15 project. This alternate would convert Route 7 to a full -- currently the state DOT has put forward alternate 26 as a preferred choice for this project. This alternate would convert Route 7 to a 4-lane boulevard by changing the character of the roadway using intersections and introducing traffic signals on Route 7. It may be the state's preferred plan, but it is not mine. The following is my opinion on alternate 26:</p> <p>(A) By adding traffic signals on the Route 7 expressway, I think that too many rear-end collisions would results since motorists are extremely inpatient, especially in densely populated Fairfield County.</p> <p>(B) If you add traffic signals, the road becomes like the existing Main Avenue, state road 719. The purpose of the expressway is to avoid the traffic signals. Traffic signals will create further backups, which already exist at the a.m. and p.m. rush hours.</p>	<p>(A) Comments acknowledged. Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential and severity of crashes.</p> <p>(B) Main Avenue corridor has various establishments (Office, Retail, Residential) that contribute to the existing delays on the corridor, which is not present within the section of Route 7 of the project limits. The proposed improvements on Route 7 will provide additional means to bypass Main Avenue between State Route 123 (New Canaan Ave) and Route 15, eliminating the need to use Exit 2 on Route 7 to access areas north of Route 15. As a result, this will alleviate local congestion on Main Avenue.</p> <p>(C) The traffic generated from the developments was considered when projecting traffic to 2045 by reviewing all planned developments and applying an appropriate CTDOT growth rate.</p> <p>A supplemental traffic data collection program was performed in 2022. A comparison of 2022 traffic data against 2016 traffic data confirmed that the 2016</p>

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			<p>(C) There are many Norwalk projects in the pipeline that will impact the Main Avenue corridor, mainly new apartments and a hotel on the I part property on Main Avenue, BJs or another big box store being proposed on a 5-acre property on Main Avenue. In Wilton, on Danbury Road, there is a huge apartment building under construction right now. When the Walmart closes on Connecticut Avenue in Norwalk soon, the existing Walmart on Main Avenue will definitely have more shoppers using this store, which is across the street from Hyde Park. Consequently, there will be much more traffic in this area. Is alternate 26 really the answer to this increased traffic? Some questions that I have concerning the alternate 26 are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will CONNDOT prevent drivers from blocking the box at the traffic signal. 2. Will CONNDOT install lighting at the traffic light. 3. How will traffic lights be timed to ensure smooth flow of traffic on the expressway. 4. Does CONNDOT plan to implement methods to slow traffic on the busy expressway heading up to the traffic lights. 5. Has this type of boulevard plan been instituted in other parts of Connecticut. 6. What about a power outage during a Nor-easter or hurricane or emergency evacuation, what will happen then. Think about the future. Implementing alternate 21D is very shortsighted since the expressway should be completed all the way to Route 33 near Orem's Diner in Wilton as proposed many years ago. I support alternate 21D with free flow traffic with direct on and off-ramps. In my opinion 21 -- alternate 26 is going to be a traffic nightmare with traffic lights resulting in heavy congestion and long delays. Let's do it right the first time. 	<p>traffic volumes were still valid for use in the draft EA/EIE, and the 2016 results are still valid. The analysis took into account traffic from the new and planned developments in the area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comment acknowledged. This is an enforcement issue that the Legal Traffic Authority is responsible for. 2. Design phase will address the need to provide appropriate lighting throughout the project area where warranted (and permitted as regards Merritt Parkway). 3. Traffic signals timing will be addressed during design and will optimize Rte. 7 and Main Ave corridors through deployment of technology for efficient travel time. 4. Design going forward will address the necessary changes to re-characterize Route 7 leading to the signalized intersections (e.g., pavement markings, shoulder widths, signage, roadside plantings). 5. Alternative 26 is similar to other freeway terminations in the State and in the country. The proposed treatment at Rte. 7 (with new signals) is essentially taking the terminus of Rte. 7 at Grist Mill Road and shifting 1 mile south. Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area. 6. During power outages, the signals may turn to flashing operation or the intersection is treated as all way stop controlled per state law.
4	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I just had a up couple of other follow-up questions about something that I read in EIE. The first one is about projected traffic. I did read over the numbers and I was pretty interested to find that the projected traffic over the no build alternate is about negligible and actually went down a little bit. I'd be curious to hear some more follow-ups from the parties about how those numbers were generated because I think that the typical line of thought is if you build -- I'm sure you're all very familiar with the concept. So, I didn't know how that was generated. I saw that there was like a framework provided, I'm not an expert in this field, by any means, so I'm not like familiar with exactly how those numbers are come up with, but I didn't know if maybe the analysis looked at changes in land use spurred by additional highway development, and I know you see this a lot, especially in the sunbelt, a build out, a new highway, and then you start seeing a bunch of developments cropping up where you wouldn't have seen them previously, and with this added productivity in the project, you can say that it's now easier maybe to live in some areas and commute to others because you're not needing to take this detour off the highway anymore and will that generate any difference in land use over the following decades after the project is completed.</p>	<p>The traffic volumes generated from the proposed developments are included as part of the applicable CTDOT growth rate for this project. Traffic growth depends on many factors and varies across the entire State. The CT Travel Demand Model accounts for demographic data including but not limited to population, employment, households, vehicle ownership etc. The purpose of this project is to provide missing linkages, improve mobility and safety and is not to increase capacity.</p>

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5	Public Hearing- Transcript	PAC	<p>So, following up on Ben's point about the VMT numbers. I actually read them with Ben, and we took a look at the travel times and the average speed through there, as well. I want to call attention to them, not because I suspect that they're wrong, I think actually that they're probably right, and that is the travel times through the intersection projected into 2045. I don't have them in front of me, but if my memory serves me right, in 2045 the travel time through the interchange, I want to say it was on the Merritt, currently -- I'm sorry, it's not the travel time, but the current average speed. The current average speed is something that we would all expect like around the speed limit, it was right on the order of 45 to 50 miles an hour, but in 2045, with the know build option, it's like a 20 mile an hour figure, and with either of the alternatives, the number was even lower than it. It was 17 or 18 in one case and like 13 in other case. We're talking average speed in miles per hour through the corridor. I think that it is interesting, in this particular case, that the building of the interchange makes the traffic move even slower, but what I also want to call attention to is the fact that in the next 20 years the traffic is, regardless of whether we do it or not or which alternative we pick, is going to get a lot slower, and I think that really speaks to the need for us to invest in other forms of transportation. We could continue widening the Merritt, but we would have to keep doing it every few years, because that how it works. That's what the data bears out. Right? If you widen it, you've got to widen it again five years later. That's the only way to keep the traffic flowing, whereas there are a lot of other forms of transportation that are much more space efficient. Right? We could be investing, like John mentioned, in more robust public transportation. On the east/west corridor that probably looks like investing in Metro North; right? Which if we're going something, we can do more of that. Right? And \$100 million, which is a difference between the two alternatives, that goes a long way, and it goes an even longer way when it comes to walking and biking transportation, as I've already pointed out, but I wanted to bring up that data point, because I think it speaks volumes.</p>	<p>Travel speeds on the Merritt Parkway are lower in the future years due to traffic growth and the fact that the existing configuration of two thru lanes in each direction remain. There are no current or future plans to widen the Merritt Parkway in this corridor.</p> <p>The Department has and continues to ensure our Capital Plan includes improvements for all modes of transportation to ensure the travelling public is provided with multiple options.</p>
6	Email	General Public	<p>I am appalled that no one from the local Norwalk government bothered to attend this meeting. It will have an enormous impact on the neighborhood. Speaks volumes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I live off of Glover Avenue. We've endured major construction for more than 2 years. It is STILL going on. The road has been dug up several times and we have had to contend with mud, exposed manhole covers not clearly marked, one way traffic, and blocked access. This pending project will once again impact Glover Avenue for years. 2. Norwalk P & Z approved construction of two huge apartment buildings, one 15 story and one 11 story. This will be an additional 1300 units and potential for 1300 additional cars. No one has considered this project hitting the timeline of the 7-15 project. People living on Glover will never be able to leave their homes. There was no mention of this at the presentation. 	<p>Comments acknowledged. As with all CTDOT projects, design will be coordinated with other local/regional projects.</p> <p>The Department has coordinated with the City of Norwalk and they have been on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The traffic volumes generated from the proposed developments are included as part of the applicable CTDOT growth rate for this project.</p>

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			<p>3. The fascination with bike lanes amazes me. Bike lanes have been added to Glover Avenue with markings on the road and multiple signs. I go up and down Glover and, at best, see two bikes a week. There is one lone bike at the train station. The other day, the bike rider was in front of me in the car lane. He was not using the bike lane. A joke!!!</p> <p>I am really tired of my neighborhood being under siege.</p>	
7	Website Form	General Public	<p>As a retired Traffic Engineer with more than 33 years traffic engineering experience including many CTDOT projects, I would like to voice my strong opposition to Alternative 26.</p> <p>This alternative, which adds two traffic control signals to the Route 7 expressway is unsafe and will cause unnecessary traffic congestion on an otherwise free-moving expressway. Alternative 26 will result in a similar traffic and safety condition to that on Route 9 in Middletown with extensive traffic congestion and a high rate of rear end collisions. That should be unacceptable to the state since it does not safely and efficiently accommodate the traveling public. Need I remind you that the state is about to rebuild Route 9 to remove those signals. Why would CTDOT consider building similar unsafe inefficient interchange when they finally eliminating that one. It makes no sense.</p> <p>I understand that the opposition to the safer and more traffic efficient Alternative 21D is the visual impact to the Merritt Parkway, and while I strongly support maintaining the visual integrity of the Scenic Highway, that should not override safety. The visual impact to the parkway could be lessened by eliminating lower volume ramps (Route 7 SB to Route 15 NB; Route 7 SB to Main Avenue; Route 7 NB to Main Avenue), constructing architecturally unique bridges in the interchange and improving landscaping. This would provide a safe, efficient and attractive interchange. Please reconsider this. Thank you.</p>	<p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p> <p>The signals on Route 9 are situated between two freeway segments. The proposed treatment at Rte. 7 (with new signals) is essentially moving the terminus of the expressway from Rte. 7 at Grist Mill Road, to just south of the proposed Exit 39 completed interchange.</p> <p>The removal of the identified exits would have negative impact on mobility, one of the key P&N tenets for the project. The alignment of various ramps at the 7 & 15 interchange will continue to be evaluated during the design process.</p>
8	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi. I am someone in the industry who prefers to remain anonymous. I have been familiar with this project for some time and am discouraged, but understanding, to see the preferred alternative presented. I strongly advise that any design beyond this point that accounts for traffic signals along an existing freeway mainline consider providing traffic calming along the US Route 7 right of way for some distance to either side of the project site at CT Route 15. Specifically, I recommend a variable width grass median, introducing slight curvature with a lower speed limit to the mainline, and providing context- and community-sensitive design elements along the side of the roadway that will contribute it being downgraded, in the perception of the motorist, from a freeway to a limited-access arterial with cross movements. The more supporting context that can be provided with this solution, the safer it will be to implement.</p> <p>My preferred solution remains the originally considered (going back many years) completion of the interchange along the Merritt Parkway with all ramps present, understanding that the design compromises that led to the current half-interchange are unlikely to be able to be overridden. I would also love to see a northern extension of the</p>	<p>The project Purpose and Needs statement notes that the existing Main Avenue and Route 15 interchange ramps have substandard acceleration and deceleration lanes, steep changes in grades, sharp curves, and limited sight distance, all factors leading to an elevated occurrence of crashes at Interchange 40. Safety was evaluated for all proposed Alternatives.</p> <p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39.</p>

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			existing northern stub end of the freeway to better tie into the US 7 mainline. In an ideal world there would be upgrades to provide 2 lanes each direction between the Merritt Parkway and I-84, but I realistically cannot expect that to be considered at this time. I just want the solution that is the safest and most easily understood by motorists. Thank you for your consideration.	Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.
9	Website Form	Non-profit group	Where is the proposed rendering of this revised plan? Additionally: 1. I do not see any studies of the impact of electric vehicles which weigh more than standard vehicles on the design specifications. 2. The plan does not address the future of autonomous vehicles, connected CCV2 standards, and safety measures that will impact the spread of fire safety during accidents involving vehicles with lithium-ion batteries.	Renderings of the alternatives (including Alternative 26) are incorporated in various sections of the EA/EIE, and specifically Appendix A. Additional renderings will be developed as the design progresses. The Purpose and Need of this project is independent of the implementation EV and CAV infrastructure. The project's proposed enhancements are designed to satisfy CTDOT's latest design standards.
10	Website Form	General Public	Dear All, This connector must be built. Given the volume of traffic and upcoming developments in Norwalk / Wilton / Westport area this connector would benefit all three towns and more importantly the nearby businesses from easy flowing traffic. I sincerely hope to see this project completed as soon as possible. Thanks Nilanjan Bhowmik	Comment acknowledged.
11	Website Form	General Public	Glover Avenue has been a total mess of a road for over 22 years. no more I am so sick and tired of the wear and tear on my vehicle year after year. NO Thank you! Stay away please!	Comment acknowledged.
12	Website Form	General Public	I am requesting the collaboration between ConnDOT and the NRVT to plan a viable route for the NRVT as a way for ASML employees to one day commute to the office by bike. This move would help alleviate traffic in route 7 in Wilton and help reduce the states carbon footprint.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
13	Website Form	General Public	This would be beneficial and well used by members of the Norwalk community to commute to work on Route 77 offices	Comment acknowledged.
14	Website Form	General Public	I strongly suggest project team to take Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) in to the scope consideration. The NRTV could be much of benefit to improve traffic and safety because of alternative commute options for many people currently have no choice of driving in the area. Thank you.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
15	Website Form	General Public	As a frequent biker on the empire rail trail it's an absolutely shame that CT hasn't committed to this project. One big advantage to funding and completing this project would be the smaller number of cars on the road in the Wilton Norwalk area as it is a	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage

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			hub with a lot of big companies who would more than likely give their employees an incentive to ride their bike to work like the EU	with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
16	Website Form	General Public	Please consider the bike infrastructure here. The NRVT still needs to go by this area to connect Norwalk to Wilton (and then on to Danbury).	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
17	Website Form	General Public	Please take into consideration of taking NRVT as part of the project. That will make it possible for many of the people working in North Norwalk/South Wilton to bike ride to work, reduce the traffic congestion on the Main Ave.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
18	Website Form	General Public	As someone who works in Wilton and loves to bike ride, I would love to see the biking infrastructure greatly improved. If I were able to bike to work my commute would greatly improve, my quality of life would greatly improve, and I would be able to do my part in helping with global warming and ecological steps being taken to fight climate change. My commute alone would save around 15 KG of CO2 (this number is for a 1 way commute! double that for a full day commute to and from work) from entering the atmosphere (numbers calculated based on current bike commute I sometimes take from my house (but am too scared to do all the time because of the lack of infrastructure to keep me safe.))	Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2). CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
19	Website Form	General Public	Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade. The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades. The NRVT is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVT around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations. Please consider accommodating the NRVT option in your planning.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
20	Website Form	General Public	Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade. The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.

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21	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT</p> <p>Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade.</p> <p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.</p> <p>The NRVT is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVT around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations.</p> <p>Please consider accommodating the NRVT option in your planning.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
22	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT</p> <p>Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade.</p> <p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.</p> <p>The NRVT is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVT around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations.</p> <p>Please consider accommodating the NRVT option in your planning.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Philip Choi</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
23	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT</p> <p>Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade.</p> <p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.

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24	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT</p> <p>Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade.</p> <p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades. The NRVT is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVT around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations.</p> <p>Please consider accommodating the NRVT option in your planning.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
25	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT</p> <p>Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade.</p> <p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.</p> <p>The NRVT is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVT around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations.</p> <p>Please consider accommodating the NRVT option in your planning.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
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27	Website Form	General Public	<p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.</p> <p>The NRVt is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVt around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
28	Website Form	General Public	<p>Several others gave this sentiment at the public comment meeting this evening, but I want to express my support for the NRVt connection through the area. I live at 1 Glover, right in the vicinity of this interchange, and Merritt currently is a major obstacle in any sort of safe bike access to the south.</p>	<p>Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (Refer to Chapter 3.2).</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>
29	Website Form	General Public	<p>Hi EA/EIE/CTDOT</p> <p>Please consider non-automotive aspects in the Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation of the Rt 7 clover leaf upgrade.</p> <p>The Rt 7 corridor development is fast paced and has no end in sight. Along with that development will come congestion. Having alternatives to driving is an economical and environmentally sound initiative to complement road upgrades.</p> <p>The NRVt is a growing alternative to driving in the Rt 7 corridor and links up with rail stations. Currently the options for routing the NRVt around the parkway are unattractive, forcing the trail to share busy narrow roads, leading to unsafe situations.</p> <p>Please consider accommodating the NRVt option in your planning.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
30	Website Form	General Public	<p>Thank you for considering public comments on this important project. While larger in scope, any option for this project that does NOT include placing traffic lights on the RT 7 connector is/are the only logical choices.</p> <p>RT 7 is a major artery to Norwalk Hospital from all points north. Emergency vehicles must travel at high rates of speed to reach medical care without concern for lights and further congestion and even accidents caused by lights on a highway.</p> <p>Placing traffic lights on a perfectly functioning and widely used highway should be considered the opposite of progress. In addition, please consider the pressure Hartford politicians are putting on the growth of the Norwalk area. Traffic is increasing and is about to explode with the building of high-rise apartments in the along the RT corridor.</p> <p>Lastly, a reminder that in retrospect, we all deserve the right to get smarter as time goes on. (hindsight) Please do not move forward with the shortsighted Alternative 26 or any other option that puts traffic lights on RT 7 Connector. Status quo would be preferred.</p>	Comment acknowledged. Installation of traffic lights as proposed in Alternative 26 will not disrupt emergency operations. State laws granting emergency vehicles rights-of-way over common traffic are applicable here, and all approaches are required to yield to an emergency vehicle with lights and sirens activated.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
31	Website Form	General Public	I am writing in concern that the project outcome will be that of a car centric idea that has permeated the past few decades. The option chosen should have the least amount of tarmac as possible to limit impermeable surfaces and also include careful design considerations for the NRVT that will be intersecting of rt 15. Alternative 26 is the ideal choice with NRVT consideration in the plan. The NRVT offers a unique and safe alternative to motorized transit and recreation destination. Alternative 26 is also the most cost effective. Two additional red lights are a small price to pay to the surrounding community that needs more old growth trees and safe pedestrian access along the connections.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
32	Website Form	General Public	I believe alternate 21d would be the preferred choice as it allows longer straights to be able to merge safely onto route 15	Comment acknowledged.
33	Website Form	General Public	I was extremely disappointed to see there were no accommodations made to provide access for the NRVT. As drawn this cut off the Main Ave offices and residents from pedestrian and bicycle access from the rest of Norwalk. Use some of the money saved in the plan to open up access to the NRVT	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
34	Website Form	General Public	I approve and support the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project. I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment for the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project and I support the findings in the Environmental Assessment. I also approve and support the build alternative (Alternative 26) for the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project because the build alternative will improve safety by eliminating the loop ramps from CT-15 E to US-7 N and from US-7 N to CT-15 W which will reduce weaving movements on US-7.	Comment acknowledged.
35	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 1 of 5	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review the NEPA Environmental Assessment/ CEPA Environmental Impact Evaluation for the proposed reconfiguration and reconstruction of Interchanges 39 and 40 of the Merritt Parkway in Norwalk. Much of this ambitious project would take place within the footprint of the existing interchanges, however several significant elements of this project involve construction on new areas adjacent to the existing interchanges and highways. DEEP staff have reviewed the above-referenced document as well as conducted a limited site review of the project area and attended the August 16 public hearing at Norwalk City Hall.</p> <p>Regulatory Authority of DEEP</p> <p>Documents prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) typically contain a section listing and discussing the necessary federal, state and municipal permits and approvals required for a proposed action. Though this EA/EIE does not contain such a discussion or listing, it appears that the relevant permits for this project are acknowledged within it. Appendix H, Floodplain Study, in particular addresses the relevant permits. The area of land disturbance during construction activities will require a General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters Associated with Construction Activities (DEEP-WPED-GP-015). Several wetlands as well</p>	Comment acknowledged. As a point of clarification, the proposed bridges along the Norwalk River are designed to prevent water surface increases to the floodplain and floodway. In the preliminary analysis, water surface elevations do not increase. Appendix H of the EA/EIE includes language on the removal of the downstream Flock Process Dam. The dam removal lowers water surface elevations approximately 1.5-feet in the upstream area, the elevations do not increase. The modeling will be provided with the permit applications for DEEP's review.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>as the Norwalk River will be impacted by construction activities as well as the placement of permanent fill and structures, thus requiring an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Permit. It is also anticipated that either a General or Individual Section 401 Water Quality Certificate will be required for the proposed action.</p> <p>Appendix H addresses the placement of permanent fill within the Norwalk River floodplain and acknowledges the need for a Floodplain Management Certification for these materials. All of the above permits would be obtained from the DEEP Land and Water Resources Division (LWRD). The estimated increase of 1.5 feet in the 100-year flood water surface elevation will be evaluated as part of the Floodplain Management Certification. A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) must be obtained from FEMA before submitting any application to the LWRD for Floodplain Management Certification.</p> <p>The City of Norwalk may also have flood management ordinances that may be applicable for this project.</p> <p>Selection of Alternative 26 as the Preferred Alternative</p> <p>The Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Impact Evaluation analyzes two build alternatives, namely Alternatives 21 D and 26, in depth. Alternative 26 is described as ConnDOT's preferred alternative in the EA/EIE although it has not been officially selected as the build concept to be advanced to design and permitting. Assumedly this will occur in the Record of Decision. DEEP concurs that the selection of Alternative 26 is a logical and reasonable choice based on a multitude of environmental, cost, and maintenance factors. As laid out in Chapter 2 of the EA/EIE, Alternative 26 has a significant construction cost advantage over Alternative 21 D (\$109 million vs. \$207 million), has a smaller project footprint, fewer road miles of construction, half as many bridge structures (14 vs. 7), easier constructability, lesser on-going maintenance needs, and lesser wetlands impacts, among other advantages, while still satisfying the project purpose and need. Some local preference has been expressed for Alternative 21 D based on its provision of free flow ramps for all movements without traffic signals, but this advantage does not outweigh the other disadvantages of Alternative 21 D relative to Alternative 26.</p>	
36	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 2 of 5	<p>Kellogg-Deering Aquifer Protection Area</p> <p>Page 3.28 of the EA/EIE briefly discusses the Kellogg-Deering Wellfield of the First Taxing District of Norwalk and mentions that this wellfield supplies 50% of the public drinking water supply for Norwalk. The Routes 7/15 Interchange Project No. 102-358 is partially located within the final adopted mapped Level A Aquifer Protection Area for the Norwalk First Taxing District's Kellogg-Deering Well Field. The southern portion of the project extends to within .036 miles of the well. Norwalk has delineated the aquifer protection area boundary on the town zoning map and adopted local aquifer protection area regulations, City of Norwalk, Connecticut Aquifer Protection Area Regulations,</p>	<p>Future project documents (design reports, design plans), where appropriate, can include identification of the APA boundaries.</p> <p>In addition, during construction, Best Management Practices will be implemented in accordance with CTDOT's Standard Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities and Incidental Construction Form 818 section 1.10</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>consistent with the state regulations pursuant to Section 22a-354p of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS).</p> <p>Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be required for construction within this area. BMPs from the Connecticut's Aquifer Protection Area Program Municipal Manual entitled, Road and Highway Construction/Reconstruction in Aquifer Protection Areas, are found in the Appendices 14.4.3. Most importantly, preventing illicit discharges to stormwater, including fuel and chemical pollution releases to the ground, is critically important, and catch basins and curbs should be installed in this area and designed to control runoff. We recommend that a plan/figure be added to future project documents with the parcel property boundary overlayed with the aquifer protection area boundary to inform all parties working in this sensitive drinking water area. See the example below:</p>	
37	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 3 of 5	<p>One Glover Apartments</p> <p>Both build alternatives include a new lane constructed along the northern edge (or westbound lanes) of the Merritt Parkway between Main Avenue and Glover Avenue. This new lane would be part of a new direct connection from Main Avenue to US Route 7 and would run between the existing Merritt Parkway embankment and the One Glover Apartments building on Glover Avenue. The One Glover Apartments building contains 132 units on five floors. It is in close proximity to the existing westbound lanes of the Merritt Parkway, separated from it by a row of parking spaces behind the building and a narrow strip of lawn. Constructing the new lane through this narrow corridor would put the ramp significantly closer to the rear apartments of the One Glover building, which is currently, according to the M39e Noise Study of Appendix E, the single site of the nineteen modeled locations exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria levels. Though Appendix E finds that this location does not meet the thresholds to construct any noise barrier or other measures, the proximity of the new ramp to these apartments unquestionably will expose their residents to additional noise impacts as well as increased impacts from headlights of passing cars. If a barrier to reduce noise and block lights is not built here, might it be feasible to increase the separation between the new lane and the One Glover Apartments by excavating and removing a portion of the existing highway embankment and shifting the alignment of the new lane southward at least partially into the space currently occupied by the lower half of the embankment. This would provide some incremental value in attenuating both noise and lighting impacts to these apartments.</p>	<p>Any shift in the alignments for the ramps would require major reconstruction of the Route 15 (Merritt Parkway) mainline and have a major impact on the visual and aesthetic character of the Parkway. As the design progresses, the project team will continue to evaluate other measures (design features, landscaping, etc.) to alleviate concerns at this location.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
38	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 4 of 5	<p>Norwalk River Valley Trail</p> <p>The value of extending the Norwalk River Valley Trail through the project area as a strategy to encourage non-motorized travel and, in particular, to reduce congestion on Main Avenue, was a prominent theme raised at the August 16 public hearing. As ConnDOT is surely aware, the Western Connecticut Council of Governments was successful in procuring a \$4.53 million RAISE grant to study the Norwalk River Valley Trail corridor, and two connecting trail corridors. This grant is to designate a final alignment for this trail, finish planning for the trail, as well as to undertake design work and prepare construction documents to advance the trail to a shovel-ready stage. ConnDOT should coordinate with these planning efforts to ensure compatibility of the Merritt Parkway project design and the Norwalk River Valley Trail plans and possibly incorporate design elements such as a pedestrian bridge over the Parkway corridor when this stage is reached.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.
39	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 5 of 5	<p>Miscellaneous Observations and Comments on the EA/EIE [numbering added]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The EA/EIE describes both build alternatives as including the realignment of Creeping Hemlock Drive northward and widening it. The document does not discuss the purpose of this realignment. Is it to improve the geometry of the intersection of Main Avenue, Glover Avenue and Creeping Hemlock Drive? This would seem logical, but it is never stated in the document. During the DEEP field review on August 16, it was noted that a 15' tall rock outcrop exists immediately north of Creeping Hemlock Drive at its approach to Main Avenue. Would this outcrop need to be cut back to accomplish the planned realignment? 2. Several speakers at the August 16 public hearing commented that the two planned traffic signals on US Route 7 would lead to numerous accidents as drivers transitioned from an expressway profile to an urban arterial profile on that road. It might be informative to review the accident rates and history on Route 9 at the signalized intersections in downtown Middletown where a similar transition occurs from expressway profiles to the north and south of the signalized intersections to a signalized urban arterial roadway. 3. Discussion on page 3.68 of the EA/EIE speaks of the function the Merritt Parkway landscaping performs to enhance resiliency by, among other things, absorbing stormwater and reducing stormwater runoff to the Norwalk River and to neighboring streets and properties. In designing the new Parkway landscaping for the reconstructed interchanges and the affected segment of the Parkway, ConnDOT should consider opportunities to incorporate, as appropriate and consistent with other landscaping objectives, water quality swales and vegetated rain gardens to facilitate infiltration of stormwater on the site. 4. At Interchange 40, the infield of the southeastern quadrant loop ramp was seen, on August 16, to be full of construction equipment, Jersey barriers, piles of soil and aggregate and other construction materials. Are these equipment and materials 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The purpose of the widening is to provide additional road capacity and turning lanes to appropriately meet traffic needs in the design year. The identified rock outcrop will be required to be cut back for proposed improvements. An initial review of any proposed rock cut reveals it not an issue to hotel property and limits of cut will remain on State ROW. 2. Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39. 3. The signals on Route 9 are situated between two freeway segments as opposed to this proposed condition where the freeway terminus will be shifted from Grist Mill to just south of the Exit 39 interchange. Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area. 4. Stormwater management practices will be designed in accordance with CTDOT MS4 Permit and Stormwater Management Plan including nonpoint discharges and opportunities for green infrastructure will be a focus of the stormwater plan and will be addressed in design. 5. The area in question is a staging area for ongoing safety improvements to the Merritt Parkway not associated with this project.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>simply being staged there for use on another site or is some work on this ramp or elsewhere in this interchange occurring or contemplated in the very near future?</p> <p>5. Lastly, and amusingly, text in Section 3.1 of the EA/EIE states that in assessing future traffic levels, the design year of 2045 is used to assess the projected traffic impact 20 years after the completion of the Project (2025). One has to assume that this latter date is simply a relic of some previous version of this report rather than an optimistic assessment of the timeframe for design, permitting and construction of this project.</p>	<p>5. All alternatives were compared under 2045 traffic conditions. The 2025 traffic analysis was used as an intermediary comparison and the EA/EIE most commonly compares traffic in 2045.</p>
40	Website Form	General Public	<p>SAVE PROJECT TIME & \$\$\$\$.</p> <p>Please remove exits/entrances at 40A 40B connecting Main Ave & the Merritt Pkwy. They have become redundant with the addition of the Grist Mill exit/entrance & (exit 2) exits/entrances & New Canaan Ave. each less than a mile from 40A & 40B. Removing 40A & 40B will also address a huge SAFETY issue of vehicles trying to enter or exit the Merritt Pkwy located at the bottom of large hills in both directions generating a large traffic shear in adjacent lanes.</p> <p>Please reconsider this phase of the 7/15 Norwalk Project.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged. Note the removal of the identified exits would have negative impact on mobility, one of the key P&N tenets for the project.</p>
41	Website Form	General Public	<p>It seems like the project should incorporate the Norwalk River Valley Trail bike path. Building a new interchange would be a great opportunity to build bicycle access into the design, rather than attempting to add it afterwards. If CT DOT and the city of Norwalk are truly serious about promoting cycling infrastructure, they should consider altering the design to include that. Further, any increase in bike accessibility is positive for the environment, as bike transport is emissions free.</p>	<p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
42	Website Form	General Public	<p>Overall, Alternative 26 seems like a superior option in terms of minimizing cost and environmental impact while still providing adequate connections for Route 7 and the Merritt Pkwy.</p> <p>I am concerned about the use of traffic lights on the ramp connections to Main Ave and Route 7. I would like to encourage CTDOT to consider safer alternatives for these intersections, such as roundabouts.</p> <p>Pedestrian and cycle improvements on Main Avenue are very welcome â€œ this is a growing area of town and improving walking & biking infrastructure will allow people in Merritt 7 to more easily reach stores on Main Ave (e.g., Stop & Shop). I look forward to seeing plans for protected pedestrian & bike infrastructure alongside the improved local roads.</p> <p>However, the proposed path for the Norwalk River Valley Trail is not adequate â€œ it is doubtful there is enough room under the Perry Ave bridge for a protected path wide enough for pedestrians & cyclists.</p> <p>There is, however, plenty of space under the Merritt Pkwy bridge over Route 7, so a protected pedestrian & cycling right-of-way could be created there.</p> <p>In order to address long-term traffic challenges and properly connect Norwalk North and South of the Merritt Pkwy, the project should incorporate space for a protected pedestrian & cycling path over or under the Merritt Pkwy.</p> <p>The Merritt Pkwy divides Norwalk, and there are not many places it can be safely crossed without a car. If CTDOT is making improvements to the Parkway, it should also be working to address this issue that pedestrians and cyclists face.</p> <p>Additionally, as this project will resolve the issue of drivers needing to use local roads to connect between state highways, Main Avenue south of Grist Mill Road should be returned to local control once the project is complete, so the city of Norwalk can build and maintain appropriate local infrastructure for this increasingly important and densely-developed part of town.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p> <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, roundabouts were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals. Other alternative concepts (i.e., Single Point Urban Interchanges (SPUI) and Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) were examined and also found not to be acceptable due to poor levels of service.</p>
43	Website Form	General Public	<p>The 7/15 project should include plans to include the Norwalk River Valley Trail. The Trail is planned to cross the Merritt and connect to the station just north of the interchange, but is planning a less direct route through the Perry Ave. tunnel instead of parallel to Main Ave. I think it would be much safer for pedestrians if they did not have to share the narrow tunnel on Perry with traffic and could safely pass the interchange without interacting with traffic as they do now on Main Ave. I think giving the trail a new underpass decoupled from the road would greatly improve the safety and quality of the trail and reduce conflicts between pedestrians/cyclists and traffic.</p>	<p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>

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44	Website Form	General Public	<p>I am concerned that while the new interchange project has been advertised to the public as friendly to biking and walking, Norwalk's most prominent bike path is left out of the plans. The trail will have to cross the Merritt Parkway as it is expanded and current crossings like Perry Avenue do not offer enough space or protection from traffic for riders and pedestrians. Including the Norwalk River Valley Trail in the new interchange plan would show that Norwalk and the Connecticut DOT are serious about building sustainable cycling and walking infrastructure for our citizens and improving road and bike safety in our city. Please consider this as this is a once in a lifetime chance to make such a big impact at a small price. Thank you (p.s. this comment field does not allow any single or double quotation marks - so apologize for that punctuation).</p>	<p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>
45	Website Form	PAC	<p>Please see attached letter for public comment from the Friends of the NRVt, Inc. Friends of the NRVt is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to facilitate the design, construction, and maintenance of a regionally significant, safe, universally accessible, multipurpose trail linking Norwalk, Wilton, Redding, Ridgefield, and Danbury that fosters increased recreational opportunities, alternative transportation options, and a healthy lifestyle. For any questions, please contact Andrea Gartner, Executive Director, NRVt, agartner@nrvt-trail.com; 203-470-8005.</p> <p>This will present the position of the Friends of the Norwalk River Valley Trail with respect to the proposed Alternative 26 revision of the 7/15 interchange.</p> <p>It is our view that Alternative 26 as presented fails to provide adequate (any) accommodation for the NRVt through this interchange. As the major regional trail in Fairfield County and as a critical alternative transportation link, this is a major disappointment and a meaningful missed planning opportunity. In particular, Alternative 26 (and all of the alternatives) severs the NRVt and the dense residential and commercial centers that lie on both sides of the interchange in Norwalk along the Route 7/Main Ave. corridor.</p> <p>We realize the roots of this project reach back 20 or so years to a time when the NRVt was not a reality. But obviously times have changed. Millions of dollars of public and private investment have gone into the NRVt and now about 15 miles of trail are completed along the route from Norwalk to Danbury... and millions more have been committed to continue construction. Obviously, times have changed and so should the scope of this project.</p> <p>We recognize that other important constituencies must also be served by this project. In an effort of collaboration and to live within the proposed Alternative 26, the NRVt has, at our expense, hired a consultant to review the feasibility of a route through the interchange, some of which are more economically feasible than others. While not necessarily an EA/EIE concern, during the design phase we would ask the DOT to consider and fund the most prudent alternative and are willing to assist in the development of that solution. A viable route for the NRVt through this fatal choke point</p>	<p>The Department thanks the NRVt for their continued participation throughout the EA/EIE process and their representation on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with your group as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area. Subsequent to the hearing, the Department has received the feasibility report from NRVt and will coordinate with the NRVt and the City after the review is complete.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>must be found given our State and National goals of environmentally responsible alternative transportation.</p> <p>The community support for the vital economic and transportation engine that the NRVT represents for this area was reflected in the grassroots showing at the recent public hearing. This was truly reflective of the community at large and was not a product of any NRVT effort.</p> <p>We, the Friends of the NRVT, have been and continue to look forward to being partners with Stantec and CTDOT in the realization of our trail. Revising 7/15 is a once in a lifetime opportunity, it should be a stimulus for, not an impediment to, safe alternative transportation that drives smart economic growth. We all must work together to realize this vision and suggest that we schedule a meeting with the NRVT, our consultant and DOT to review the options the NRVT has developed.</p> <p>Thank you again for the opportunity to submit these comments. Should you have any questions concerning any issues or topics discussed herein, please feel free to contact me at (860) 424-4110 or at kate@elsllc.net .</p>	
46	Email	General Public	<p>Just wondering if there might be an animated video showing the various vehicle approaches for the different proposals. If there isn't one, this might be a good project for some computer savvy visual arts student.</p> <p>A bit off-topic, but I have always been hopeful that the "new" Rte. 7 might someday be extended from Grist Hill Road through our homogeneous communities to the north, up to the Ridgefield/Danbury line. Back in the day, this was the original plan, or so I've heard. Any thoughts on this?</p>	<p>A 3D visualization model was created for this project including Alt 21D and Alt 26. This was shared with the Project Advisory Committee and graphics from the models were incorporated in the EA/EIE Visual Impacts section. The model will be updated once design of Alt 26 advances and it will be shared with the public. The extension of Route 7 from Grist Mill Road is beyond the scope of this project. Currently, there are no plans to extend Route 7.</p>
47	Email	General Public	<p>My name is Angelo, and I wanted to briefly comment on the 7/15 Norwalk Project. I am concerned about bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the area, as well as the planned routing of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) proposed by this project.</p> <p>As someone who doesn't own a car, I walk, take public transit, and use alternative forms of transportation to get around, as do many in Norwalk. However, the area of Main Avenue in the study area is currently dangerous to walk and bike, and is poorly served by public transit. As highlighted in the project's Environmental Assessment, many of the roads in the area completely lack sidewalks, very few of the existing sidewalks are ADA accessible, and much of the sidewalks are degraded beyond use. As the Assessment discovered, very few people bike in the area, driven by a complete lack of infrastructure, and the high speeds and volumes of vehicles driving along Main Avenue and exiting the Merritt Parkway.</p> <p>Furthermore, I am concerned with the routing of the NRVT that would result from the project's current plans. Currently, the project would force the trail underneath the Merritt Parkway via Perry Avenue. However, the area in question already barely has space for a sidewalk, and will undoubtedly have no space for a dedicated bike trail. Any</p>	<p>Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2).</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>

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			<p>proposal that would result in people on bikes having to ride in traffic along Perry Avenue with cars will jeopardize the safety and pleasure of those using the NRVt.</p> <p>I implore the project to strongly consider the needs of people who walk, bike, and use public transit to get around the area, such as myself. Adding sidewalks and protected bike lanes to the roads in the study area will improve safety and reduce the acts of traffic violence which have plagued Connecticut residents in recent years. Furthermore, to promote future use of the NRVt, the trail should not be forced to operate in mixed traffic, but instead should have its own dedicated pathway, or protected lane. These considerations will help Norwalk reconnect neighborhoods long divided by Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway, cost a miniscule fraction of the spending proposed for car infrastructure changes, and help the NRVt become a first-class trail for all of Norwalk's residents to enjoy. I implore the project to take these proposals into consideration, and adopt these ideas.</p>	
48	Written Comment	General Public	<p>Noise is a major detractor of quality of life in the Merritt/ Rt. 7 area, motorcyclists and souped-up cars are encroaching on the sound environment. The problem is too complex to be addressed thru legislation or law enforcement (I've tried!) We now have a chance to solve the problem thru this <u>physical</u> environment we are creating. The decibel "not worse" is a really weak showing for noise concerns that are a high priority.</p> <p>Roundabouts should be considered. They do promote civilities and noise vandals can't do their thing. People in Greenwich can have anything they want. They have roundabouts.</p>	<p>The EA/EIE addresses Noise in Chapter 3.4. The analysis finds that Alternative 26 does not increase noise (over the current condition) in the various identified measured and modeled locations throughout the project area in any discernable amount, and in fact in some instances decreases noise levels.</p> <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p>
49	Written Comment	General Public	What's an "Open House" without delicious munchies and drinks? CONNDOT employees should have titles or roles on their name badges. Was CT State police included in the 7-15 PAC?	State Police are not on the 7-15 PAC but were contacted and commented favorably on the concept. Crash data provided by State Police were obtained from the DOT/UConn database.
50	Written Comment	General Public	<p>Moderator (Amy Stula) was well spoken, easy to understand. Orderly.</p> <p>Glad to have full access interchange for Route 7 & Route 15.</p> <p>At Creeping Hemlock is a 1st taxing district water building that contains pumps, gauges & other essential drinking water distribution infrastructure. Has 1st taxing district been part of the conversation? If not, you need to make them part of the conversation. Not just CBYD.</p> <p>Initially I thought Alternative 26 would be awful because of installing traffic signals on Route 7 "freeway". Having seen & heard the presentation, I now think <u>Alternative 26 is preferable</u> and the best way to make this interchange a full 4-way connection.</p>	The Project team has met with Norwalk First Taxing District to obtain their input throughout the EA/EIE process and will continue to coordinate with them as design progresses. In addition, during construction, Best Management Practices will be implemented in accordance with CTDOT's Standard Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities and Incidental Construction Form 818 section 1.10
51	Written Comment	General Public	Sidewalks and pedestrian movability. Main Ave. & Glover is not pedestrian friendly.	Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (Refer to Chapter 3.2)

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
52	Email	USFWS	My only comment is that we are expecting to see a final rule to list the tri-colored bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act in the near future. That species did not appear on the IPaC report, but I recommend following the progress of that listing action and considering minimizing effects to that species, as applicable.	As noted in EA Section 3.5.3, CTDOT will continue to monitor the IPaC database for new or updated listings of species that may occur within the Project Area (e.g., Monarch Butterfly and Tri-colored Bat) and will coordinate with USFWS and CTDEEP as required to address applicable state and federal requirements as design and construction progress.
53	Email	General Public	You have destroyed the Merritt 7 landmark and you have destroyed too many beautiful trees (hmmm who profited from your destruction?). I will research every person behind this destruction, and my vote will indicate my disapproval.	Comment acknowledged.
54	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I live at 14 Haviland Street in South Norwalk, Connecticut, and I work in Wilton and I ride my bike to work every day. I'm well-acquainted with how the current state of the project area is an impediment to people trying to walk or bike between Norwalk and Wilton. My main feedback for the project team tonight is I think that there's a need for additional planning for a fully separated route through the NRVt project area. I think that, as probably most people in this room know, the NRVt will one day make up the whole backbone of the whole region's bike network. But a change is only as strong as its weakest link. The current proposed route on Perry Ave will put trail users in with mixed traffic, and I think that will make it a much less attractive option for a lot of people who don't feel comfortable riding in mixed traffic, and you'll see a lot less usage of the trail if that is the route that is ultimately chosen. I think this project provides a once in a generation opportunity to provide a safe, great separated route through the project area that all users will feel comfortable using. I think this is better for regional connectivity, reducing congestion and putting in air quality, all of which are stated project goals. So, I think that a separated path is really key for making sure that the project, in its entirety, all users can meet its goals.</p> <p>Looking through the EIE, I haven't seen a lot of evidence that the project is considering this. It does show the baseline routing on Perry, but it doesn't really give much priority to alternative routings, especially ones that are fully separated. I think that this is the best change that we have to do this and planning for the NRVt needs to be fully integrated with planning for the project as a whole. I hope that you're working closely with the NRVt organization, and whatever other relevant stakeholders are involved, to make sure that we do this right, because this is our best chance and it also would be really cheap. You know, as the cost was just shown, over \$100 million for the cheap option. No matter how crazy you want to get with bridges or tunnels for bikes, it's going to be on the order of a few percent of the total project cost. So, I think it's very feasible to do, and I think we should do this the right way because the region deserves a quality bike path in this area.</p>	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
55	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I fully agree with the previous speaker on every element. Norwalk River Valley Trail is what he was talking about, and I think it's vital that, given even with 365 crashes, we're talking about something like, if I'm doing the math right, 300,000 per crash, the cost of this project. So, I really think we need to give more attention to cyclists and pedestrians in what is becoming a very dense urban area and will be even more dense by 2045, and I hope that there's more density in Norwalk near the Metro-North and that there's more investment in the Metro-North, and this doesn't really contemplate that, except in a very small way.</p> <p>And the other piece I note from the superhighway that was created only up until Grist Mill Road is that it went right through a big body of water and that there's development right encroaching on the other side of that body of water, and there are birds are in there and everything, and I just want to be careful before doing a whole bunch more.</p> <p>And the other piece is that I happen to live really close to the Merritt Parkway in Norwalk, and I never realized that all of the trees were going to be denuded. There is a member of our planning and zoning department, who is a good friend, and he explained to me that they were native trees that are going to be replanted and that a lot of the trees that were cut were diseased. All of that is well and good, but it has really taken away a large carbon sink for us for the next 20 years before those replanted trees get mature, and also the views have changed for, especially a lot of my neighbors who live really right on the Merritt, and they didn't get compensated for that. That superhighway part is a lot wider, so the risk to cars, which was the whole justification of cutting down all the trees, from increased climate changes is much lower from the midsize, so I hope that the plans in response to this public hearing will consider that more seriously. We need more urban reforestation, and that goes throughout the state. So, thank very much, and I live on Chestnut Hill Road in Norwalk.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area. Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2).</p> <p>With regard to replanting, Alt 26 will rehabilitate remnant, scarred and cluttered areas within the Project area to enhance Parkway character through planting design as part of the commitment memorialized in the MOA to adhere to the “Merritt Parkway Landscape Assessment Guidelines” (March 2020).</p>
56	Public Hearing- Transcript	PAC	<p>I'm an appointed official. I'm the chair of the Bike/Walk Commission here in Norwalk and I'm also speaking as a resident and representative of an advocacy group called Sustainable Streets, which is somewhat new. Some of our members are here. I do want to put the request for the NRVT in context, first by acknowledging all the things that the project is doing well.</p> <p>The lower cost of the preferred alternative over 21 is great. The fact that connection is being made is going to make peoples' lives easier. I think that re-characterizing Route 7 is the right move. It will enable traffic calming and opening the door for maybe re-imagining all that land that's north of the interchange. I think the point that was made about stoplights is a valid one, and I would love to see whether, in the past or in the future, roundabouts have been or could be considered in place of those stoplights because they have a much better safety record, but still move a comparable amount of traffic in a lot of cases.</p>	<p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p> <p>Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2).</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>The fact that the project is going to alleviate some of the traffic and the pressure on Main Avenue is a huge win for pedestrian and bike safety, because that's a very unsafe corridor right now. I have biked it and I have walked it, and I know firsthand. I really appreciate the stated commitment to mobility for all users, especially on the Main Avenue corridor, especially going under the Merritt bridge.</p> <p>I don't want that to be lost in all the requests for accommodations for NRVt, because that's going to be a game changer for that area, but the requests for that sort of mobility accommodation and the request for the accommodations for the actual route of the NRVt serve two different purposes: one's local, one's regional. One serves more commuters and adults, frankly, and the other serves people of all abilities and all ages. But I want to provide a little context for why we should care about the NRVt. The interest in the NRVt and walking and biking generally has grown dramatically since this project started. During the pandemic, the usage of the trail has spiked like three times, and it has stayed stable like over two times the baseline right before the pandemic. Norwalk just opened a new section of trail, the Federal Department of Transportation just awarded a one half a million dollar grant for planning and design for the entire rest of the trail, so it's a much bigger deal than it was in 2016 when I understand this project started and it started before that even, right?</p> <p>Additionally, Norwalk is investing in a citywide complete street project, a plan, a commitment. There are ambitious goals in our transportation master plan about access for walking and biking. There's a transit-oriented focus of our draft zoning code that's being reviewed right now. There's a new train station at Merritt 7, which is right next to the project area, and then we've got this increasing job density along Route 7 in Wilton, which is outside the project scope, but the fact that we're putting more jobs on a road that is pretty narrow and is already pretty congested, it just speaks to the need for a greater vision for non-car and for structure for walking and biking and public transportation. That's why we're all talking about the NRVt today.</p> <p>The NRVt board has done a lot of work and they've spent a lot of money of that they had to fundraise for to look for alternatives as to how to get the main route of the NRVt through the project area and what they found is that, by their standards, they have getting money from grants to do their stuff. Like Ben mentioned, in the context of this project, we're talking like peanuts. So, we could get like a top quality connection for the NRVt through the project area on the order of 1 percent or maybe 2 percent of the total project cost. So that's what I'm asking for. I understand that the official scope of the project doesn't include the NRVt, but I guess I'm asking for the to be officially expanded to include that, because it is critical regional connectivity and will make the project more holistic and not just about moving more cars. to spend a ton of money to do it. This is a group, again, that is fundraising their own money and they're getting money from grants to do their stuff.</p>	

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
57	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	I'm a resident of Haviland Street in South Norwalk. I just want to thank everyone for the work they've done on this project. I'm also in favor of alternative 26, the cheaper one. I think I would like to see some of the money that the state of Connecticut and the federal government was willing to fork over for alternative 21D potentially be repurposed into adding the NRVT, as a couple of people already mentioned, through the project area.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>
58	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	I'm the president of the Norwalk Association of 25 Silvermine Homeowners. Thank you very much. You guys have been great, very transparent and collaborative with us as part of the PAC. Thank you very much. It's great to see. My biggest concern is that we're getting slammed in Norwalk and, you know, we talk about timing and stuff like that, and I just want to make sure that, as much as it can be, 95 is done being constructed, I know there's another project for Grist Mill to be continued on, which is a separate DOT project group, and it doesn't seem like there's a lot of coordination in timing. We have the Rock Bridge being constructed. Norwalk really needs help with coordinating so that it's not happening all at once for us. And my second comment is on a personal level as someone -- I do ride my bike to work across town down Main Avenue, and the lights are almost never really coordinated really well, so as part of the project if we can make sure that if there are lights added to the expressway, that there is a real look at how lights are coordinated for safety.	<p>Comment acknowledged. As with all CTDOT projects, design will be coordinated with other local/regional projects.</p> <p>Traffic signal coordination along Main Avenue will be addressed in the design phase of the project.</p> <p>Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2).</p>
59	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	I am here to speak about the lack of connectivity incorporated in the project for NRVT. The NRVT is originally -- it's a regional spine in regard to the bicycle network. I ride it quite often and, as we all know, it's disjointed because it's going -- it's being built in piecemeal fashion, but it really lends itself to being a good corridor that people can go to jobs and businesses on the north side. It's great for recreation, not just for cycles, but for pedestrians and all walkers. It provides a lot of economic activity. By not having it fully connect through this project could possibly jeopardize that economic activity it provides, because we all know that businesses and property values go up when there's an off-road bike path of this sort there including in NRVT in it and have a really robust right of way incorporated in the project. I would also like to see if we go with the alternative 26, those signals be turned into roundabouts. With more traffic they've been shown to be better for safety and also reduce some articulate matter and ozone gasses.	<p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>
60	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	<p>The Conservancy, as many of you probably know, is a private nonprofit organization that was established by the governor about 20 years ago. We have a 3-prong mission. Our first is to --we're committed to ensure the Merritt Parkway's beauty is kept and revitalized in construction and maintenance projects and changes necessitated to upgrade safety are done with the spirit of its delightful original design, and we also strive to keep the public informed about the history and value of this really unusual resource.</p> <p>Our mission was stress tested by this interchange soon after we were organized 20 years ago when demolition of the historic Main Avenue bridge began for the interchange designed with a large network or flyover bridges and ramps that was not parklike by any</p>	Comment acknowledged.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>means. We successfully litigated to stop the construction, and we're here tonight and very pleased to say that for the first time, out of all the alternatives that have been discussed, we strongly support alternative 26.</p> <p>The compact interchange between Route 7 and the Merritt is clearly preferable to the much larger one in 21D in terms of conserving natural features, wetlands, wildlife habitat and minimizing impervious cover with the watershed. At least half the size of all previous proposals with significant cost saving to the taxpayers are an important benefit.</p> <p>We do represent the public aspect of the Merritt Parkway. It substantially reduces both construction costs, as well as ongoing maintenance costs in the future. So, in closing, I just want to say that I really appreciate on behalf of the Conservancy, and I speak for the board, Stantec and CONNDOT and FHWA for their thoroughness in this alternative analysis and in hearing our concerns over the scale compatibility and costs and incorporating them all in alternative 26.</p>	
61	Public Hearing- Transcript	CTDEEP	<p>I'm with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and I will be submitting comments in that capacity later on. Two or three short things.</p> <p>One, I had a note in the EIE/EA, page 31, it talks about looking at traffic volumes for the low impact and for the no build and the two builds for the year 2045, which would be 20 years after the completion of the project in 2025. I don't think anybody here really believes that the project is completed in 2025, so I think that number may be left over from some previous iteration of this project.</p> <p>Second comment, I appreciated Anthony's opening remarks and some of the other remarks about changing the character of Route from the expressway to signalized, I'm just wondering if, looking at the traffic, the accident rates for Route 9 going through Middletown, which has signalized intersections with full expressways through north and south, if that might provide any guidance as to how to successfully bring about what you're trying to bring about.</p> <p>The other comment that I had -- I spent this afternoon, it was a much warmer day than I anticipated, walking much of the alignments and the neighborhoods and side streets and working up with pretty good sweat. The point I wanted to bring up is both of the build alternative show a new 2-lane on the northern side or westbound side of Route 15 between Main Avenue and Route 7 and going between the existing highway and the 1 Glover apartment building and having walked behind the 1 Glover apartment building, there is a very, very small width between the bottom of the embankment of the highway and the back of the apartment building. So, I'm hoping the EA -- the final EA can maybe address that, and a couple of things I would think might be helpful. One is if the new lane can encroach into the existing embankment, maybe with retaining walls, or something, to give you a little more width to work with, and the other would be some kind of noise barrier/light barrier could be incorporated those new lanes and the 1 Glover apartment building, because it really seems like additional lanes there are going to be almost like in</p>	<p>All alternatives were compared under 2045 traffic conditions. The 2025 traffic analysis was used as an intermediary comparison and the EA/EIE most commonly compares traffic in 2045.</p> <p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for severe crashes. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39.</p> <p>The signals on Route 9 are situated between two freeway segments as opposed to this proposed condition where the freeway terminus will be shifted from Grist Mill to just south of the Exit 39 interchange. Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p> <p>Any shift in the alignments for the ramps would require major reconstruction of the Route 15 (Merritt Parkway) mainline and have a major impact on the visual and aesthetic character of the Parkway. As the design progresses, the project team will continue to evaluate other measures (design features, landscaping, etc.) to alleviate concerns at this location.</p> <p>The noise analysis finds that Alternative 26 does not increase noise (over the current condition) in the various identified measured and modeled locations throughout the project area in any discernable amount, and in fact in some instances decreases noise levels.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			the windows of those apartments. It's a really narrow corridor, so I wanted to make those comments.	Please also see responses to written comments received from CTDEEP included separately in this matrix.
62	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	I like the alternative 26. It has less permeable services, less of that water runoff coming from all those vehicles contaminating the soil, contaminating the water, ultimately going back into our drinking water, which we're having a problem with now, and I also concur with a lot of NRVT. I mean, that should be a priority. Everything should be built around that, to be totally honest with you, in my perspective. I was actually hit by a car on Main Avenue right after that bridge, because it's really that unsafe for your bicycle. Crossed over two lanes, a lady I hit me head on. Luckily, I'm fine, but still I'm glad that it's being taken into consideration how important that is, not just for recreational cyclists but other micro mobility.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p> <p>Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2).</p>
63	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	I want to echo earlier comments about the importance of the NRVT. I really think that if we're looking at providing better connections, we need to not just consider cars, we need to consider pedestrians and bicyclists. And right now, the Merritt Parkway kind of cuts off pedestrian and bicyclists, and the proposal to run through Perry Avenue, that's a very narrow bridge. It's probably not safe for a protected bike path on that, so it would be mixed traffic. I don't think that would be very safe. It's not a pedestrian friendly road. So, finding a path for the NRVT where it can be fully protected, I think is crucial. The other comment that I had was just also to echo concerns about putting traffic lights on Route 7. There's obviously a lot of risk there. I'd like to ask that alternative, like roundabouts, be studied for that as well.	<p>CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p> <p>Alternative 26 has committed to making bike/ped improvements in the Main Avenue corridor within the project limits (refer to Chapter 3.2).</p> <p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p> <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p>
64	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I live in the southwest quadrant of that intersection we've been talking about. I appreciate the transparency of this process. I think this is my first meeting in Norwalk with the people in the city, so I'd like to take the opportunity to make some noise about the noise.</p> <p>I notice that the noise is one of the very top things people are concerned about. But paraphrase what I've heard, noise is really important, but our alternative doesn't change or abate the noise in any way. I have no expertise on how you do this, but I want to tell you that, as I sit on my back deck amongst the lovely trees around the Riverside, River View Drive, I occasionally end up with lemonade on my lap because a motorcycle has gone racing by, and this is a real impact on the quality of life. I don't know how many of the rest of you feel this, but for me to hear bird songs punctuated by people racing in cars that are made to be as loud as they can possibly be or to have motorcycles racing</p>	<p>The EA/EIE addresses Noise in Chapter 3.4. The analysis finds that Alternative 26 does not increase noise (over the current condition) in the various identified measured and modeled locations throughout the project area in any discernable amount, and in fact in some instances decreases noise levels.</p> <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>to show off their gear shifting skills while I'm trying to enjoy myself is a problem for me and I wonder if it is for you. So physical solutions to that, I don't know.</p> <p>Maybe let's talk about roundabouts. I'm trying to picture a motorcycle trying to show off on a roundabout a flipping up in the air and ending somewhere on the curbing, which would probably please me. In any event, there may and must be some ways to abate sound.</p>	
65	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I'm really quite impressed with this process, and I do want to share my thoughts on this project and transportation in Connecticut, in general. I would like to draw our attention to the future. I think that much of this project is focused on solving the problems that we had in the past with that intersection and accessibility. But this is an exciting time for transportation. Technology is changing. Things are going to be different in the future, and I think we should look forward to some of these important changes. Cars, in particular, in the future, actually the present, but certainly more in the future, cars are going to be electric. Cars will be shared, cars will also be autonomous, and they will be smart, and they're actually going to be much, much safer than they are now. Besides cars, roads are going to be different. Roads are actually going to be smarter and things like traffic enforcement and safety and traffic monitoring is all going to be more accessible, cheaper, and better. Besides roads and cars, I actually think people are going to be different. I think that the residents are going to be much less interested in spending much time commuting, and we will see job and lifestyle choices by people that live in Connecticut that will cause them to be commuting much, much less. I think also the residents of the future, actually the present but certainly more so in the future, residents are going to crave lifestyle oriented recreational resources, which will enhance things like bike ability and walkability. Also, I think that public transportation will finally and, rightly, enjoy a much greater share of public transportation funding relative to private transportation. That's long overdue, and I think we'll be getting that. So, this all circles back to an extraordinary resource that's just been developed over the last couple of years, although long planned, and that's the NRVt trail. It is an amazing resource, not just for the people that live in Norwalk and surrounding communities now but especially for the ones that are moving to this area, who are going to look at this resource as being a transportation network for them for things like recreation and commuting and work. It is already, but certainly for more in the future. Further in the future, that amazing resource, the NRVt, is going to be enhanced even further because eventually, I'm quite confident, we'll have a green way along the length of the Merritt Parkway, as we should have. And that's going to even further enhance the value of the Norwalk River Valley Trail as a recreation and transportation resource. So, I just want to say, please make sure that you look to the future and recognize that the NRVt is an absolute gem of a resource that will be growing in value for the residents of the future.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged. CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVt throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVt is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
66	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>Having this presentation, I really appreciate it, to become more aware of what has been going on. Given these different alternatives, one, I've been watching this go on for -- since 1972. So, I've seen the changes when this road was going to start and nothing happened. Then we got it started and then they tore down all the trees and made a mess and the road was stopped. It only goes to Grist Mill Road. I go on those roads every other day or so. It's horrendous. No one knows how to stop at the traffic light, they don't know which lane to be in. We're very unintelligent on using all these facilities and we -- you know, the alternative may be a good thing, but I don't know with putting more traffic lights. I mean, I see all the people stopping and I worry about the pollution, and I don't know who's measuring that, and now we're going to put in a couple more traffic lights. What are we doing? This is all happening to Norwalk, and I don't think it's right. I mean, it's almost leave it alone, unless you can come up with something better. Fix the roads the way they are.</p> <p>We talk about the number of accidents, and I don't know number wise. I go on the Merritt Parkway a great deal. I'm really surprised that there's been that many in that area versus a lot further south more towards Stamford. It's very surprising to me. Because I move in that traffic, I'm always aware of it. My children have grown up here, one of them lives in Trumbull. We're always worried about the traffic coming the other way, so I'm very aware of what goes on. I don't know if they're that dangerous or how bad the accidents have been or if they've been minor, but I haven't seen that much of it here. I mean, I appreciate it all, but I don't -- you know, maybe doing something without the traffic lights, doing a roundabout may be a way of going.</p> <p>But I think before we do anything, this road should have gone -- I never wanted the road, but if it was going, then it should have gone through Wilton, through Ridgefield and finished the road. I have a husband who leaves at 6 o'clock in the morning just to go to Danbury, because the traffic is so horrendous, and the pollution, and I don't know who's studying that, because I haven't heard anything, going up Belden Hill Road, there are stoplights. There's only a stoplight because the road goes for a mile, then there's a stoplight and then the next one, until you get all the way up about five miles into Wilton.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39.</p> <p>Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p> <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p> <p>Chapter 3.3 of the EA/EIE presents the results of an air quality analysis for the Project which found that over the long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Build Alternatives would result in lower emissions of the precursors to ozone (O3) when compared to the No Build Alternative. The Project would not substantially increase the number of diesel vehicles or emissions of PM2.5 at any of the evaluated intersections. Concentrations of CO would be well below the NAAQS under all Alternatives. Both Build Alternatives would reduce the total vehicle miles traveled and resultant emissions of MSATs compared to the No Build Alternative. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would decrease for both Build Alternatives compared to the No Build Alternative. The Project is included in the 2015 State Transportation Improvement Program which was evaluated and approved by the EPA. Therefore, the Project follows the Clean Air Act's Transportation Conformity Rule requirements.
67	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>So, I'm Diane from Norwalk again, and I didn't say which one of the alternatives, because I clearly wanted the cheaper one of the two we were given, but the -- I was an air quality transportation planner in Middletown for the state regional planning earlier in my career, and so I studied the air pollution that comes from traffic signals, and it's not good. Carbon monoxide is generated every time a car is idling, and that is bad for people with lung conditions and heart conditions and for children and for pregnant women. So, it's really not a great idea. And there was a great article in the New York Times about traffic circles, and I happened to have traveled to Sedona, Arizona where there's a million traffic circles and it actually cultivates courtesy among people and it slows traffic down. So, I</p>	<p>Chapter 3.3 of the EA/EIE presents the results of an air quality analysis for the Project which found that over the long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Build Alternatives would result in lower emissions of the precursors to ozone (O3) when compared to the No Build Alternative. The Project would not substantially increase the number of diesel vehicles or emissions of PM2.5 at any of the evaluated intersections. Concentrations of CO would be well below the NAAQS under all Alternatives. Both Build Alternatives would reduce the total vehicle miles traveled and resultant emissions of MSATs compared to the No Build Alternative.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			think that that would be a much preferable design, so I'm wondering whether DOT actually considered that in the 20-plus original ideas and, if not, can we go back to the drawing board and look at that.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would decrease for both Build Alternatives compared to the No Build Alternative. The Project is included in the 2015 State Transportation Improvement Program which was evaluated and approved by the EPA. Therefore, the Project is in compliance with the Clean Air Act's Transportation Conformity Rule requirements. <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p>
68	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	Just like that previous lady, I also forgot to say which of the alternatives I thought was the one that I liked. Also 26. You know, I say people are like, I guess, quite concerned that there would be traffic lights on Route 7. It's not going to be a concern. I'm telling you, in the future cars are going to be safe and they're not going to be jumping into each other and not going to be running over kids and bicycles. Traffic lights will be fine. The lights are going to be so much more efficient and wait time there is going to be so reduced at all of these intersections, just because it's going to be a smarter transportation device. So -- and also the cars are going to be electric. So, the Norwalk problems are going to go away, which is a good thing, and the cars are going to be electric so the air pollution problems are going to be -- not entirely go away, they're just going to be moved to the location where the electricity is produced and, hopefully, that will be green electricity in Connecticut. I think it's going to be -- is going to work out just fine and there's really good technological solutions coming down the pike. People are going to look back and say traffic lights are no big deal.	Comment acknowledged.
69	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	I totally agree with Mrs. Molinari, the person that spoke before this gentleman. She told it like it was and she's absolutely correct on every count, as far as I'm concerned. She knows Norwalk, she's lived here, she's seen what has happened. Nothing really has happened to Norwalk in a long, long time, in my estimation. The marker dates back to 1992. We in Fairfield County, especially in Norwalk, it's a growing city day by day and traffic is going to get worse. Believe me. I live right next to the Merritt Parkway. I see it morning and night. I hear the sirens. I hear the sirens on Route 7, so good luck. If you try 26, you're going to have a lot of honking horns.	Comment acknowledged.

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70	Public Hearing- Transcript	General Public	<p>I know a lot of speakers have talked about the potential safety issues of the traffic lights and the potential for roundabouts. For people who haven't spent an entire evening gazing through the appendices of the EIE, EIE there was actually an alternative looked, which is alternative 7A, which is a high speed roundabout, and I know that the reason that was axed is because it introduced weaving into the traffic pattern and traffic design, but I'm curious if the, if it's better practice to have traffic lights on a high speed road, such as Route 7, versus introducing weaving, if weaving is worse. You know, anecdotally, I find weaving to be kind of annoying but, you know, I guess I don't know, in industry standards, how bad that really is. So, yeah, I would just be curious to hear a little bit more justification for why that's considered to be a deal breaker on this project.</p>	<p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p> <p>The referenced Alternative 7A did not meet at least one of the purpose and needs of the project (safety) and was eliminated from consideration.</p> <p>Roundabouts for both Main Avenue and Route 7 intersections were studied as part of the alternatives development process. The analysis found that due to significant peak hour demand and poor levels of service, they were not found to be an acceptable alternative to signals.</p>
71	Email	General Public	<p>I have lived near the Merritt Parkway in Stamford for the majority of my life and found myself passing through the Merritt/7 interchange on many occasions for many reasons. I used it the day I first got my drivers' license.</p> <p>I appreciate the efforts the state of Connecticut has made to try and build the missing movements at this interchange and I understand that after years and years consideration it simply is not possible to build a full free-flowing interchange without either negatively impacting the historic character of the parkway or negatively impacting the property values of nearby homeowners.</p> <p>However, I am very concerned about the safety impact of adding signalized intersections to a high speed roadway and do not think it is possible to sufficiently mitigate these impacts with simple approach treatments when the horizontal and vertical geometry of Route 7 are and will still be designed to accommodate high speeds. Thru traffic on route 7 is going to continue traveling at high speed and if these intersections are built it will be a question of when, not if, someone is killed at one of them.</p> <p>I therefore implore the state to please simply leave the interchange with Route 7 as it is and focus just on reconstructing Exit 40 with Main Ave to improve safety there.</p>	<p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39.</p> <p>Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
72	Email	General Public	<p>I write today to submit comments in strong disfavor as to the findings of Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) evaluation of the 7/15 interchange project, in which Alternative 26 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. For the reasons set forth below, I would strongly urge stakeholders to reevaluate the data underlying the evaluation and its ultimate conclusions as to environmental impact and the overall safety and efficiency of this design.</p> <p>The data supporting CTDOT's preference for Alt. 26 as preferred is outdated and no longer reflects reality for those living in Norwalk and the surrounding area. Notably, traffic studies and other data referenced in the evaluation appear to be 6-7 years old, gathered in 2016-2017. Since then, the area has seen a significant increase in the number of apartment buildings and total number of residents, particularly in the area of Glover Avenue/Merritt 7. Supply for housing is nevertheless strained, and demand for affordable single-family and multi-family housing has never been higher. Traffic data gathered in connection with the various studies surrounding the 7/15 project are outdated and not likely to reflect more recent traffic patterns or overall volume.</p> <p>Moreover, CTDOT's focus on maintaining a "park-like setting" for this project is misplaced and will not serve the needs of travelers that necessitated this project in the first instance. As set forth in the EA/EIE, there is a negligible difference in the overall environmental impact between both alternatives. There is nothing "park-like" about the Merritt as it runs through that section of Norwalk. In any event, I cannot think of any park I've visited lately where drivers regularly weave in and out of traffic at 85-90 MPH. To this end, any considerations that the Merritt will somehow lose its "defining historical characteristics" (which are severely outdated and do not reflect the concerns of average users of the parkway), should be dismissed, particularly in light of Alternative 21D's superior design.</p> <p>To put it bluntly, the proposal to put traffic signals on Route 7 is nothing short of a horrendous idea that will lead to increased traffic and associated noise and accidents, and will overall lead to people avoiding Norwalk altogether. Route 7 has served as a freeway/limited access highway since its inception. Changing the core characteristics of the road to incorporate traffic lights, particularly where there are no driveways, businesses, storefronts, or any other intersections, would be confusing for drivers and decrease safety on the roadway. Placing traffic lights on what essentially amounts to a freeway would only invite people to disregard the signal and cause major, high-speed accidents. And, as recent history tells us, we cannot rely on the CT state police to ethically monitor our roadways (https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/connecticut-state-police-fake-traffic-tickets/). Moreover, tractor trailers and other large trucks like construction vehicles that frequent Route 7 as is would make significantly more noise as they decelerate (and use their J-brakes) to suddenly stop at a changing light. There simply does not seem like any safe way to convert the road to one with traffic lights.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged.</p> <p>A supplemental traffic data collection program was performed in 2022. A comparison of 2022 traffic data against 2016 traffic data confirmed that the 2016 traffic volumes were still valid for use in the draft EA/EIE, and the 2016 results are still valid. The analysis took into account significant traffic from the new and planned developments in the area.</p> <p>Alternative 26 combines ramp/freeway vehicles at lower vehicular speeds compared to other alternatives, which reduces the potential for and severity of crashes. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39.</p> <p>Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area.</p> <p>The EA/EIE addresses proposed Noise in Chapter 3.4. The analysis finds that Alternative 26 does not increase noise (over the No-Build current condition) in the various identified measured and modeled locations throughout the project area in any discernable amount, and in fact in some instances decreases noise levels.</p>

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			<p>Placing signals along Route 7 would be an unmitigated disaster. Frankly, focus should be placed instead on extending Route 7 to connect to Danbury, as originally intended. The local roads surrounding Route 7 and Main Ave. have suffered for long enough with heavy vehicles and impatient commuters cutting through West Rocks Road, East Rocks Road, Silvermine Ave, William St., Strawberry Hill Ave., New Canaan Ave., and other surrounding streets. Traffic signals on Route 7 would only further encourage drivers to seek out less congested local roads and further contribute to the increasingly dangerous behavior of drivers in our neighborhoods.</p> <p>It's also unclear whether the folks conducting this study looked at the 8/25 interchange in Trumbull. It did not seem like any focus was placed on maintaining the Merritt's historical properties when that (fully complete) interchange was completed. Moreover, I am old enough to remember the federal lawsuit that previously derailed these efforts decades ago, and the primary concern was the multiple-level flyover bridges that were proposed at that time. Alt. 21D represents a clear and reasonable compromise between the extensive work previously called for in the abandoned plans from decades ago, with the unrealistic and dangerous "preferred" Alt. 26.</p> <p>Alternative 26 is a half measure that will make life significantly more difficult both for those of us living in Norwalk and those unfortunate enough to use the highways that pass through the area. The bottom line is that people want to get to where they need to be as safely and as quickly as possible, and Alt. 26 would accomplish neither of those goals. Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts and please feel free to reach me with any questions or to discuss further.</p>	
73	Email	General Public	Exit 40B on southbound Merritt P'kway. Approaching the exit, there is no deceleration lane/space, causing abrupt braking and increased danger. I'm sure there are other exits and entrances with the same problem.	Increased deceleration lanes as noted at this location have recently been constructed under CTDOT Project No. 0102-0368 (Route 15 Safety Improvements, Resurfacing, Enhancements, and Bridge Improvements). The Route 7/15 Interchange project is proposing to maintain these increased deceleration lanes.
74	Email	General Public	<p>Although I attended the meeting last night, I did not take home one of the forms for comment. I'd like to make a short comment here. I am a resident of Silvermine, a board member of NASH, and on the Advisory Board for the Merritt Parkway Conservancy. Needless to say I support the smaller, less invasive design, Alternative 26. What struck me most, other than the presentation, was the large turnout of Norwalk River Valley Trail supporters and the plea for a commuting trail to Wilton for bikers/pedestrians to be included in the design. Having lived in Silvermine for over 40 years, I am very much aware of the rural, narrow road known as Perry Ave. We are a dark sky historic area. Some of the old houses are right on the road. At night, in winter, after as early as 4 pm, no biker should be using Perry Ave. as a commute. It is dangerous and there are parts of it that are barely two cars wide.</p> <p>Please consider adding a commuter bike/pedestrian trail to your design using a small amount of the 100 million you have saved on 26. You will make a lot of friends in the</p>	Comment acknowledged. CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.

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			<p>NRVT group and I think in Silvermine as well. We do welcome recreational bikers but commuters should be on a different trail and it should parallel the Norwalk River not the Silvermine branch.</p> <p>Thank you for reading this letter and forwarding it on to whomever should be taking it into account.</p>	
75	Email	CEQ Comment 1 of 4:	The Council questions whether the EIE should also include a review and analysis of the potential impacts to 1) carbon sequestration and storage for the potential permanent impacts to wetlands, and 2) values and functions for the remaining nearby wetlands resulting from the potential permanent impacts to wetlands within the proposed project area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wetlands proposed to be impacted, as well as nearby wetlands, are in locations which, although they contain poorly drained and or very poorly drained hydric soils, are not classified as histosols. Soils classified as histosols have the greatest potential to achieve measurable and meaningful carbon sequestration and storage. • The primary functions and values of nearby wetlands are sediment/ toxication retention and stormwater flood/flow alteration. These functions and values are anticipated to be unaffected by the changes to the directly impacted wetlands.
76	Email	CEQ Comment 2 of 4:	The Council recommends that the DOT prioritize avoidance during the project design for reducing potential permanent impacts to wetlands. If permanent impacts to wetlands are unavoidable, the Council recommends that the DOT explore restoration and enhancement of impaired wetlands within the proposed project area or along the Route 7 and Route 15 corridor as mitigation before exploring compensatory creation of wetlands. In all circumstances, the Council recommends that the permanent loss of wetlands be addressed by restorative or compensatory measures at a ratio greater than 1:1 for the proposed mitigation to have a net benefit to the wetland system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the design of each alternative wetland impacts were reviewed and Best Management Practices and design alterations were implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands to the extent practicable while still achieving the project's goals and objectives. • Mitigation for at the federal level for the US Army Corps of Engineers will consists of payment into the In-Leu-Fee program which will result in wetland funded projects within the southwest coast major watershed. • In accordance with the CTDEEP the project plans to provide wetland mitigation at the state level at greater than a 1:1 ratio at the state level consisting of creation, enhancement, and restoration of wetlands. Two locations have preliminarily been identified for this purpose. One site is within the project area which would result in direct compensation and replacement of lost functions and values at the project site. The second site is located within the southwest coast major drainage basin and would result in the creation of additional wetland area, enhancement of existing wetlands, rare and endangered habitat enhancement, and the expansion of an existing large contiguous forest/wetland system. Not only would the principal functions and values initially lost by the project be replaced, but other more critical functions and values would be realized on this site due to project mitigation.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
77	Email	CEQ Comment 3 of 4:	The Council received a complaint from a resident of Westport in May 2022 regarding noise generated by traffic travelling along Route 15 over bridge expansion joints in the Westport area. The EIE notes that because the noise level would exceed the noise abatement criteria (NAC) within the project area, evaluation of abatement strategies is required. In sections 3.4.3 and 7 it states that “CTDOT’s final recommendation regarding noise abatement would be made during the project’s final design and public involvement process”. However, in Tables 2.4.2 and E1.1.1, for both alternative 21D and the preferred alternative 26, the EIE states that “although the NAC is approached/exceeded in 1 location, initial analysis shows noise abatement is not considered reasonable.” Consequently, the Council questions how noise generated by traffic within the project area, including noise potentially generated by vehicles travelling over the expansion joints for the four new bridges and two existing historic bridges for the preferred alternative 262, would be mitigated in the final design for nearby receptors.	The EA/EIE addresses proposed Noise in Chapter 3.4. Additional clarification regarding the noise analysis and subsequent determination that abatement is not warranted or feasible is provided in the errata sheet attached to the FONSI. The analysis finds that Alternative 26 does not increase noise (over the No-Build current condition) in the various identified measured and modeled locations throughout the project area in any discernable amount (increase no more than 1 dB(A)), and in fact in some instances decreases noise levels. With specific reference to expansion joints: the bridge types in our project on Merritt Parkway and Glover Avenue are less likely to have noise issues due to the construction type (rigid frame and arch, which would not be constructed with expansion joints). The Merritt Parkway bridge over Route 7 is the only bridge within the project limits with existing expansion joints. Link slabs are currently being studied at this bridge, which would be less prone to generate noise than if expansion joints similar to the existing ones were installed.
78	Email	CEQ Comment 4 of 4:	The EIE states in sections 3.8.3 and 7 that “the Project design would be in accordance with the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from CTDOT Separate Stormwater Discharge Systems (TS4) to the maximum extent practicable to mitigate any potential increases to current impairments (sedimentation/siltation) identified on the 303(d) list for the segment of the Norwalk River that traverses the Project area (ID CT7300-00_01)”. The EIE also states that the DOT will “identify specific stormwater management and monitoring practices during Project design, including practices to mitigate sedimentation or siltation to the Norwalk River”. The Council questions under what circumstances the DOT would not be able to meet the requirements of the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater, what potential impacts could result from failing to meet the General Permit requirements, and how could the project design eliminate and not just mitigate sedimentation or siltation of the Norwalk River, potentially resulting from the proposed project.	The Project design will be in accordance with the General Permit, including minimization of siltation and sedimentation and any site-specific measures required for conformance with stormwater regulations.

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79	Email	NRWA (Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.) Topic 1 of 3	<p>I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association (NRWA) and its over 2500 members and participants in Norwalk, Wilton, Ridgefield, New Canaan, Redding, and Weston. NRWA works to protect and restore water quality and fish and wildlife habitats in the Norwalk River Watershed.</p> <p>Thank you for the presentation at the public hearing. I write today to say that we disagree with the statement from the EA/EIE that “Permanent impacts to the Norwalk River are not expected” for the build alternatives for this project.</p> <p>Permanent impacts to approximately 1.4 AC of wetlands, approximately 40 LF of intermittent streams, and approximately 410 LF of perennial streams, increased runoff and concentrated flows from additional impervious surfaces, and diminished riparian buffers as outlined in the EA/EIE without question will result in permanent impacts to the water quality in the Norwalk River, Silvermine River, and Long Island Sound and to the wildlife habitat in the area. Added to those permanent impacts will be increased sediment and potentially harmful chemicals during construction.</p> <p>As a result, we ask that DOT plans include mitigation for these effects. This community requests a system be put in place to collect stormwater runoff from the ramps and bridges, like the system in place on Yankee Doodle bridge over the Norwalk River, for filtration. In addition, we ask that there be replacement of the destroyed wetlands with reconstructed wetlands like the ones the DOT put in along Route 7 in Wilton. Those reconstructed wetlands have been shown to support wildlife. Reconstructed wetlands would also likely help filter runoff and improve flood resilience. We request that the fill and grading placed into wetlands be certified to be clean and without invasive plant seeds. In addition, on-going removal of invasives after the project should be included in the plan.</p> <p>We also expect replacement of all trees removed and would like to see plans for that included as a mitigation measure. Since the replacement trees will be small, they will not meet the carbon reduction and stormwater filtration services provided by the older trees that would be removed, so we request replacement of trees at a greater than one-for-one ratio.</p> <p>The EA/EIE states, essentially, that because development has already harmed wildlife habitat, more harming of wildlife habitat should be allowed without mitigation.</p> <p><i>“Both Alternatives 26 and 21D include work within developed areas north of Route 15 and within fragments of undeveloped forests south of the Parkway, including riparian areas associated with the Norwalk River. Some tree cutting and land disturbance is anticipated under either Build Alternative. The natural communities and habitats have been degraded and fragmented as a result of adjacent land uses including roadways, railways, and commercial developments as well as the continued spread of non-native invasive species. Therefore, minimal</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EA acknowledges the potential for impacts to the Norwalk River during construction and operation of the Project and notes that specific stormwater management and monitoring practices would be identified during Project design, including practices to mitigate sedimentation or siltation to the Norwalk River.• During the design of each alternative, wetland impacts were reviewed, and best management practices and design alterations were implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and watercourses to the extent practicable while still achieving the project’s goals and objectives.• Mitigation for wetland impacts at the federal level for the US Army Corps of Engineers will consist of payment into the In-Lieu-Fee program, which will result in wetland funded projects within the southwest coast major water basin.• In accordance with CTDEEP, the proposed project plans to provide wetland mitigation at the state level at a greater than 1:1 ratio, consisting of a combination of creation, enhancement, and restoration of wetlands. Two locations have been preliminarily identified for this purpose. One site is within the project area, which would result in direct compensation and replacement of lost functions and values at the project site. The second site is located within the southwest coast major water basin and will provide the remaining quantity of mitigation required to achieve a wetland mitigation ratio of greater than 1:1. The proposed mitigation between the sites will replace in kind the principal functions and values initially lost by the project and potentially create and enhance other currently non-existent functions and values within the major water basin.• Replacing every tree removed by the project is not practical or a suitable means to provide carbon reduction or to improve the habitat in the project area. The fact that the project area is already degraded provides ample opportunity to improve the existing habitats by means of removal of invasive species of vegetation and the addition of strategically planted native species which will be included in the planting plan. Known RTE species will be coordinated through the CTDEEP Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) program. NDDDB will provide permit conditions, as appropriate, to protect and preserve specific RTE species critical habitats within the project areas.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p><i>impacts on RTE species are anticipated for either alternative as a result of the Project.”</i></p> <p>The impairment of our river and urban forests is the result of death by a thousand cuts. Arguing that the landscape, wetlands, streams, and rivers are already ruined, so DOT should be able to ruin them further without mitigation perpetuates the problem and is not acceptable.</p>	
80	Email	NRWA (Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.) Topic 2 of 3	<p>We have also have a few specific questions about language in the EA/EIE as follows:</p> <p>The EA/EIE reads: <i>“If in-water work is required during construction, temporary protections may be installed around resource areas during new ramp/bridge construction for both Alternatives 26 and 21D. Time of year restrictions (no unconfined in-stream work between April 1 and June 30) may be required as part of the permitting process for activities during construction to avoid and minimize impacts to anadromous fish runs in the Norwalk River.”</i></p> <p>We request a language change to: <i>“would be installed”</i> and <i>“would be required”</i>. Decades of work by NRWA, Trout Unlimited, Harbor Watch, City of Norwalk, Save the Sound and others have gone into improving water quality and opening the Norwalk River to anadromous fish. It is imperative that every precaution be taken to protect the returning fish, including blueback herring (a Species of Special Concern in Connecticut), lamprey eel, and others known to be present in this part of the river since the removal of the Flock Process dam in 2018.</p> <p>We appreciate that, “CTDOT would avoid and minimize wetland and watercourse impacts during design. Any mitigation needs following those avoidance measures would be identified and agreed upon in conjunction with the appropriate regulatory agencies, including the ACOE and CTDEEP.” But we request that since at least 1.4 acres of wetlands will be destroyed and filled and there will known new sources of runoff and concentrated flows to streams, wetlands and watercourses, that the need for mitigation be recognized now and included in plans for the construction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted above, the need for mitigation is recognized in the plan and will be included in construction plans, with appropriate agency review and approvals. The EA/EIE is planning level document. Specific Best Management Practices and time of year restrictions will be incorporated within the permitting phase, subject to review and approval by CTDEEP and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries.

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			Without a commitment to significant mitigations that help restore tree canopy and protect water quality, NRWA is of the position that our community is better off with a no-build option.	
81	Email	NRWA (Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.) Topic 3 of 3	We also feel strongly that the plans should include off-road bike trails as part of the Norwalk River Valley Trail as it passes through this area.	CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
82	Email	WESTCOG	<p>As the EA/EIE is an extensive document, we have reproduced certain sections of the EA/EIE (in italics) to call attention to specific concerns that we have, and to follow up with comments or questions as detailed (in regular type) below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Page 1.14, 1.4 OTHER ACTIONS AT THE PROJECT LOCATION There are two CTDOT actions (i.e., current projects) at the project locations which are summarized below. CTDOT would look to incorporate improvements related to these actions during design. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Investigation and Identification of Methods to Improve Notification of Height Restrictions on the Merritt Parkway: Under direction of the Connecticut General Assembly Under section 13a-26a of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), CTDOT performed a study to investigate and identify methods to improve notification of height restrictions on Route 15. This study, completed in 2019, recommended several types of improvements aimed at keeping overweight vehicles off of Route 15.</i> <i>Merritt Parkway (Route 15) Safety Improvements, Resurfacing, Enhancements And Bridge Improvements: This project involves roadway improvements, safety improvements, and aesthetic enhancements for a 6.5 mile segment of Route 15 in both directions from Route 124 in New Canaan to Newtown Turnpike in Westport. The northern section of this project (Project 0102-0368; Main Avenue in Norwalk to Newtown Turnpike in Westport) is in construction and is scheduled for completion in 2022. The southern section of this project (Project 0102-0296; Main Avenue in Norwalk to Route 124 in New Canaan) is in design and construction is scheduled to begin in 2023. There are no other CTDOT actions (i.e., completed studies, pending projects) outside the scope of this EA/EIE that would reasonably be anticipated to affect the Project within the Project Site.</i> <p>WestCOG has reviewed the analysis of transportation operations and recommends that the Project provide for the incorporation of active traffic management technologies such as adaptive signal coordination, dynamically variable on-and/or off ramp metering, and variable messaging. Note that WestCOG intends to pursue the feasibility of a networked, dynamically variable flow control system on Route 15 through the USDOT SMART program. Part of what we propose includes potential detection of overheight/commercial vehicles and use of the adaptive management technology (whether at dedicated ramp meters or existing signals) to control flow on/off the Parkway. WestCOG suggests that the Preferred Alternative, at a minimum, include coordination of all signals off Parkway and, preferably, provide for current or future coordination with traffic flow on the Parkway itself. Should it not be feasible to</p> 	<p>(Broken down to their sections):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> & b. Active traffic management technologies referenced can be assessed for appropriateness to this specific project as future design phase progresses. The project team will continue to coordinate design with WestCOG activities including potential improvement (e.g., detection systems, and adaptive management technologies in the project area. Coordination of signals throughout the project area will be addressed in the design phase of the project. & d. Noting the reference to Rte. 9, the proposed signals on Rte. 7 under this project is a different situation than Rte. 9. The signals on Route 9 are situated between two freeway segments as opposed to this proposed condition where the freeway terminus will be shifted from Grist Mill to just south of the Exit 39 interchange. Additionally, Route 7 will be re-characterized to function as an urban boulevard and various design features (narrow shoulders, signage, roadside plantings, etc.) will be incorporated to inform drivers and help reduce travel speeds within the project area. The project team and CTDOT have continued to engage with the CTDOT Office of Rails to review proposals for new or changes to bridges. All design work will be in accordance with rail needs (e.g., electrification etc.). This coordination will continue through the design process. Increases in traffic volumes are accounted for using CTDOT growth rates to account for planned future developments. The Department will review the traffic data and Origin-Destination Data as the Design progresses and assess if revisions are required. The Department will evaluate the need to construct the improvements in phases if applicable. CTDOT has actively coordinated with NRVT throughout the EA/EIE process and NRVT is represented on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). CTDOT will continue to engage with them as design progresses. Alternative 26 does not preclude the future construction of a multi-use trail through the project area.

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
			<p>deploy such technology at present, the provision of electric service, fiber, and/or conduit should be considered to allow for its future implementation.</p> <p><i>c. Build Alternatives: Both Build Alternatives are projected to provide comparable improvements to traffic operations through reductions in deficient locations in the design year when compared to the No Build Alternative. With both Build Alternatives, a total of ten locations are projected to be deficient during the weekday morning peak hour. During the weekday evening peak hour, a total of eight locations are projected to be deficient with Alternative 26 and nine locations are projected to be deficient under Alternative 21D. Alternative 26 proposes to complete the missing movements using new signalized intersections (with turn lanes for some of the high-volume turning movements), in comparison to Alternative 21D which proposes to complete the missing movements at the Routes 7/15 interchange using free-flow connections. As such, Alternative 21D is projected to generally provide faster travel times for the missing interchange movements when compared to the No Build Alternative. In most cases, Alternative 26 is also projected to provide faster travel times for the missing interchange movements when compared to the No Build Alternative, albeit to a lesser extent. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39. Furthermore, the Main Avenue corridor would provide additional accommodation for pedestrians and bicyclists.</i></p> <p><i>d. Mitigation Measures: no significant adverse impacts have been identified for either Build Alternative. Both Build Alternatives provide comparable improvements to traffic operations and safety in the traffic study area. Therefore, no mitigation is required.</i></p> <p>Regarding the addition of traffic signals to US-7: WestCOG is concerned this could produce an outcome similar to Connecticut Route 9 in Middletown, where the design of the highway is inconsistent with traffic signals, confounding driver expectations, and produces backups that regularly stretch for miles. (Note that, while the addition of traffic signals is being proposed here, the reverse is being proposed for Route 9 in Middletown.)</p> <p>From a regional traffic movement perspective, free-flowing connections in all directions between US-7 and Route 15 (Alternative 21D) are preferable. Given concerns about intersection capacity, congestion, and back-ups, should</p>	

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			<p>Alternative 26 advance, WestCOG suggests maintaining as many movements as free-flow as is possible, especially movements from Route 15 to US-7. The illustrations for Alternative 26 appear to redirect certain movements that currently are made by freeway-to-freeway ramps through intersections (whether directly through a light or via a slip lane). Given more favorable volume-to-capacity ratios on Route 7 than Route 15, designs that maintain throughput of vehicles from Route 15 onto US-7 may be important in preventing/reducing back-ups onto Route 15.</p> <p>2. <i>p.3-37: Metro-North Bridge: The Metro-North Bridge, a rigid-frame concrete bridge that carries the Merritt Parkway over the Danbury Branch, is a contributing resource to the Merritt Parkway N RH P historic district. At present, the bridge is readily visible from Glover Avenue. As currently planned, both Build Alternatives would retain the bridge but would result in an indirect adverse effect as construction of a new ramp would obscure the bridge from view from Glover Avenue, diminishing its integrity of setting.</i></p> <p>CTDOT should ensure in the EA/EI E (and in the design process to follow) that the new bridges and other structures to be constructed as part Project will not impact the current operations of, or future use of, the MNCW operations on the Danbury Branch, particularly for the restoration of electric and second track service. This should apply to any new structures above or adjacent to the Branch and to the Merritt 7 station, which is being upgraded now. In addition, the Project should not contribute to any loss of capacity at the Merritt 7 station. Bear in mind that the improvement of the Danbury Branch and upgrading of passenger rail service on the Branch is an integral part of the South Western Region MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.</p> <p>We have two additional questions and one comment:</p> <p>3. Adequacy of design: Does the analysis account for changes in larger-scale traffic patterns? Improved connections between US-7 and Route 15 may result in a) substantial traffic diversion from I-95 and b) an overall increase in vehicle trips. The difficulty associated with connecting between Route 15 and US-7 may limit the number of drivers that make these movements; drivers instead may use I-95. It is WestCOG's expectation that driver behavior (in part guided by GPS systems that minimize total travel time and route complexity) will change substantially following the opening of a better connection between US-7 and Route 15. While this may ease congestion somewhat on I-95, it may result in greater-than-anticipated vehicle volumes in the Project Area, if the analysis did not account for this eventuality.</p>	

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			<p>Furthermore, insofar as the project improves the ability to drive through the Project Area, it may stimulate more drivers to make such a trip at peak hour or to make such a trip at all. Transportation demand is generally elastic with respect to price, especially over the long-term, so that when the cost of traveling falls, the quantity of traveling rises. While this is not a negative - people generally do not travel for the sake of traveling, but rather to improve their socioeconomic opportunities - it is not clear that the analysis accounts for the potential for the Project to enable additional trips and the impact of those trips on the infrastructure in question. WestCOG suggests that the analysis, if it has not already done so, model diversions from I-95 and any additional "induced demand."</p> <p>4. Extensibility: will the Preferred Alternative be designed to allow for future modification in the event that traffic conditions warrant it? WestCOG has concerns regarding the performance of the traffic signals proposed. The only freeway with traffic signals in Connecticut, Route 9, regularly experiences multi-mile back-ups. WestCOG suggests that, in addition to directly incorporating or providing for the future use of active traffic management technologies and maintaining existing free-flow movements, Alternative 26, where possible, avoid design choices that could increase the cost or decrease the feasibility of making additional improvements, such as grade separation, should it become necessary.</p> <p>5. Multimodal transportation: WestCOG underscores the importance of pedestrian and bicycle connections in the Project Area, particularly for the continued development of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (N RVT). At the public hearing on 8/16/23, several of the commenters advocated for an N RVT design through the Project Area that encourages safe walking and bicycling in equal measure to the effort being focused on motor vehicle travel through the area. In design, the N RVT should not only be safe, but should connect well with the adjacent land uses and have sufficient design capacity to function as a regional facility.</p>	

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83	Email	PAC	<p>I have served on the PAC (Project Advisory Committee) for this project since its inception. In fact, I caused the initial ruckus which led to this committee when I discovered that plans were underway to construct the new 7/15 Interchange in my Silvermine neighborhood. Representative Larry Cafaro helped raise public awareness and get that effort terminated and the interchange subsequently moved back East into the river valley where it logically belongs.</p> <p>Connecticut, and more importantly, Fairfield County, deserve a full-service interchange between these two important coastal highways. If we believe that climate change will continue on the current trajectory and that seas will rise and storms will become more severe, this interchange will be an important part of any coastal evacuation plan. With the service levels of Alternate 26 being so close to unacceptable, Alternate 21D is clearly the sustainable choice.</p> <p>Since the environmental impacts of both Alternates are quite similar, cost seems to be the only differentiating factor that makes Alternate 26 the “preferred” choice. We are at a point in time when there is a lot of money available for infrastructure projects. We are spending \$1 Billion on another project that will allow tall ships to travel all the way to Wall St. in Norwalk. If adopting Alternate 21D doubles the cost to \$200 Million, it’s a bargain! Let’s not shortchange Norwalk, Fairfield County, and the State of Connecticut! Do the right thing.</p> <p>A great deal has been said over the years about maintaining the original vistas and design concepts of the original Parkway, however, much has changed since then. Automobiles travel more than 40 MPH and the Parkway is part of many citizens’ daily commute. This is first and foremost a transportation project. I trust our DOT to be respectful to the Merritt Parkway and its historic significance. I pass daily under the “new” Parkway ramps which span Perry Avenue. From either direction, these ramps appear to sit perfectly atop the original structure that supports the original Parkway. That’s no accident. It is thoughtful design, respectful of the past. Alternate 26 is a step backward that completely fails the stated mission of the project.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged. Both Built Alternatives result in comparable operational benefits and perform better than the No Build Alternative. However, evaluation of alternatives weighs a more comprehensive view of impacts and benefits than service levels alone. In addition to lower cost, Alternative 26 impacts fewer wetlands. It also has fewer ramps and bridges than Alternative 21D and thus the cumulative visual impact to the Project Site can be considered lower than that of Alternative 21D. Further, Alternative 26's compact nature provides the greatest opportunity to preserve and enhance natural features and systems, integrate the roadway into a park-like setting with appropriate topography and planting clusters, reduce maintenance, and design access and egress ramps as Parkway amenities.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
84	Email	Preservation CT Part 1 of 2	<p>On behalf of the Trustees, members, and staff of Preservation Connecticut, I am pleased to offer these comments on the draft Joint Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Evaluation (EZ/EIE) for the Merritt Parkway-Route 7 interchange in Norwalk.</p> <p>As the statewide nonprofit dedicated to the preservation, protection and promotion of Connecticut’s historic places, Preservation Connecticut (formerly the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation) has been an advocate for the Merritt Parkway for more than three decades, starting with writing the National Register nomination for the Parkway in 1991.</p> <p>Preservation Connecticut has followed the development of this project for many years. While we still are not entirely convinced that all new construction elements of the project are truly necessary, we applaud the care with which the Department of Transportation has carried out the planning for this most recent version of the interchange.</p> <p>The department’s preferred alternative, Alternative 26, is a vast improvement over previous schemes for the interchange. It represents a reasonable and realistic plan for improving connections between the Parkway, Route 7, and Main Avenue. It promises needed safety improvements for automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians. And, it offers an opportunity to improve the Parkway landscape in the work area by blending new work into the historic landscape as well as healing the damage done to the Parkway in the construction of Route 7. Preservation Connecticut supports the selection of Alternative 26.</p> <p>The draft EA/EIE document for the most part lays out clearly the reasons for selecting Alternative 26, its probable effects on historic resources, and the Department’s plans to minimize or mitigate harmful effects. Its discussion of the Parkway’s landscape character—perhaps the most crucial element of its historic character—faithfully follows discussions with knowledgeable participants in the project advisory committee. For instance, the draft document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognizes the crucial distinction between the experience of driving through a park-like landscape and that of driving past one (page 3.36);• notes that “Major areas of alteration and past construction, visible today, present opportunities for landscape rehabilitation” (page 3.54); and• rightly concludes that “Alternative 26’s compact nature provides the greatest opportunity to preserve and enhance natural features and systems, integrate the roadway into a park-like setting with appropriate topography and planting clusters, reduce maintenance, and design access and egress ramps as Parkway amenities” (page 3.60).	Comment acknowledged.

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85	Email	Preservation CT Part 2 of 2	<p>The only serious shortcoming of the draft document is a lack of clarity in identifying historic resources in some places. This results from the decision to split the discussion of historic resources among three different categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• historic and archaeological resources, which deals primarily with built resources such as houses and bridges;• visual impacts, which focuses on overall character and roadway configuration; and• scenic byway, focusing on the Parkway landscape. <p>For instance, the chart that summarizes impacts of the project (Table 1.3.1) lists removal and replacement of historic/scenic roadway elements and reconfiguring of existing roadway geometry under Visual Impact Assessment; similarly, removal and replacement of scenic landscape elements is listed under Merritt Parkway Landscape (Scenic Byway). In both cases, impacts are categorized as visual or scenic, and not <i>historic</i> elements. These omissions are repeated in Table 2.4.2, a summary of potential benefits and impacts of the build and no-build alternatives.</p> <p>Two things get lost, or at least downplayed, in this divided approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussing elements such as roadway configuration and the designed landscape under visual impact or scenic byway (a designation that can include natural, as well as cultural scenery) downplays their historic, as opposed to merely visual or scenic, significance.• The sense of the Merritt Parkway as a unified design comprising roadways, bridges and other resources within an encompassing designed landscape also is lost. This totality is in fact what accounts for the Parkway’s historic significance. <p>Admittedly, the historic character of these features is a bit more explicitly stated in the chapters on visual impacts and scenic byways that follow, but even there it is easily lost. See, for instance, the visual impact chapter, where a single sentence (pages 3.42- 3.43) says that the Parkway’s visual character contributes to its listing on the National Register. Unfortunately, the use of abbreviations, the placement of the sentence over a page break and just above an illustration, and the lack of further discussion all minimize the impact of this statement.</p> <p>Preservation Connecticut recommends that the EA/EIE document be revised to clarify the potential impacts and benefits of the project on the Parkway’s historic character. This will not be a major revision; rather it requires adding some more explicit and substantive references to the historic nature of roadway and landscape resources to the tables and chapters cited above, and providing an introductory section that forcefully makes the point of the Parkway’s significance as a unified historic design.</p> <p>As the draft document notes, the preferred alternative is of course only a schematic plan. The degree to which its goals of protecting and enhancing the historic character of the Merritt Parkway are met will be determined as an actual design for the project is</p>	<p>CTDOT and the design team recognize the historic significance of the Parkway as a composition of landscape, topography, and structures that provides a cohesive, identifiable, and unique sense of place as a highway corridor. As the commenter notes, the EA/EIE describes crucial aspects of the Parkway’s historical character as well as the reasons for selecting Alternative 26 with respect to minimizing potential impacts on historic resources. In addition, protection and enhancement of the Parkway will be addressed more comprehensively with specific solutions throughout the Project design phase through the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). While the EA/EIE discussion is necessarily succinct, additional information regarding the Parkway’s historical character is provided in the supporting Appendices I (Cultural Resources Assessment) and J (Visual Impact Assessment). In addition, specific commitments for design and opportunities for review by stakeholders throughout the design process are provided in the MOA. Throughout the EA and MOA process, the Department has demonstrated its past, ongoing and future commitment to engagement with stakeholders and consulting parties.</p> <p>The FONSI will include Preservation Connecticut’s comments and this response, which will serve as the final update to the EA/EIE.</p>

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			<p>worked out. The Department must remain steadfast in its pursuit of the goals and commitments laid out in the EA/EIE document.</p> <p>Preservation Connecticut is proud to play a role in the preservation of the Merritt Parkway and we remain committed to continuing to advocate for and assist in the Parkway's preservation.</p>	
86	Email	SHPO	<p>The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CT SHPO) has reviewed the environmental documentation prepared for the referenced project and titled <i>Environmental Assessment/Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation; CEPA Environmental Impact Evaluation</i> (EA/EIE). We understand that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has integrated its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act with Section 106, the implementing regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act, to streamline the compliance process. The project will be implemented by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) and the completed Environmental Assessment is recognized as meeting the reporting requirements of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act. CT DOT and FHWA initiated consultation with CT SHPO during late 2017. Since that time, CT SHPO has engaged in multiple consultation meetings with CT DOT, FHWA, its consultants, and other interested parties.</p> <p>CT SHPO understands the purpose and need for improving the linkages, mobility, and safety of the Route 7 and Route 15 interchange, as described in the EA/EIE. Our office also understands that the No Build Alternative cannot meet the purpose and need of the project. During the evaluation of a range of build alternatives, Alternatives 21D and 26 emerged as the best options, with Alternative 26 performing slightly better for meeting the project's purpose and need, but both would impact significant cultural resources. In evaluating the totality of environmental harm, Alternative 26 had fewer impacts to wetlands and wildlife habitats. In addition, the costs of constructing Alternative 26 were substantially less than Alternative 21D.</p> <p>CT SHPO reviewed both the Visual Impact Assessment report and the Phase I and II Cultural Resources Survey Report prepared for Stantec by Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. as part of the ongoing consultation process. These reports are summarized in the EA/EIE and SHPO has concurred with their findings.</p> <p>A total of three archaeological sites (Sites 103-57, 103-58/60, and 103-61/62) were identified and evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion D as a result of the cultural resources survey. These sites date from the Middle Archaic through Woodland periods and contained artifacts typically associated with repeated short-term occupations. All three sites would be preserved in place as part of Alternative 21D, but two sites (Sites 103-57 and 103-58/60) would be at least partially lost as part of Alternative 26.</p> <p>The Merritt Parkway Historic District was listed on the NRHP in 1991 under Criteria A and C. In addition to the roadway and landscape features that contribute to the historic</p>	Comment acknowledged.

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			<p>district, three contributing bridges (Metro-North Railroad Bridge, Norwalk River Bridge, and Main Avenue Bridge) would be impacted by either build alternative. While most of the impacts consist of indirect effects, the Main Avenue Bridge would be replaced. In addition, the Glover Avenue Bridge, determined eligible for listing on the NRHP, also would be replaced as part of Alternatives 21D and 26. The difference between the alternatives is in a magnitude of effect. While both result in the loss of historic resources, Alternative 26 retains a greater integrity of setting and feeling for the Merritt Parkway and provides less of an interruption to the parkway's landscape characteristics.</p> <p>The cornerstone of the Section 106 process is consultation to either avoid, minimize, or mitigate historic loss. For this project, no suitable solutions could be identified to meet the project needs while avoiding an <u>adverse effect</u> to historic properties. Both build alternatives have direct and indirect effects on historic properties listed and eligible for listing in the NRHP. Although Alternative 26 would result in the loss of two archaeological sites, its visual impact on the Merritt Parkway is significantly less and is in keeping with the character of this historic property. While CT SHPO regrets the loss of the two archaeological sites, we offer no objection to identifying Alternative 26 as the Preferred Alternative. Our office is hopeful that as construction plans emerge, portions of these sites may be further avoided by construction.</p> <p>To resolve the adverse effects to historic properties related to the construction of Alternative 26, CT SHPO requested the preparation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with stipulations to compensate for both the direct loss and indirect effects. After several meetings with consulting and interested parties, an acceptable collection of stipulations were codified into a MOA signed by CT SHPO earlier this year titled Memorandum of Agreement Between the Federal Highway Administration, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation Regarding the Route 7/Route 15 (Merritt Parkway) Interchange Project Norwalk, Connecticut. The stipulations include, but are not limited to project design review opportunities, written and photo-documentation, and an archaeological data recovery and treatment plan that would preserve the research potential of the impacted sites. It is SHPO's opinion that this document resolves all adverse effects.</p> <p>This office appreciates the opportunity to review and comment upon this project and we look forward to additional consultation as the stipulations of the MOA are implemented. These comments are provided in accordance with the National Environmental Policy, the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. For any questions or additional information, please contact me at information, please contact Catherine Labadia, Environmental Reviewer and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, at (860) 500-2329 or catherine.labadia@ct.gov.</p>	

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	Comment	Response
87	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 1 of 4	<p>Environmental Justice</p> <p>Section 3.16 and Appendix M of the Environmental Assessment adequately assess the potential environmental justice impacts of the proposed project in accordance with relevant Executive Orders and guidance.</p> <p>Building on CTDOT’s commitment to providing timely project updates to neighborhoods and businesses within the study area to help residents and business owners prepare for short and long-term impacts, EPA recommends that CTDOT and FHWA consider the following additional activities and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to create community outreach products are written in plain language that can be understood by all affected community members. Readability should not exceed 7th to 8th grade level, which is considered the lower end of the estimated average reading level of the U.S. population. • Continue to offer technical assistance to help community members better understand the proposed action and its impacts. • Continue to provide appropriate translation and interpretive services to linguistically isolated populations who live and work in the study area to ensure meaningful engagement. Future public meetings should be accessible to all and scheduled at times that accommodate the greatest number of participants. • Provide continuous outreach to residents and businesses impacted by temporary construction activities, potential changes in traffic patterns and access, and short-term nuisance dust and noise. Providing updates through local media, social media, the project website, the City of Norwalk, and neighborhood associations will help ensure that information reaches the greatest number of stakeholders. 	<p>The Project will continue to follow the specific Public Involvement Plan developed for the 7/15 Norwalk Project as well as CTDOT's overall Public Involvement Plan (https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOT/documents/dplans/PIPdf.pdf).</p> <p>In addition, the EA establishes seven commitments related to EJ concerns, including timing, format, and methods of communication; minimizing construction impacts; and mitigation of impacts to cultural resources.</p> <p>In particular, the following will be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As on all CTDOT projects, use of plain language that can be understood by all affected community members is part of overall approach to communication. • The project website will be maintained through construction with timely updates sent to contacts and posted to appropriate platforms. Additionally, public information meetings will be scheduled at appropriate times during the design and construction process, where the local community can provide comments and questions either in person or remotely. • CTDOT will continue to provide appropriate translation and interpretive services to linguistically isolated populations who live and work in the study area to ensure meaningful engagement. Public meetings will remain accessible to all and scheduled at times that accommodate the greatest number of participants. • As on all CTDOT projects, continuous outreach will be provided to residents and businesses, including updates through local media, social media, the project website, the City of Norwalk, and neighborhood associations will help ensure that information reaches the greatest number of stakeholders. The project website will be maintained through construction with timely updates sent to contacts and posted to appropriate platforms. Additionally, public information meetings will be scheduled at appropriate times during the design and construction process.
88	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 2 of 4	<p>Wetland Impacts</p> <p>We support the identification of Alternative 26 as the preferred alternative due to reduced potential for impacts to wetland resources. In addition, Alternative 26 provides opportunities for further avoidance and minimization of impacts through careful design of infrastructure at the wetland and watercourse crossings. CTDOT should take this opportunity to develop project designs that minimize direct and secondary impacts to aquatic resources, improve hydraulic conditions, reduce stormwater impacts, and provide long-term resiliency in light of projected climate conditions and the potential for more frequent storms and associated stormwater flows. Final project designs will need to satisfy requirements of the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>During the design of each alternative, wetland impacts were reviewed, and Best Management Practices and design alterations were implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and watercourses to the extent practicable while still achieving the project’s purpose and need.</p> <p>Final Project design will satisfy CWA Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.</p>

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89	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 3 of 4	<p>Wetland Mitigation</p> <p>Development of a suitable compensatory mitigation plan will be required for either of the two build alternatives, but the mitigation obligation will be greatly reduced for Alternative 26. The compensatory mitigation plan will need to satisfy federal mitigation requirements as promulgated in the 2008 Mitigation Rule (40 CFR Part 230). The federal preference for compensatory mitigation begins with credits from mitigation banks, followed by in-lieu fee programs, and finally with permittee responsible mitigation. If permittee responsible mitigation is planned to meet state requirements, activity credits that meet the requirements of the 2008 Mitigation Rule will be recognized in calculation of any remaining federal mitigation obligation.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>Mitigation for wetland impacts at the federal level for the US Army Corps of Engineers will consist of payment into the In-Lieu-Fee program, which will result in wetland funded projects within the southwest coast major water basin.</p> <p>In accordance with CTDEEP, the proposed project plans to provide wetland mitigation at the state level at a greater than 1:1 ratio, consisting of a combination of creation, enhancement, and restoration of wetlands. Two locations have been preliminarily identified for this purpose. One site is within the project area, which would result in direct compensation and replacement of lost functions and values at the project site. The second site is located within the southwest coast major water basin and will provide the remaining quantity of mitigation required to achieve a wetland mitigation ratio of greater than 1:1. The proposed mitigation between the sites will replace in kind the principal functions and values initially lost by the project and potentially create and enhance other currently non-existent functions and values within the major water basin.</p>
90	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 4 of 4	<p>Stormwater</p> <p>Both Alternative 26 (the preferred alternative) and 21D include the creation of new impervious surfaces. Increased impervious surfaces lead to increased stormwater discharges and increased discharges of pollutants (total phosphorus, total nitrogen, sediment, bacteria, and others) to wetland areas and waterbodies. CTDOT is subject to the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Department of Transportation Separate Storm Sewer Systems (TS4 General Permit) and the proposed project discharges to waterbodies designated as impaired on the Connecticut Integrated Water Quality Report. Because the project will result in an increased discharge, we note that CTDOT must demonstrate a no net increase in pollutant loading by the DOT MS4 of the pollutant(s) for which the waterbody is impaired, consistent with Section 3(b)(7) of the TS4 General Permit.</p>	<p>The EA acknowledges the potential for impacts to the Norwalk River during construction and operation of the Project and notes that specific stormwater management and monitoring practices would be identified during Project design, including practices to mitigate sedimentation or siltation to the Norwalk River.</p> <p>Project design will be in accordance with the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from CTDOT Separate Stormwater Discharge Systems (MS4) to the maximum extent practicable to mitigate potential increases to current impairments (sedimentation/siltation) identified on the 303(d) list for the segment of the Norwalk River that traverses the Project area (ID CT7300-00_01). Additionally, the project would incorporate the requirements of the Construction Stormwater General Permit due to siltation/sedimentation impairment.</p>

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	First Name	Last Name	Town	State	Zip
1	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Anthony	Costanzo			
2	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Daniela	Posada			
3	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	Jo-Ann	Horvath	Norwalk	CT	
4	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Ben	Hanpeter			
5	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	Tanner	Thompson			
6	Email	General Public	JoAnn	Ciavarelli	Norwalk	CT	
7	Website Form	General Public	Jay	Koolis	Glastonbury	CT	06033
8	Website Form	General Public	Steve	S			
9	Website Form	Non-profit group	Jackie	Light field	Norwalk	CT	06852
10	Website Form	General Public	Nilanjan	Bhowmik		CT	
11	Website Form	General Public	John	Whitaker	Norwalk	CT	06850
12	Website Form	General Public	Manuel	Alvarez	Danbury	CT	06810
13	Website Form	General Public	Cherag Naushad	Bhagwagar	Norwalk	CT	06854
14	Website Form	General Public	Yan	Liu	Norwalk	CT	06851
15	Website Form	General Public	Chris	R	Danbury	CT	06810
16	Website Form	General Public	Ryan	Morrison	Norwalk	CT	06850
17	Website Form	General Public	Guobin	Ou	Westport	CT	06880
18	Website Form	General Public	Edward	McCabe	Norwalk	CT	
19	Website Form	General Public	Nicole	Crimmins	Norwalk	CT	
20	Website Form	General Public	Keith	Frering	Southbury	CT	06488
21	Website Form	General Public	Owen	Parent	Norwalk	CT	06851
22	Website Form	General Public	Philip	Choi		CT	
23	Website Form	General Public	Leo	Orsini	Stamford	CT	06901
24	Website Form	General Public	Martin	Piekarski	Fairfield	CT	06824
25	Website Form	General Public	Samuel	Pond	Norwalk	CT	06855
26	Website Form	General Public	Zafir	Khan	Norwalk	CT	06851
27	Website Form	General Public	Christian	Green	Westport	CT	06880
28	Website Form	General Public	Matthew	Boudreau	Norwalk	CT	06850
29	Website Form	General Public	Sonia	Jacome	Norwalk	CT	06850-2308
30	Website Form	General Public	Garrett	Friedrichsen	Norwalk	CT	06853
31	Website Form	General Public	Philip	Chiaia	Norwalk	CT	06851
32	Website Form	General Public	Justin	Christian	Plantsville	CT	06479
33	Website Form	General Public	Barbara	Kinn	Norwalk	CT	06851
34	Website Form	General Public	Jackson	Hurst	Kennesaw	GA	30144
35	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 1 of 5	Frederick	Riese	Hartford	CT	06106
36	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 2 of 5					
37	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 3 of 5					
38	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 4 of 5					
39	Website Form	CTDEEP Topic 5 of 5					
40	Website Form	General Public	Charles	Weimer	Norwalk	CT	06850

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	First Name	Last Name	Town	State	Zip
41	Website Form	General Public	Steven	Alquesta	Norwalk	CT	06854
42	Website Form	General Public	Paul	Fox	Norwalk	CT	06850
43	Website Form	General Public	Jack	Meyers	Norwalk	CT	06850
44	Website Form	General Public	Nick	Kantor	Norwalk	CT	
45	Website Form	PAC	Kate	Throckmorton	Georgetown	CT	06829
46	Email	General Public	Mike	Parenteau	Norwalk	CT	06854
47	Email	General Public	Angelo	Bochanis			
48	Written Comment	General Public	Frank	B.			
49	Written Comment	General Public	John	Levin			
50	Written Comment	General Public	Elsa	Peterson Obuchoski			
51	Written Comment	General Public					
52	Email	USFWS	David	Simmons	Concord	NH	03301
53	Email	General Public	Celeste	Burton			
54	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Ben	Hanpeter	Norwalk	CT	
55	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Diane	Keefe			
56	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	Tanner	Thompson			
57	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Eric	Honck			
58	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	Heather	Dunn			
59	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Paul	Cheverd	Norwalk	CT	
60	Public Hearing-Transcript	PAC	Wes	Haynes			
61	Public Hearing-Transcript	CTDEEP	Frederick	Riese			
62	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Phil	Kei	Norwalk	CT	
63	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Paul	Fox	Norwalk	CT	
64	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Frank	Fornaro			
65	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	John	Levin	Norwalk	CT	
66	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Lucia	Molinari	Silvermine	CT	
67	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Diane	Keefe	Norwalk	CT	
68	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	John	Levin			
69	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Jo-Ann	Horvath			
70	Public Hearing-Transcript	General Public	Ben	Hanpeter			
71	Email	General Public	Anthony	Costanzo			
72	Email	General Public	Michael	Stenger	Norwalk	CT	
73	Email	General Public	Murray	Bruckel			
74	Email	General Public	Leigh	Grant	Norwalk	CT	06850
75	Email	CEQ Comment 1 of 4	Paul	Aresta			
76	Email	CEQ Comment 2 of 4					
77	Email	CEQ Comment 3 of 4					
78	Email	CEQ Comment 4 of 4					

Comment No.	Comment Source	Commentor Type	First Name	Last Name	Town	State	Zip
79	Email	NRWA (Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.) Topic 1 of 3	Louise	Washer			
80	Email	NRWA (Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.) Topic 2 of 3					
81	Email	NRWA (Norwalk River Watershed Association, Inc.) Topic 3 of 3					
82	Email	WESTCOG	Todd	Fontanella			
83	Email	PAC	Alan	Kibbe	Norwalk	CT	
84	Email	Preservation CT Part 1 of 2	Chris	Wigren			
85	Email	Preservation CT Part 2 of 2					
86	Email	SHPO	Jonathan	Kinney			
87	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 1 of 4	Timothy	Timmermann	Boston	MA	02109-3912
88	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 2 of 4					
89	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 3 of 4					
90	Email	EPA Region 1 - Topic 4 of 4					



Kevin Carifa, Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, Connecticut 06131

RE: Route 7/15 Interchange Improvements
State Project No. 102-358
Norwalk, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Carifa:

This will present the position of the Friends of the Norwalk River Valley Trail with respect to the proposed Alternative 26 revision of the 7/15 interchange.

It is our view that Alternative 26 as presented fails to provide adequate (any) accommodation for the NRVT through this interchange. As the major regional trail in Fairfield County and as a critical alternative transportation link, this is a major disappointment and a meaningful missed planning opportunity. In particular, Alternative 26 (and all of the alternatives) severs the NRVT and the dense residential and commercial centers that lie on both sides of the interchange in Norwalk along the Route 7/Main Ave. corridor.

We realize the roots of this project reach back 20 or so years to a time when the NRVT was not a reality. But obviously times have changed. Millions of dollars of public and private investment have gone into the NRVT and now about 15 miles of trail are completed along the route from Norwalk to Danbury... and millions more have been committed to continue construction. Obviously times have changed and so should the scope of this project.

We recognize that other important constituencies must also be served by this project. In an effort of collaboration and to live within the proposed Alternative 26, the NRVT has, at our expense, hired a consultant to review the feasibility of a route through the interchange, some of which are more economically feasible than others. While not necessarily an EA/EIE concern, during the design phase we would ask the DOT to consider and fund the most prudent alternative and are willing to assist in the development of that solution. A viable route for the NRVT through this fatal choke point must be found given our State and National goals of environmentally responsible alternative transportation.

The community support for the vital economic and transportation engine that the NRVT represents for this area was reflected in the grassroots showing at the recent public hearing. This was truly reflective of the community at large and was not a product of any NRVT effort.

We, the Friends of the NRVT, have been and continue to look forward to being partners with Stantec and CTDOT in the realization of our trail. Revising 7/15 is a once in a lifetime opportunity, it should be a stimulus for, not an impediment to, safe alternative transportation that drives smart economic growth. We all must work together to realize this vision and suggest that we schedule a meeting with the NRVT, our consultant and DOT to review the options the NRVT has developed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit these comments. Should you have any questions concerning any issues or topics discussed herein, please feel free to contact me at (860) 424-4110 or at kate@elsllc.net.

Respectfully yours,



Kate Throckmorton
Interim President, Board of Directors
Friends of the NRVT, Inc.

cc:

Congressman Jim Himes
CT State Senator Bob Duff
Harry Rilling, Mayor, City of Norwalk,
Jim Travers, City of Norwalk



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

August 25, 2023

Kevin F. Carifa, Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
Bureau of Policy and Planning
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT, 06131
comments@7-15norwalk.com

Re: State Project No. 102-358, Route 7 / Route 15 Interchange

Dear Mr. Carifa,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) offers the following comments regarding the Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for the Route 7 / Route 15 Interchange project in Norwalk.

Wetlands

The Department of Transportation's (DOT) EIE notes that alternative 21D could permanently impact approximately 3 acres of wetlands, approximately 120 linear feet (LF) of intermittent streams, and approximately 650 LF of perennial streams, while the preferred alternative 26 could permanently impact approximately 1.4 acres of wetlands, approximately 40 LF of intermittent streams, and approximately 410 LF of perennial streams. As noted in the Council's annual report, [*Environmental Quality in Connecticut*](#),¹ "wetlands serve many functions, one of them being their unique ability to store and sequester carbon", and wetlands "should be recognized as important to greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation strategies and incorporated into inland wetland protection efforts in Connecticut." The Council notes that the potential permanent impacts to wetlands in the proposed project area could impact the values and functions of wetlands identified within the proposed project area. The Council questions whether the EIE should also include a review and analysis of the potential impacts to 1) carbon sequestration and storage for the potential permanent impacts to wetlands, and 2) values and functions for the remaining nearby wetlands resulting from the potential permanent impacts to wetlands within the proposed project area.

The EIE notes that "impacts to wetlands would be mitigated per state and federal requirements" and that "any mitigation needs following those avoidance measures would be identified and agreed upon in conjunction with the appropriate regulatory agencies". The Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, Section 22a-1a-8 (f)(6)(E) states that a discussion of the potential environmental impact of the action should include "*mitigation measures to the action including: limiting the degree or magnitude of the action; rectifying the effects of such action by repairing, rehabilitating or restoring the impacted environment; reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations; and compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.*" Consequently, the Council recommends that the DOT prioritize avoidance during the project design for reducing potential permanent impacts to wetlands. If permanent impacts to wetlands are unavoidable, the Council recommends that the DOT explore restoration and enhancement of impaired wetlands within the proposed project area or along the Route 7 and Route 15 corridor as mitigation before exploring compensatory creation

of wetlands. In all circumstances, the Council recommends that the permanent loss of wetlands be addressed by restorative or compensatory measures at a ratio greater than 1:1 for the proposed mitigation to have a net benefit to the wetland system. Additionally, the Council questions if the potential permanent impacts to wetlands within the project area should be included in the review and analysis of “Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources”.

Noise

The Council received a complaint from a resident of Westport in May 2022 regarding noise generated by traffic travelling along Route 15 over bridge expansion joints in the Westport area. The EIE notes that because the noise level would exceed the noise abatement criteria (NAC) within the project area, evaluation of abatement strategies is required. In sections 3.4.3 and 7 it states that “CTDOT’s final recommendation regarding noise abatement would be made during the project’s final design and public involvement process”. However, in Tables 2.4.2 and E1.1.1, for both alternative 21D and the preferred alternative 26, the EIE states that “although the NAC is approached/exceeded in 1 location, initial analysis shows noise abatement is not considered reasonable.” Consequently, the Council questions how noise generated by traffic within the project area, including noise potentially generated by vehicles travelling over the expansion joints for the four new bridges and two existing historic bridges for the preferred alternative 26², would be mitigated in the final design for nearby receptors.

Stormwater

The EIE states in sections 3.8.3 and 7 that “the Project design would be in accordance with the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from CTDOT Separate Stormwater Discharge Systems (TS4) to the maximum extent practicable to mitigate any potential increases to current impairments (sedimentation/siltation) identified on the 303(d) list for the segment of the Norwalk River that traverses the Project area (ID CT7300-00_01)”. The EIE also states that the DOT will “identify specific stormwater management and monitoring practices during Project design, including practices to mitigate sedimentation or siltation to the Norwalk River”. The Council questions under what circumstances the DOT would not be able to meet the requirements of the General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater, what potential impacts could result from failing to meet the General Permit requirements, and how could the project design eliminate and not just mitigate sedimentation or siltation of the Norwalk River, potentially resulting from the proposed project.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council’s comments.

Sincerely,



Paul Aresta
Executive Director

¹ Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality, Environmental Quality in Connecticut, May 4, 2023; <https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/AR-22-Gold/2022-CEQ-Annual-Report-eBook/Land---Preserved-Land/Wetlands>

² The same question would apply for alternative 21D that would require the construction of eleven new bridges and the reconstruction of three existing bridges.



PO Box 7114
Wilton, CT 06897
norwalkriver.org

August 27, 2023

Re: Routes 7/15 Interchange Improvement Norwalk, Connecticut State Project No. 102-358
Federal Project No. 0015(133) Environmental Assessment/Draft Section 4(F) Evaluation and
Environmental Impact Evaluation

Dear Mr. Kevin Carifa, Transportation Planning Director at CTDOT:

I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association (NRWA) and its over 2500 members and participants in Norwalk, Wilton, Ridgefield, New Canaan, Redding, and Weston. NRWA works to protect and restore water quality and fish and wildlife habitats in the Norwalk River Watershed.

Thank you for the presentation at the public hearing. I write today to say that we disagree with the statement from the EA/EIE that “Permanent impacts to the Norwalk River are not expected” for the build alternatives for this project.

Permanent impacts to approximately 1.4 AC of wetlands, approximately 40 LF of intermittent streams, and approximately 410 LF of perennial streams, increased runoff and concentrated flows from additional impervious surfaces, and diminished riparian buffers as outlined in the EA/EIE **without question will result in permanent impacts to the water quality in the Norwalk River, Silvermine River, and Long Island Sound and to the wildlife habitat in the area.** Added to those permanent impacts will be increased sediment and potentially harmful chemicals during construction.

As a result, we ask that DOT plans include mitigation for these effects. This community requests a system be put in place to collect stormwater runoff from the ramps and bridges, like the system in place on Yankee Doodle bridge over the Norwalk River, for filtration. In addition, we ask that there be replacement of the destroyed wetlands with reconstructed wetlands like the ones the DOT put in along Route 7 in Wilton. Those reconstructed wetlands have been shown to support wildlife. Reconstructed wetlands would also likely help filter runoff and improve flood resilience. We request that the fill and grading placed into wetlands be certified

to be clean and without invasive plant seeds. In addition, on-going removal of invasives after the project should be included in the plan.

We also expect replacement of all trees removed and would like to see plans for that included as a mitigation measure. Since the replacement trees will be small, they will not meet the carbon reduction and stormwater filtration services provided by the older trees that would be removed, so we request replacement of trees **at a greater than one-for-one ratio.**

The EA/EIE states, essentially, that because development has already harmed wildlife habitat, more harming of wildlife habitat should be allowed without mitigation.

Both Alternatives 26 and 21D include work within developed areas north of Route 15 and within fragments of undeveloped forests south of the Parkway, including riparian areas associated with the Norwalk River. Some tree cutting and land disturbance is anticipated under either Build Alternative. The natural communities and habitats have been degraded and fragmented as a result of adjacent land uses including roadways, railways, and commercial developments as well as the continued spread of non-native invasive species. Therefore, minimal impacts on RTE species are anticipated for either alternative as a result of the Project.

The impairment of our river and urban forests is the result of death by a thousand cuts. Arguing that the landscape, wetlands, streams, and rivers are already ruined, so DOT should be able to ruin them further without mitigation perpetuates the problem and is not acceptable.

We have also have a few specific questions about language in the EA/EIE as follows:

The EA/EIE reads: *If in-water work is required during construction, temporary protections **may be installed** around resource areas during new ramp/bridge construction for both Alternatives 26 and 21D. Time of year restrictions (no unconfined in-stream work between April 1 and June 30) **may be required** as part of the permitting process for activities during construction to avoid and minimize impacts to anadromous fish runs in the Norwalk River.*

We request a language change to: *would be installed and would be required.* Decades of work by NRWA, Trout Unlimited, Harbor Watch, City of Norwalk, Save the Sound and others have gone into improving water quality and opening the Norwalk River to anadromous fish. It is imperative that every precaution be taken to protect the returning fish, including blueback herring (a Species of Special Concern in Connecticut), lamprey eel, and others known to be present in this part of the river since the removal of the Flock Process dam in 2018.

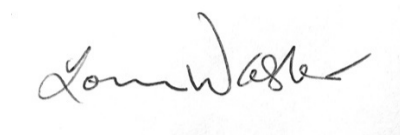
We appreciate that, “CTDOT would avoid and minimize wetland and watercourse impacts during design. **Any mitigation needs** following those avoidance measures would be identified and agreed upon in conjunction with the appropriate regulatory agencies, including the ACOE and CTDEEP.” But we request that since at least 1.4 acres of wetlands will be destroyed and filled and there will known new sources of runoff and concentrated flows to streams, wetlands

and watercourses, that the need for mitigation be recognized now and included in plans for the construction.

Without a commitment to significant mitigations that help restore tree canopy and protect water quality, NRWA is of the position that our community is better off with a no-build option. We also feel strongly that the plans should include off-road bike trails as part of the Norwalk River Valley Trail as it passes through this area.

Thank you for the chance to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louise Washer", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Louise Washer, President
Norwalk River Watershed Association

August 30, 2023

Mr. Kevin Carifa, Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131
Submitted via comments@7-15norwalk.com

**RE: Environmental Assessment / Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE)
for the Routes US-7 & CT-15 Interchange Project in Norwalk, CT**

Dear Mr. Carifa:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment upon the EA/EIE for this long-awaited project.

As the EA/EIE is an extensive document, we have reproduced certain sections of the EA/EIE (in italics) to call attention to specific concerns that we have, and to follow up with comments or questions as detailed (in regular type) below:

1. *Page 1.14, 1.4 OTHER ACTIONS AT THE PROJECT LOCATION There are two CTDOT actions (i.e. current projects) at the project location which are summarized below. CTDOT would look to incorporate improvements related to these actions during design.*
 - a) *Investigation and Identification of Methods to Improve Notification of Height Restrictions on the Merritt Parkway: Under direction of the Connecticut General Assembly under Section 13a-26a of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), CTDOT performed a study to investigate and identify methods to improve notification of height restrictions on Route 15. This study, completed in 2019, recommended several types of improvements aimed at keeping overheight vehicles off of Route 15.*
 - b) *Merritt Parkway (Route 15) Safety Improvements, Resurfacing, Enhancements and Bridge Improvements: This project involves roadway improvements, safety improvements, and aesthetic enhancements for a 6.5-mile segment of Route 15 in both directions from Route 124 in New Canaan to Newtown Turnpike in Westport. The northern section of this project (Project 0102-0368; Main Avenue in Norwalk to Newtown Turnpike in Westport) is in construction and is scheduled for completion in 2022. The southern section of this project (Project 0102- 0296; Main Avenue in Norwalk to Route 124 in New Canaan) is in design and construction is scheduled to begin in 2023. There are no other CTDOT actions (i.e., completed studies, pending projects) outside the scope of this EA/EIE that would reasonably be anticipated to affect the Project within the Project Site.*

WestCOG has reviewed the analysis of transportation operations and recommends that the Project provide for the incorporation of active traffic management technologies such as adaptive signal coordination, dynamically variable on- and/or off-ramp metering, and

variable messaging. Note that WestCOG intends to pursue the feasibility of a networked, dynamically variable flow control system on Route 15 through the USDOT SMART program. Part of what we propose includes potential detection of overheight/commercial vehicles and use of the adaptive management technology (whether at dedicated ramp meters or existing signals) to control flow on/off the Parkway. WestCOG suggests that the Preferred Alternative, at a minimum, include coordination of all signals off Parkway and, preferably, provide for current or future coordination with traffic flow on the Parkway itself. Should it not be feasible to deploy such technology at present, the provision of electric service, fiber, and/or conduit should be considered to allow for its future implementation.

- c) *Build Alternatives: Both Build Alternatives are projected to provide comparable improvements to traffic operations through reductions in deficient locations in the design year when compared to the No Build Alternative. With both Build Alternatives, a total of ten locations are projected to be deficient during the weekday morning peak hour. During the weekday evening peak hour, a total of eight locations are projected to be deficient with Alternative 26 and nine locations are projected to be deficient under Alternative 21D. Alternative 26 proposes to complete the missing movements using new signalized intersections (with turn lanes for some of the high-volume turning movements), in comparison to Alternative 21D which proposes to complete the missing movements at the Routes 7/15 interchange using free-flow connections. As such, Alternative 21D is projected to generally provide faster travel times for the missing interchange movements when compared to the No Build Alternative. In most cases, Alternative 26 is also projected to provide faster travel times for the missing interchange movements when compared to the No Build Alternative, albeit to a lesser extent. Both Build Alternatives propose to address safety concerns by reconfiguring the Main Avenue interchange by removing and redesigning the existing stop-controlled on-ramps from Main Avenue onto Route 15 which would provide standard acceleration and deceleration lanes, and by providing full access between Routes 7 and 15 at Interchange 39. Furthermore, the Main Avenue corridor would provide additional accommodation for pedestrians and bicyclists.*
- d) *Mitigation Measures: no significant adverse impacts have been identified for either Build Alternative. Both Build Alternatives provide comparable improvements to traffic operations and safety in the traffic study area. Therefore, no mitigation is required.*

Regarding the addition of traffic signals to US-7: WestCOG is concerned this could produce an outcome similar to Connecticut Route 9 in Middletown, where the design of the highway is inconsistent with traffic signals, confounding driver expectations, and produces backups that regularly stretch for miles. (Note that, while the addition of traffic signals is being proposed here, the reverse is being proposed for Route 9 in Middletown.)

From a regional traffic movement perspective, free-flowing connections in all directions between US-7 and Route 15 (Alternative 21D) are preferable. Given concerns about intersection capacity, congestion, and back-ups, should Alternative 26 advance, WestCOG suggests maintaining as many movements as free-flow as is possible, especially movements from Route 15 to US-7. The illustrations for Alternative 26 appear to redirect certain movements that currently are made by freeway-to-freeway ramps through

intersections (whether directly through a light or via a slip lane). Given more favorable volume-to-capacity ratios on Route 7 than Route 15, designs that maintain throughput of vehicles from Route 15 onto US-7 may be important in preventing/reducing back-ups onto Route 15.

2. *p. 3-37: Metro-North Bridge: The Metro-North Bridge, a rigid-frame concrete bridge that carries the Merritt Parkway over the Danbury Branch, is a contributing resource to the Merritt Parkway NRHP historic district. At present, the bridge is readily visible from Glover Avenue. As currently planned, both Build Alternatives would retain the bridge but would result in an indirect adverse effect as construction of a new ramp would obscure the bridge from view from Glover Avenue, diminishing its integrity of setting.*

CTDOT should ensure in the EA/EIE (and in the design process to follow) that the new bridges and other structures to be constructed as part Project will not impact the current operations of, or future use of, the MNCW operations on the Danbury Branch, particularly for the restoration of electric and second track service. This should apply to any new structures above or adjacent to the Branch and to the Merritt 7 station, which is being upgraded now. In addition, the Project should not contribute to any loss of capacity at the Merritt 7 station. Bear in mind that the improvement of the Danbury Branch and upgrading of passenger rail service on the Branch is an integral part of the South Western Region MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

We have two additional questions and one comment:

3. Adequacy of design: Does the analysis account for changes in larger-scale traffic patterns? Improved connections between US-7 and Route 15 may result in a) substantial traffic diversion from I-95 and b) an overall increase in vehicle trips. The difficulty associated with connecting between Route 15 and US-7 may limit the number of drivers that make these movements; drivers instead may use I-95. It is WestCOG's expectation that driver behavior (in part guided by GPS systems that minimize total travel time and route complexity) will change substantially following the opening of a better connection between US-7 and Route 15. While this may ease congestion somewhat on I-95, it may result in greater-than-anticipated vehicle volumes in the Project Area, if the analysis did not account for this eventuality.

Furthermore, insofar as the project improves the ability to drive through the Project Area, it may stimulate more drivers to make such a trip at peak hour or to make such a trip at all. Transportation demand is generally elastic with respect to price, especially over the long-term, so that when the cost of traveling falls, the quantity of traveling rises. While this is not a negative – people generally do not travel for the sake of traveling, but rather to improve their socioeconomic opportunities – it is not clear that the analysis accounts for the potential for the Project to enable additional trips and the impact of those trips on the infrastructure in question. WestCOG suggests that the analysis, if it has not already done so, model diversions from I-95 and any additional “induced demand.”

4. Extensibility: will the Preferred Alternative be designed to allow for future modification in the event that traffic conditions warrant it? WestCOG has concerns regarding the performance of

the traffic signals proposed. The only freeway with traffic signals in Connecticut, Route 9, regularly experiences multi-mile back-ups. WestCOG suggests that, in addition to directly incorporating or providing for the future use of active traffic management technologies and maintaining existing free-flow movements, Alternative 26, where possible, avoid design choices that could increase the cost or decrease the feasibility of making additional improvements, such as grade separation, should it become necessary.

5. Multimodal transportation: WestCOG underscores the importance of pedestrian and bicycle connections in the Project Area, particularly for the continued development of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT). At the public hearing on 8/16/23, several of the commenters advocated for an NRVT design through the Project Area that encourages safe walking and bicycling in equal measure to the effort being focused on motor vehicle travel through the area. In design, the NRVT should not only be safe, but should connect well with the adjacent land uses and have sufficient design capacity to function as a regional facility.

We look forward to consideration of these points in the finalization of the EA/EIE.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Francis Pickering". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "F" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director



31 August 2023

Kevin Carifa
Transportation Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, Connecticut 06131
Via email, comments@7-15norwalk.com

Subject: Joint Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation, Merritt Parkway/Route 7 interchange, Norwalk, Connecticut

Dear Mr Carifa:

On behalf of the Trustees, members, and staff of Preservation Connecticut, I am pleased to offer these comments on the draft Joint Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Evaluation (EZ/EIE) for the Merritt Parkway-Route 7 interchange in Norwalk.

As the statewide nonprofit dedicated to the preservation, protection and promotion of Connecticut's historic places, Preservation Connecticut (formerly the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation) has been an advocate for the Merritt Parkway for more than three decades, starting with writing the National Register nomination for the Parkway in 1991.

Preservation Connecticut has followed the development of this project for many years. While we still are not entirely convinced that all new construction elements of the project are truly necessary, we applaud the care with which the Department of Transportation has carried out the planning for this most recent version of the interchange.

The department's preferred alternative, Alternative 26, is a vast improvement over previous schemes for the interchange. It represents a reasonable and realistic plan for improving connections between the Parkway, Route 7, and Main Avenue. It promises needed safety improvements for automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians. And, it offers an opportunity to improve the Parkway landscape in the work area by blending new work into the historic landscape as well as healing the damage done to the Parkway in the construction of Route 7. **Preservation Connecticut supports the selection of Alternative 26.**

The draft EA/EIE document for the most part lays out clearly the reasons for selecting Alternative 26, its probable effects on historic resources, and the Department's plans to minimize or mitigate harmful effects. Its discussion of the Parkway's landscape character—perhaps the most crucial element of its historic character—faithfully follows discussions with knowledgeable participants in the project advisory committee. For instance, the draft document:

- recognizes the crucial distinction between the experience of driving *through* a park-like landscape and that of driving *past* one (page 3.36);
- notes that “Major areas of alteration and past construction, visible today, present opportunities for landscape rehabilitation” (page 3.54); and
- rightly concludes that “Alternative 26’s compact nature provides the greatest opportunity to preserve and enhance natural features and systems, integrate the roadway into a park-like setting with appropriate topography and planting clusters, reduce maintenance, and design access and egress ramps as Parkway amenities” (page 3.60).

The only serious shortcoming of the draft document is a lack of clarity in identifying historic resources in some places. This results from the decision to split the discussion of historic resources among three different categories:

- historic and archaeological resources, which deals primarily with built resources such as houses and bridges;
- visual impacts, which focuses on overall character and roadway configuration; and
- scenic byway, focusing on the Parkway landscape.

For instance, the chart that summarizes impacts of the project (Table 1.3.1) lists removal and replacement of historic/scenic roadway elements and reconfiguring of existing roadway geometry under Visual Impact Assessment; similarly, removal and replacement of scenic landscape elements is listed under Merritt Parkway Landscape (Scenic Byway). In both cases, impacts are categorized as visual or scenic, and not *historic* elements. These omissions are repeated in Table 2.4.2, a summary of potential benefits and impacts of the build and no-build alternatives.

Two things get lost, or at least downplayed, in this divided approach:

- Discussing elements such as roadway configuration and the designed landscape under visual impact or scenic byway (a designation that can include natural, as well as cultural scenery) downplays their historic, as opposed to merely visual or scenic, significance.
- The sense of the Merritt Parkway as a unified design comprising roadways, bridges and other resources within an encompassing designed landscape also is lost. This totality is in fact what accounts for the Parkway’s historic significance.

Admittedly, the historic character of these features is a bit more explicitly stated in the chapters on visual impacts and scenic byways that follow, but even there it is easily lost. See, for instance, the visual impact chapter, where a single sentence (pages 3.42-3.43) says that the Parkway’s visual character contributes to its listing on the National Register. Unfortunately, the use of abbreviations, the placement of the sentence over a page break and just above an illustration, and the lack of further discussion all minimize the impact of this statement.

Preservation Connecticut recommends that the EA/EIE document be revised to clarify the potential impacts and benefits of the project on the Parkway’s historic character. This will not be a major revision; rather it requires adding some more explicit and substantive references to the historic nature of roadway and landscape resources to the tables and chapters cited above, and providing an introductory section that forcefully makes the point of the Parkway’s significance as a unified historic design.

As the draft document notes, the preferred alternative is of course only a schematic plan. The degree to which its goals of protecting and enhancing the historic character of the Merritt Parkway are met will be determined as an actual design for the project is worked out. The Department must remain steadfast in its pursuit of the goals and commitments laid out in the EA/EIE document.

Preservation Connecticut is proud to play a role in the preservation of the Merritt Parkway and we remain committed to continuing to advocate for and assist in the Parkway's preservation.

Very truly yours,



Christopher Wigren
Deputy Director

cc:
Jonathan Kinney, State Historic Preservation Officer
Wes Haynes, Merritt Parkway Conservancy
Peter Viteretto, Connecticut ASLA

September 18, 2023

Mr. Kevin Carifa
Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131
(via email only to Kevin.Carifa@ct.gov)

Subject: Route 7/15 Interchange Improvement Project Environmental Documentation
Norwalk, Connecticut
State Project No. 102-358, Federal Project No. 0015(133)

Dear Mr. Carifa,

The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CT SHPO) has reviewed the environmental documentation prepared for the referenced project and titled *Environmental Assessment/Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation; CEPA Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE)*. We understand that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has integrated its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act with Section 106, the implementing regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act, to streamline the compliance process. The project will be implemented by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) and the completed Environmental Assessment is recognized as meeting the reporting requirements of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act. CT DOT and FHWA initiated consultation with CT SHPO during late 2017. Since that time, CT SHPO has engaged in multiple consultation meetings with CT DOT, FHWA, its consultants, and other interested parties.

CT SHPO understands the purpose and need for improving the linkages, mobility, and safety of the Route 7 and Route 15 interchange, as described in the EA/EIE. Our office also understands that the No Build Alternative cannot meet the purpose and need of the project. During the evaluation of a range of build alternatives, Alternatives 21D and 26 emerged as the best options, with Alternative 26 performing slightly better for meeting the project's purpose and need, but both would impact significant cultural resources. In evaluating the totality of environmental harm, Alternative 26 had fewer impacts to wetlands and wildlife habitats. In addition, the costs of constructing Alternative 26 were substantially less than Alternative 21D.

CT SHPO reviewed both the Visual Impact Assessment report and the Phase I and II Cultural Resources Survey Report prepared for Stantec by Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. as part of the ongoing consultation process. These reports are summarized in the EA/EIE and SHPO has concurred with their findings.

A total of three archaeological sites (Sites 103-57, 103-58/60, and 103-61/62) were identified and evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion D as a result of the cultural resources survey. These sites date from the Middle Archaic through Woodland periods and contained artifacts typically associated with repeated short-term occupations. All three sites would be preserved in place as part of Alternative 21D, but two sites (Sites 103-57 and 103-58/60) would be at least partially lost as part of Alternative 26.

The Merritt Parkway Historic District was listed on the NRHP in 1991 under Criteria A and C. In addition to the roadway and landscape features that contribute to the historic district, three contributing bridges (Metro-North Railroad Bridge, Norwalk River Bridge, and Main Avenue Bridge) would be impacted by


either build alternative. While most of the impacts consist of indirect effects, the Main Avenue Bridge would be replaced. In addition, the Glover Avenue Bridge, determined eligible for listing on the NRHP, also would be replaced as part of Alternatives 21D and 26. The difference between the alternatives is in a magnitude of effect. While both result in the loss of historic resources, Alternative 26 retains a greater integrity of setting and feeling for the Merritt Parkway and provides less of an interruption to the parkway's landscape characteristics.

The cornerstone of the Section 106 process is consultation to either avoid, minimize, or mitigate historic loss. For this project, no suitable solutions could be identified to meet the project needs while avoiding an adverse effect to historic properties. Both build alternatives have direct and indirect effects on historic properties listed and eligible for listing in the NRHP. Although Alternative 26 would result in the loss of two archaeological sites, its visual impact on the Merritt Parkway is significantly less and is in keeping with the character of this historic property. While CT SHPO regrets the loss of the two archaeological sites, we offer no objection to identifying Alternative 26 as the Preferred Alternative. Our office is hopeful that as construction plans emerge, portions of these sites may be further avoided by construction.

To resolve the adverse effects to historic properties related to the construction of Alternative 26, CT SHPO requested the preparation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with stipulations to compensate for both the direct loss and indirect effects. After several meetings with consulting and interested parties, an acceptable collection of stipulations were codified into a MOA signed by CT SHPO earlier this year titled *Memorandum of Agreement Between the Federal Highway Administration, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation Regarding the Route 7/Route 15 (Merritt Parkway) Interchange Project Norwalk, Connecticut*. The stipulations include, but are not limited to project design review opportunities, written and photo-documentation, and an archaeological data recovery and treatment plan that would preserve the research potential of the impacted sites. It is SHPO's opinion that this document resolves all adverse effects.

This office appreciates the opportunity to review and comment upon this project and we look forward to additional consultation as the stipulations of the MOA are implemented. These comments are provided in accordance with the National Environmental Policy, the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. For any questions or additional information, please contact me at information, please contact Catherine Labadia, Environmental Reviewer and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, at (860) 500-2329 or catherine.labadia@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan Kinney".

Jonathan Kinney
State Historic Preservation Officer



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION I
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE SUITE 100
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02109-3912

August 31, 2023

Kevin Carifa
Transportation Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131

RE: Environmental Assessment for the Route 7/15 Interchange Project in Norwalk, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Carifa:

We are writing in response to the July 18, 2023 Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) publication of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Route 7/15 Interchange Project in Norwalk, Connecticut. We submit the following response to the EA in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The project includes proposed improvements at the Route 7 and Merritt Parkway (Route 15) interchange and improvements to connections with local roads in Norwalk, Connecticut. According to the EA, “[t]he principal elements of the Project are designed to provide a full directional interchange with direct access between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway and to improve traffic operations and safety at the Merritt Parkway and Main Avenue interchange as well as along Main Avenue and Glover Avenue in the vicinity of the interchange.”

We reviewed the EA and provide the following comments related to environmental justice, wetland impacts, and stormwater management.

Environmental Justice

Section 3.16 and Appendix M of the Environmental Assessment adequately assess the potential environmental justice impacts of the proposed project in accordance with relevant Executive Orders and guidance.

Building on CTDOT’s commitment to providing timely project updates to neighborhoods and businesses within the study area to help residents and business owners prepare for short and long-term impacts, EPA recommends that CTDOT and FHWA consider the following additional activities and practices:

- Strive to create community outreach products are written in plain language that can be understood by all affected community members. Readability should not exceed 7th to 8th grade level, which is considered the lower end of the estimated average reading level of the U.S. population.
- Continue to offer technical assistance to help community members better understand the proposed action and its impacts.
- Continue to provide appropriate translation and interpretive services to linguistically isolated populations who live and work in the study area to ensure meaningful engagement. Future public meetings should be accessible to all and scheduled at times that accommodate the greatest number of participants.
- Provide continuous outreach to residents and businesses impacted by temporary construction activities, potential changes in traffic patterns and access, and short-term nuisance dust and noise. Providing updates through local media, social media, the project website, the City of Norwalk, and neighborhood associations will help ensure that information reaches the greatest number of stakeholders.

Wetland Impacts

We support the identification of Alternative 26 as the preferred alternative due to reduced potential for impacts to wetland resources. In addition, Alternative 26 provides opportunities for further avoidance and minimization of impacts through careful design of infrastructure at the wetland and watercourse crossings. CTDOT should take this opportunity to develop project designs that minimize direct and secondary impacts to aquatic resources, improve hydraulic conditions, reduce stormwater impacts, and provide long-term resiliency in light of projected climate conditions and the potential for more frequent storms and associated stormwater flows. Final project designs will need to satisfy requirements of the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

Wetland Mitigation

Development of a suitable compensatory mitigation plan will be required for either of the two build alternatives, but the mitigation obligation will be greatly reduced for Alternative 26. The compensatory mitigation plan will need to satisfy federal mitigation requirements as promulgated in the 2008 Mitigation Rule (40 CFR Part 230). The federal preference for compensatory mitigation begins with credits from mitigation banks, followed by in-lieu fee programs, and finally with permittee responsible mitigation. If permittee responsible mitigation is planned to meet state requirements, activity credits that meet the requirements of the 2008 Mitigation Rule will be recognized in calculation of any remaining federal mitigation obligation.

Stormwater

Both Alternative 26 (the preferred alternative) and 21D include the creation of new impervious surfaces. Increased impervious surfaces lead to increased stormwater discharges and increased discharges of pollutants (total phosphorus, total nitrogen, sediment, bacteria, and others) to wetland areas and waterbodies. CTDOT is subject to the General Permit for the Discharge of

Stormwater from Department of Transportation Separate Storm Sewer Systems (TS4 General Permit) and the proposed project discharges to waterbodies designated as impaired on the Connecticut Integrated Water Quality Report. Because the project will result in an increased discharge, we note that CTDOT must demonstrate a no net increase in pollutant loading by the DOT MS4 of the pollutant(s) for which the waterbody is impaired, consistent with Section 3(b)(7) of the TS4 General Permit.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the EA for the proposed interchange improvements. We look forward to the opportunity to review responses to our comments in the final EA. Please contact me if you have any questions at 617-918-1025 or timmermann.timothy@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Timothy Timmermann
Director, Office of Environmental Review

Routes 7 & 15 Interchange Project

State Project 0102-0358

CEPA Record of Decision

Appendix F

Public Hearing Transcript

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7 PUBLIC HEARING
8 IN RE: ROUTE 7/15 PROJECT
9

10 AUGUST 16, 2023

11 7:00 P.M.

12 NORWALK CITY HALL
13 125 EAST AVENUE
14 NORWALK, CT
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 COURT REPORTER: DEBRA A. CHASSE
25 LICENSE NO. 00055

1 MR. PATEL: Good evening. My name
2 is Neil Patel. I'm with the Department of
3 Transportation's highway design, major highways unit.
4 Welcome to the public hearing for state project
5 102-358, the Route 7 and 15 interchange improvement.
6 This hearing is being held as a result of the document
7 that was recently published by the Department and
8 Federal Highway Administration. That document is the
9 environmental assessment, environmental impact
10 evaluation and draft Section 4F evaluation. The
11 wording, we'll get into exactly what that means in a
12 little bit.

13 Before I get started, I just want to
14 kind of recognize some of the folks on our team here
15 and, I'll just kind of do a very quick general
16 overview. From the department, we've got folks from
17 our highway design unit over here. Our division chief
18 is also here in the back. From the Bureau of Policy
19 and Planning, our bureau chief is here. And we've got
20 Kevin and Mike McMillan also here from environmental
21 planning. Like I said, I'm going to keep it general
22 here. We also have from FHWA Connecticut division
23 folks from that office over here also. Our consultant
24 is -- our primary consultant is Stantec, and they'll be
25 doing the presentation today. FHI Studios is also here

1 and is responsible for some of the public outreach and
2 public involvement.

3 I do want to just welcome and thank
4 some of the PAC members that we see here. They've been
5 pretty key in the response for the process, so thank
6 you for coming and thank you for all the help
7 throughout the years and up to this point.

8 So just a little bit on the agenda.
9 I'm going to turn it over here to Amy Stula. She's
10 going to be the moderator for the hearing. She'll go
11 through the format and then we'll get into a little bit
12 of the overview of the document in terms of what the
13 document is, why are we here and why did we do it.
14 We'll talk about the project overview, a little bit
15 about the purpose and need of the project and get into
16 how we screened the alternatives and then really get
17 into the meat of what was that environmental review in
18 terms of what resources did we look at to come to the
19 conclusions that we did in the document. And then
20 we'll open it up for formal commentary. I just want to
21 remind everyone that we'll also be here afterwards to
22 answer any questions. With that, I'm going to turn it
23 over to Amy.

24 MS. STULA: Thank you. Good
25 evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Amy Stula.

1 I'm the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and I
2 will serve as the moderator for tonight's public
3 hearing. We are meeting with you this evening in order
4 to discuss the environmental assessment, environmental
5 impact evaluation for project 102-358, the Route 7/15
6 Norwalk project.

7 Our goal tonight for this public
8 hearing is for sole opportunity for public
9 participation in the environmental impact evaluation
10 that was prepared for this project. The environmental
11 assessment, environmental impact evaluation is part of
12 the environmental documentation process required by the
13 National Environmental Policy Act, which is also known
14 NEPA, and Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, CEPA.

15 We encourage open discussions of any
16 views and comments you, the community, may have with
17 regards to this project.

18 I'd like to introduce the various
19 individuals who are here this evening and will be
20 presenting; Mr. John Erbele and Mr. Gary Sorge.

21 This public hearing is being held in
22 accordance with the Connecticut Department of
23 Transportations policy on public involvement, public
24 hearings and in accordance to the latest version of the
25 Public Environmental Guidance Manual. Documents

1 related to this project are available for public
2 inspection and copying at the Connecticut Department of
3 Transportation, Norwalk Public Library, the Connecticut
4 State Library, Norwalk City Hall, FHWA Connecticut
5 office, and the Westcott offices.

6 I will now discuss the format for
7 tonight's hearing, and then I will turn the podium over
8 to our presenters. I will then moderate the hearing as
9 we listen to your comments and questions. For your
10 information, our presentation should take approximately
11 30 to 40 minutes to complete. My intent is to conduct
12 a fair and orderly hearing tonight by following a
13 particular format. We would appreciate your patience
14 during my remarks, as well as the presentation to
15 follow. Sorry. They have slides for me. Thank you.

16 I'll jump right back in. We would
17 appreciate your patience during my remarks, as well as
18 the presentation to follow by holding your remarks and
19 comments until this portion of the hearing has been
20 completed. We will be happy to remain here this
21 evening until everyone has had a reasonable opportunity
22 to speak. Experience has shown that audible recordings
23 can only be made if the person making the statement
24 uses the microphone connected to the recording
25 equipment. The microphone has been set up, and if you

1 wish to make a statement, please come to the microphone
2 after I read your name from the signup sheet that was
3 at the table when you all walked in. Please introduce
4 yourself, and if you're representing an organization,
5 please give its name as well. If you didn't sign up to
6 speak, but a question comes to mind, feel free to raise
7 your hand and I'll be happy to recognize you after I go
8 through the speaker signup sheet. For those
9 individuals who have prepared a statement, you may read
10 it into the recording if you so desire. However, if
11 the statement is lengthy, you are asked to offer a
12 written copy of the statement for the record and give a
13 brief summary of its contents. Such attachments to the
14 record can carry as much weight as a transcribed verbal
15 testimony we receive here tonight when the transcript
16 is reviewed. If you wish to speak this evening, we
17 have a signup sheet at the entrance to the room. There
18 is a 3-minute limit on all first time speakers. There
19 will be no yielding your time to other speakers. Your
20 time is for your comments. If after all the first time
21 speakers have finished, anyone who would like the
22 opportunity to speak again, a reasonable amount of time
23 will be allotted for this purpose. Anyone who wishes
24 to present written comments for the public hearing
25 records should give them to me before the end of

1 tonight's meeting. As a result of information that you
2 might learn at tonight's hearing, you may wish to make
3 additional comments on the project. Written statements
4 or exhibits may be mailed or delivered to the attention
5 of Mr. Kevin Carifa. I believe it was also in your
6 handouts. The deadline for receipt of comments on this
7 proposal is August 31st. Written statements or
8 exhibits must be postmarked by this date and must be
9 reproducible in black and white and not larger than 8
10 and a half by 11-inch paper. This information will be
11 made part of the public hearing record and will be
12 considered in the same regard as oral statements.

13 Your civil rights. No person shall
14 on the basis of race, color, or national origin be
15 excluded from participation or subject to
16 discrimination in the development of this project. The
17 notice to public is presented here in front of you in
18 English and in Spanish. For more information, you may
19 reach out to the e-mail addresses, the phone numbers,
20 and addresses listed for the Connecticut DOT civil
21 rights program, Federal Transit Authority, and the
22 Federal Highway Administration. There is also a QR
23 link to our surveyor.

24 At this point, I will now turn the
25 podium over to Mr. John Eberle, project manager.

1 MR. EBERLE: Good evening. Good
2 turnout. It looks good to me. So, as Amy indicated,
3 I'm going to talk a little bit about the core of this
4 project, the EA/EIE, and I'll go through those in a
5 minute but, before I do, I want to kind of step back
6 and talk a little bit about what Neil said, why we're
7 here. I think you have to understand the process that
8 we fall under.

9 So this project falls under actually
10 two acts, the NEPA, the National Environmental Policy
11 Act, and the CEPA, Connecticut Environmental Policy
12 Act, and you'll hear NEPA and CEPA used a lot tonight,
13 so this kind of gives you the definition.

14 NEPA is used where projects require
15 a federal action. Okay? We fall under that. We
16 absolutely need federal action on this, and that is the
17 environmental assessment portion of what the document
18 is. Okay? For Connecticut and for state projects,
19 it's an environmental impact evaluation. So this
20 actually falls under both and so it's a joint document;
21 EA/EIE, so that's what you're seeing here. It's one
22 document that addresses both requirements; okay?

23 So that kind of steps back to why
24 we're here. So what is the environmental assessment,
25 what is an EA/EIE have to show, have to look at? Well,

1 the first thing is to find purpose and need. Okay?
2 You'll see that in the documents if you go on-line or
3 take a look at the hard copy. Description of affected
4 area is in the document. Existing proposed conditions
5 and analysis of alternatives. I'm going to talk a
6 little bit about those coming up in a few minutes.
7 Ultimately, it leads to the preferred alternative,
8 recommendation for the preferred alternative. We
9 assess the impacts of both alternatives on
10 environmental resources, and I'm going to talk a little
11 bit about that. Mitigation is important because there
12 are impacts that have to be mitigates as part of this
13 project, so we discuss those in the document, and last,
14 but not least, Section 4F of the Department of
15 Transportation 1966, which is a wonky way of talking
16 about that. So because we have historic properties, 4F
17 comes into play if you have public parks, recreational
18 areas, wildlife refuges, and historic properties. We
19 don't have the first three, so we don't have to worry
20 about that, but we do have historic property, and I'm
21 going to show you and talk to you about what those are
22 and what is going to be done with those and then,
23 obviously, there will be mitigation.

24 Now, an action is only allowed if no
25 feasible and prudent alternative exists, and this

1 includes all possible means to minimize impact. That's
2 the mitigation that I'll reference a little bit later,
3 or the use will have a de minimis impact on the
4 resource.

5 So I'll talk a little bit about
6 that. We have identified the Section 4F impacts, and
7 that is in the document as well. So everyone should be
8 looking at that. And I already said kind of mitigation
9 and minimization of impact is an important part of the
10 document itself.

11 Project Advisory Committee, and we
12 have a few here and we thank them, again, for their
13 long, long service. But I thought it was important
14 before I go on to have you understand what the PAC is
15 and what their role is. We did not just do the
16 environmental reviews and alternative screening in a
17 vacuum. We had a PAC. That PAC, Project Advisory
18 Committee is made up, and I'll show you the makeup in a
19 minute. They basically help the project team go
20 through the project development phase. They serve as
21 advisory to us. We don't know the local roadways like
22 local people do, so that is invaluable to us to
23 understand. They provide that local insight, they talk
24 to their neighbors, they get other input from folks in
25 the neighborhood. They serve us at length to the

1 community. That's very important for a project like
2 this. They provide input and they have provided input
3 on the key issues. Public need statement, they did a
4 great job with that; the alternative screening -- and
5 the alternative screening, and I'll talk about that, as
6 well. This PAC has been meeting since 2016, so it's
7 been a long time. They've stayed with us all the way.
8 Unfortunately, we did have something called Covid, so a
9 little pandemic kind of interrupted some of the flow,
10 but they stood with us, and they did a great job in
11 helping us get to the point where we are today. Don't
12 worry, I'm not going to go through every member here.

13 Suffice it to say that the
14 membership of the PAC is made up of a really diverse
15 group; business owners, environmentalists, bike and
16 folks like that, so we really go a wealth of different
17 opinions as we kind of marched on. Again, a very
18 diverse group.

19 So the NEPA CEPA process, and I
20 promise I'm going to get to a point where I'm actually
21 talking about the project. We think it's also
22 important to know where we've been. This may have been
23 one of the first slides we ever showed the PAC, just so
24 they could try to understand what the process was.

25 So six years ago, five years ago, we

1 started the NEPA CEPA reviews and process. That
2 started with developing the purpose and need, and the
3 project initiation went into a project scoping meeting,
4 which, hopefully, many of you have attended and that
5 was, again, years ago. That kind of set the sail of
6 where we were heading. We refined the project purpose
7 and need.

8 Ultimately, we went through
9 alternatives, and I'll show you a number of those, and
10 we find ourselves here after developing those
11 alternatives and starting the impact analysis of
12 preparing the document that we published and on-line
13 and at the library.

14 So tonight is actually the public
15 hearing. And that really is really specifically on the
16 environmental documentation that has been published,
17 and that's what you'll hear a lot tonight and the
18 questions that we get.

19 So someone asked me earlier where do
20 we go from here. Where we go from here is we get
21 comments. That's really the most important thing about
22 tonight, the commentary. I think it ends on the 31st.
23 It's going to be really important that we get all your
24 comments, and then we look at them. We look at the
25 documents and we try to understand what your insights

1 are, what your questions are and look at that.
2 Ultimately, we hope this year that we'll go toward the
3 record of a decision so we have the findings and we
4 know whether we can go forward with what we've got here
5 for an alternative. Once that is done, then we
6 actually turn our attention to final design and,
7 ultimately, construction and that's out a few years.
8 It's going to take a couple of years of design and
9 things like that.

10 The one thing that I want people to
11 leave this with, because I had some conversations on
12 this. Tonight is not the last time you'll have a
13 chance to comment on this project. This project
14 doesn't go underground and then it pops up when it's
15 being constructed. There's a lot of design work that
16 has to happen, there's a lot of input that we still
17 need from stakeholders. Even the PAC, although I'd
18 like to dismiss you and tell you you're all done, but
19 you're not all done. There's still years to go. But
20 at various stages, as the design progresses, we're
21 going to be looking for input to the actual design. So
22 keep that in mind, this is not your final bite at the
23 apple, as it were.

24 Project overview. You saw the
25 purpose and need is in the back, it's in the document.

1 I just want to run through it so everyone understands,
2 again, what the projects purpose need is. No. 1, it's
3 improving the roadway system linkage between Route 7
4 and Route 15 at interchange 39. That's a key element.
5 Improving mobility for vehicles at both Route 15
6 intersections and the Main Avenue intersection, so both
7 39 and 40.

8 This next one is very important.
9 This is where the PAC is very helpful to us, because
10 there was the consensus in the PAC that mobility for
11 all users had to be part of the purpose and need. And
12 that's where we came up with No. 3, improving the
13 mobility for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists along
14 the immediate adjacent local roadway network; Main
15 Avenue, Creeping Hemlock, Glover Avenue, and you'll
16 see, we'll talk a little bit about that, and then,
17 obviously, improving safety at the interchanges is one
18 of the key purposes of the project.

19 So the needs of the project
20 basically broke down into three main categories; the
21 roadway system linkage that I talked about, safety,
22 addressing the substandard acceleration deceleration,
23 the sight lines, the geometry of those interchanges.
24 That's one of the -- and, again, the mobility,
25 providing local roadway improvements and bicycle path

1 improvements in the area. Obviously, as we go forward
2 in the design, we'll be addressing the ADA issues that
3 are currently out there.

4 So this is kind of it in a nutshell.
5 This is a graphic that we've shared for a long time,
6 many times. Some of the PAC members are probably tired
7 of seeing it. This kind of gets to the connections and
8 that need very clearly. What you're seeing in green
9 are the current connections between the Merritt
10 Parkway, and the Merritt Parkway runs this way, Route 7
11 here, Main Avenue here. 40 and 39.

12 So what you see in green are the
13 current connections that you can make today. So if
14 you're on Main Avenue, you can make the connection to
15 Main Avenue, Main Avenue can make the full connection
16 going northbound, southbound on the Merritt Parkway.

17 The issue comes in on what you see
18 in red because those are the connections that you do
19 not -- you cannot make today. So if you're going
20 southbound on the Merritt Parkway and you try to get
21 onto Route 7, you're not getting that direct
22 connections. You're getting off at Main Avenue, you're
23 taking local roads to make your way over to Route 7.
24 So that's really kind of the critical thing that we're
25 trying to resolve with this project.

1 The other thing, and I had a number
2 of conversations with folks, crashes. This should not
3 come as a surprise to a lot of folks who know this
4 area. The sheer volume of crash history in these two
5 interchanges is pretty startling. What you see in
6 purple, that's our area. Over 300 crashes in a half
7 mile segment. Nothing else is maybe a little over 200,
8 240. So this speaks volumes about why we're trying to
9 do this project.

10 Project alternatives. So this is,
11 again, the very key aspect of this project. We know
12 why we're here, we know what the purpose and needs of
13 the project is. Well, how are we going to try to fix
14 it, what are the alternatives that we're going to come
15 up with. This is a big view of how we proceeded with
16 alternatives, and I'm going to talk a little more about
17 the number of alternatives.

18 So at the beginning we have a lot of
19 alternatives; maybe some of them work, maybe some of
20 them don't. We don't know. But we develop them with
21 the hope that it will fix certain aspects of purpose
22 and need. Ultimately, over time, and this is where the
23 PAC came in. We actually had two levels of screening,
24 as it were, so we screened the first number down to a
25 reasonable number. Ultimately, we ended up with the

1 final alternatives that you see now in the back and in
2 the document itself. So we went from -- I'll steal my
3 own thunder. We started with 20 plus, and that 20 plus
4 is actually 28, so I think we gipped ourselves on this
5 a little bit. Of those 28 -- it's important to note
6 that this project has been around for a long time. You
7 know, it's decades. So we're just the new kids on the
8 block trying to do this. When this phase of the
9 project in 2016 started up, there was thought that we
10 could just go forward with the consensus pick
11 alternatives that we developed years ago, maybe come up
12 some with other alternatives and go forward, but the
13 Department made the decision that we really wanted to
14 be transparent here. So what our charge was was to go
15 back, go back to 2000, late 1990s when there were
16 alternates on maps. We took everything and we put it
17 into the mix and screened it so that we didn't --
18 heaven forbid we left an alternative off the table that
19 would have worked, and we just didn't look at it.

20 So we started at 28. That became
21 21D and 26. The other important part of this is that
22 the two alternatives there are build alternatives. We
23 are required to look at no build and no actions
24 alternatives. We have to compare it against that at a
25 benchmark to measure the environmental impact of the

1 build alternative. So when you look at the document,
2 when you read the document, I may talk about two
3 alternatives. Any time I say two alternatives just put
4 in build there. There's really three. We're looking
5 at what happens if we don't do anything. You'll see
6 some of the ramifications of that.

7 So just real quickly wanted to kind
8 of look at this. In the back, we have these up there.
9 I want to quickly go through what are the alternatives
10 that we're actually looking at. So this is the no
11 build alternative. I'll define the no build
12 alternative a little bit more in a minute. You have
13 Route 7 here, Merritt Parkway, Main Avenue, this way
14 there's a Stop & Shop, there's the railroad station
15 there.

16 So the no build is basically doing
17 no major improvements to this and just letting it go.
18 Sure, maintenance, and things like that, but no basic
19 improvements.

20 Alternate 21D. I'm going to show
21 you a movement on each of these so that you can kind of
22 get a sense. I'm not going to go through every
23 movement, because we'd be here for an awful long time.
24 What the takeaway on this is it's a fairly normal
25 interchange, normal free flow ramp interchange, that

1 you see on a lot of interchanges up through America.
2 I'm just going to, just to orientate you, same thing,
3 Route 7, Merritt Parkway, Main Avenue. Okay? So you
4 have that. Now, so I talked earlier about
5 southbound -- a vehicle traveling southbound on the
6 Merritt Parkway cannot get onto Route 7 directly
7 without going off road. In this alternative, what
8 would happen is, everything you see here is new
9 construction. The southbound vehicles would get off
10 the new interchange, be on this ramp, cross over Route
11 7, continue on, cross under the Merritt Parkway, and
12 then would join up heading south to downtown Norwalk.
13 That's that one movement. There's other movements that
14 also make these connections. The takeaway from this
15 free flow lanes, because the next alternative does the
16 exact same connections, so it makes those connections,
17 but it does it in an extremely -- a very different way.
18 And what we do here is we're adding signals -- we're
19 proposing signals on Route 7 just north of the Merritt
20 Parkway and just south of the Merritt Parkway. I'll do
21 the same movements, the same persons in the vehicle
22 heading southbound, they want to get to Route 7.
23 They'll still, essentially, get off the new interchange
24 that will be developed. So travel this roadway, now
25 they'll come to a light. Okay? Travel signal. At

1 this point, they can turn right and head north, they
2 can turn left to head south. So that's the connection.
3 Same connection, gets them to Route 7, just does it in
4 a very different way. Okay?

5 Two things I want to point out on
6 there that it's important that folks take away. The
7 area of the Main Avenue in here, what you'll notice, is
8 the same. So there really is no difference between 21D
9 and 26 when it comes to what would be proposed in this
10 area. There will be new signals. Glover Avenue and
11 Creeping Hemlock would be realigned. Right now they
12 have that ugly offset and the nice police officer
13 that's out there doing traffic. There will no longer
14 be need for the nice police officer directing traffic.
15 We'll realign that and -- so with both alternatives
16 treat this the same way. It doesn't matter which
17 alternative we select.

18 The other takeaway that's important
19 to understand, because, you know, I talked to a bunch
20 of people out here, and Route 7 -- you know,
21 essentially we're putting signals here, which in a way
22 is kind of moving the turn now from Grist Mill down to
23 a mile. But what's going to have to happen is in
24 design we have to re-characterize this roadway here.
25 It can't be a an expressway coming into a signal at 60

1 miles an hour. That's going to be one of the key
2 things that we have to look at in design. How do we do
3 that. How do we calm traffic, how do we reduce
4 footprints, whether it's road side plantings, signage,
5 it's all going to be a part of the answer, and you're
6 going to see a lot of graphics once we get into the
7 design. This is very much a key point of this. So
8 those are the alternatives.

9 We're now to the environmental
10 review. What we wanted to do is this is the basic
11 resource analysis that you'll see in the document.
12 There may be a few others that are here. What you see
13 in green -- the purpose of tonight is not necessarily
14 to go through every resource and impact and compare.
15 That would be a 3-hour meeting. What you see in green,
16 though, are the topics that, working with stakeholders,
17 working with the PAC, seem to rise to the top as far as
18 sensitivity. So it's not that people didn't care out
19 wetlands, but they wanted to make sure that bike and
20 ped -- Merritt Parkway landscape is -- Gary is going to
21 talk to you about that.

22 We're going to go through these
23 basic things, we're going to give you a high level, did
24 we find in EA/EIE. So we'll start with traffic. The
25 traffic analysis summary and, again, when you look at

1 the document, I think there's 13,000 pages on traffic
2 alone in the appendix. Good luck if you want to get in
3 there and look at it. There's a lot of different ways
4 you can look at traffic. What we try to do, and this
5 is just to kind of pull it out, is look at the number
6 of intersections that failed. We have a number today.
7 So what you're seeing is existing conditions. We have
8 ten locations throughout the project area that failed.
9 They're not acceptable.

10 The no build alternative, not doing
11 anything out there, creates -- traffic operations
12 worsen, obviously. More traffic, but you haven't made
13 any improvement. Safety is not addressed. Those ramps
14 stay the way they are with the sight line issues and
15 geometry and the connections and mobility we're talking
16 about are not addressed. No improvement is made.

17 Both build alternatives improve
18 traffic operation and address safety issues at the
19 Route 15/Main Avenue interchange. Traffic, turns out,
20 is not a differentiator, and we kind of see that here.
21 This is existing conditions. I'm just going to use the
22 morning peak hour traffic. So it's morning, we have
23 ten locations that fail. If we don't do anything, the
24 no build, that rises up to, I think it's 23, don't
25 quote me on that, but I think it's 23 locations. So

1 you see a doubling of locations that fail.

2 The one thing that I want to define
3 in the no build for you is, the no build is not just
4 simply looking at today's traffic on an interchange, or
5 whatever, that progresses in 30 years. We're actually
6 looking at 2045 he. We projected the traffic, we've
7 looked at development, we've looked at the road, and we
8 projected the traffic, so we're looking at 2045. So
9 whenever I say no build, that's the year that we're
10 actually looking at, so it's out there.

11 What you see here build alternative
12 21D, build alternative 26. That's no real difference
13 between the two. We'd like to say 26 or 21D is the
14 answer if you want to fix the traffic. It doesn't
15 really matter. They both do the same job out there, so
16 there's not -- again, it's not a differentiator on this
17 project.

18 Bike and ped. We have a bunch of --
19 we have a number of bike and ped. I can see folks
20 here. They were on the PAC. What we found is that
21 both alternatives have the same benefits to biking and
22 pedestrian movements through this area, and you can
23 imagine that, not only because, as I indicated, Main
24 Avenue is the same, regardless of what you do, and
25 that's where we're focusing a lot of the bike ped

1 improvements. It doesn't matter, 21D or 26, they're
2 both going to get improvements to bike ped facilities
3 out there. And those are improvements you can see from
4 here. Signal improvement for pedestrians, which you
5 don't have now. Wider sidewalks, you'll have that.
6 Enhanced ADA sidewalks, so that will be fixed. Right
7 now, I think when you walk on Main Avenue, you take
8 your life in your hands. That won't be the case with
9 either alternative that was selected. You'll have
10 buffered bike lanes, bicycle treatments, various things
11 that will come out in design.

12 The other point in this that I want
13 to -- I'm trying to get you to visualize what these
14 bike improvements are. You don't have to necessarily
15 visualize it now. As we proceed into the design, this
16 is going to be one of the key things that we have to
17 come out to you with, and you're going to see an awful
18 lot of graphic rendering of what this will look like.
19 But for the sake of environmental review it's what
20 we're addressing and what it impacts, so keep that in
21 mind.

22 Noise assessment. So noise
23 assessment, again, was highlighted as a possible
24 concern for the folks, not knowing which alternative
25 would do what to the noise, ambient noise out there.

1 We had our specialist look at the various land uses,
2 residential, obviously, places of worship and office
3 buildings out there. What they found is that both
4 build alternatives decreased noise one to two decibels
5 at any given -- they remained the same, or they
6 increase no more than 1 decibel. And to put that in
7 context, the CONN DOT noise program guidelines
8 essentially say that anything less than a 3 decibel
9 increase is not detectable by the human ear. So the
10 takeaway on this again is that noise is not a
11 differentiator. It's just not an issue out there.

12 What you see there on the right,
13 this is the project area, every blue dot is a receptor
14 area, so that's a point where we took the existing
15 conditions, modeled future traffic, and came up with
16 the analysis that you'll see in the document. So it
17 ended up, while it was raised as a potential concern,
18 it was not ultimately a big differentiator between the
19 two alternatives.

20 Historic and cultural. I mentioned
21 4F as a resource. So here's where you'll see the 4F
22 resources. What you see, and we have a number out
23 here, Perry Avenue Bridge, Verneur Pratt Historic
24 District. What you see in highlights in red, those are
25 the 4F -- the bridges that will be impacted in this

1 project. In the case of Main Avenue Bridge and Glover
2 Avenue Bridge, those will actually be replaced. Again,
3 it doesn't matter which alternative is selected. They
4 both will be replaced. And, obviously, part of
5 mitigation is to understand what's going back, and
6 that's going to be a key part of design in the
7 mitigation process.

8 So you basically have four of the 4F
9 properties that get impacted, thus triggering the 4F.
10 The other thing to keep in mind is the Merritt Parkway
11 itself, we're operating on that, that is a historic
12 district itself. So that is a 4F property.

13 Just real quickly, the MetroNorth
14 Bridge and the Norwalk River Bridge that you see there,
15 those are not replacements, but they are historic
16 bridges and will have some impact to them, so keep that
17 in mind as we move forward.

18 I'm going to show you, this kind of
19 supports what I just said, so it's a good slide. So
20 you see the historic properties that we're dealing
21 with. Alternate 21D and Alternate 26 have the adverse
22 impact, so it does not matter which alternative is
23 chosen. And, again, you're comparing it against the no
24 build, the no build has no impact, we're not doing
25 anything. That makes logical sense.

1 So those were the aboveground
2 resources that we're dealing with. There are also
3 below ground, the archeological sites, and you'll see
4 that depicted in the document itself. And in this case
5 alternate 26 would actually have impact to two of the
6 sites; maybe not the huge impact, but they definitely
7 will have an impact. Alternate 21D does not have any
8 impact to any archeological site and no build, again,
9 no impact to the sites.

10 What we take away from this is that
11 we recognize that there are impacts, and we've been
12 working with the PAC, the Section 106 subcommittee
13 consulting parties to understand what the mitigation
14 is, what it should be, and how we go forward with it,
15 whether it be archeological logical treatment plans.
16 That is a continuing process. So that doesn't end
17 tonight either or the 31st when our comments are
18 closed. That will be an ongoing process that we have
19 to deal with, because there may be things out there
20 that we just don't know, so as we go forward we have to
21 have a plan to be ready to go if we do hit something.
22 Keep that in mind. It's important to recognize what
23 the impacts are.

24 So with that, I'm going to turn it
25 over to Gary Sorge who is going to talk a little bit

1 about the landscape assessment because that's really
2 key.

3 MR. SORGE: Good evening, everyone.
4 It's good to see everyone again. I maybe should have
5 just let John keep going because he was on such a roll
6 in covering the topics so well.

7 We can't talk about the Merritt
8 Parkway without talking about it's landscape and how
9 this project could impact it's footprint. So the
10 landscape of the Merritt Parkway is very significant.
11 It's historically documented, and there are a number of
12 criteria that we have here. The geometry of the
13 roadway, cuts and hills were designed to open up view
14 sheds, views out to pastures and farmlands in the days
15 when the parkway was constructed. Trees and plantings
16 were maintained and added to blend in and enhance the
17 natural surroundings. So when the parkway was
18 constructed the landscape was designed to transition
19 into its surroundings, so you had a natural transition.
20 It gave it a very nice pastoral sort of experience.

21 Over the years, as you've seen,
22 development has encroached on its right of way, so
23 today you see much more buildings and larger buildings
24 than you would have when the parkway was first
25 constructed, so we take that into account as we're

1 moving forward. The landscape, when the parkway was
2 originally constructed, was incorporated to heal the
3 man-made intrusions, the excavations to actually
4 created the roadway, the bridges that were constructed,
5 but it was done masterfully with a rolling landscape
6 with nodes and such that accentuate the bridges and
7 provide these views off into the distance.

8 And then there were associate
9 elements with the landscape design. There was a unique
10 vocabulary, whether it was signage or guide rails and
11 even the plant materials that were selected. That
12 vocabulary was a signature of the parkway. The project
13 that John explained to you, and it's visible on the
14 boards behind you, much of the project reaches the
15 Route 7 corridor. So as we're approaching the Merritt
16 Parkway, on the approach to the views of the Merritt
17 Parkway, the bridges, we like to consider that
18 landscape. So it's not only the view from the parkway
19 but the view of the parkway and the experience you have
20 on the ramps and the connections to the parkway, so
21 that there is a sense of place that you consider that
22 was historic and was always recognized within the Route
23 15 Merritt Parkway corridor.

24 So the landscape assessment drivers
25 and purpose of the assessment in the documents that you

1 will see on-line, as John has pointed out the Section
2 106 of the National Preservation Historic Act of 1966.
3 "Assess the effects of project undertakings on
4 properties listed and eligible for listing on the
5 National Register of Historic Places" and -- such as
6 the Merritt Parkway. It's a historic amenity that we
7 need to consider in every aspect of the design and then
8 defining and providing mitigation for indirect effects
9 arising from project activities that could impact the
10 integrity of the setting. So that's not only what you
11 experience while you're on the parkway but what you
12 might see from the neighboring road, be it Main Avenue
13 or Perry Avenue or the interchange with Route 7.

14 So we'll have mitigation through
15 landscape design. Much of this will be worked out in
16 subsequent phases of design well after this evening --
17 the impacts to the scenic landscape were being
18 addressed in a draft Memorandum of Agreement, MOA,
19 between DOT, Federal Highway Administration, and the
20 Connecticut State Historic Preservation office in
21 consultation with concurring parties who have been
22 participating, some during the public outreach process
23 dating back to, as John pointed out, 2016. Those
24 groups include the Merritt Parkway Conservancy, the
25 Connecticut chapter of the American Society of

1 Landscape Architects -- advocates so they've been
2 consulted and these concurrent parties are consulted as
3 part of that agreement.

4 So as we're moving forward, we need
5 to consider the enhancement of view corridors and the
6 landscapes surrounds both potentially disturbed areas
7 of the right of way. So being consistent and sensitive
8 to the original design where new ramps and roadways and
9 the main line or the connections to Route 7 are being
10 constructed, what is the experience along those
11 corridors and how was the landscape then transitioning
12 into the areas that will remain, whether they're wooded
13 areas or rock outcroppings or water courses or other
14 elements that are historic or have some archeological
15 significance, how are they all connecting.

16 So, as John had mentioned, as we
17 look at the alternative assessment, alternative 26 is
18 more advantageous and why. We have a few points here.
19 It has a more compact footprint, as you see in the
20 comparative between the top, alternative 26, and in the
21 lower illustration, which is alternative 21D. You can
22 actually see those illustrations on the back, you might
23 have seen then prior, or you can actually walk up to
24 them after the meeting and ask some questions, if you'd
25 like. But looking at the footprint, the amount of

1 pavement, the number of bridges is dramatically greater
2 in alternative 21D, as opposed to alternative 26.

3 You have enhanced natural features
4 in alternative 26. Much of the woodland if you look at
5 the southeast quadrant in the upper image, look at the
6 extent of the woodlands that are preserved and some of
7 which will be restored when some of the existing ramps
8 are removed, so you can argue that there would be added
9 buffer and woodlands around the roadway corridor to the
10 surrounding neighborhoods, advantageous in alternative
11 26, as opposed to 21D.

12 26 is creating a more park like
13 setting. There's reduced maintenance because you'll
14 have reduced roadways and bridges and you'll have fewer
15 structures. That is clear on the illustrations that
16 you'll see in the back and the illustrations that John
17 shared with you earlier.

18 Again, a comparative between the
19 two. Closest to us in the lower portion, lower right
20 portion of the image, you can see the existing ramps on
21 the existing parkway and super 7 interchange, but you
22 can also see the proposed ramps that are shown on 21D
23 that complete the complete intersection. On the
24 illustration on the right, immediately looking, again,
25 to our immediate foreground, you can see the ramps that

1 are no longer needed creating a direct connection
2 between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway, which allows
3 more woodlands to be restored, more pastoral areas to
4 be created and allow for greater buffers between the
5 roadway and cars in the surrounding community.

6 I'm going to pass it back to John.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. SORGE: So Gary mentioned fewer
9 structures, more compact, less infrastructure as part
10 of the visuals. Well, logic dictates that that smaller
11 footprint and less infrastructure leads to cost
12 differences between the two. In the document itself,
13 you're going to see a very robust section on cost
14 benefit analysis, fairly detailed. Tonight we're just
15 really talking about the cost analysis. I think at a
16 gut level, this states a story in itself.

17 As Gary indicated, 21D has double
18 the amount of bridges than 26 does, 14 to 7. If you
19 look at a total ramp length, about double, between 26
20 and 21D. Ultimately all of the lesser in
21 infrastructures that have to be constructed, the
22 initial construction costs and, keep in mind, this is
23 order of magnitude. We don't have a design. Our first
24 real construction costs will come in during early
25 design when we really have gotten in there. But for an

1 order of magnitude, you're seeing 21D on the order of
2 240 to \$260 million to construct as compared to 26, 140
3 to 160. So it's significant savings going with
4 alternate 26. Keep in mind, there is an order of
5 magnitude, but it's reasonable, based on what we're
6 kind of talking about tonight. So we're almost there,
7 so hang in.

8 EA/EIE conclusions. If you haven't
9 guessed at this point, the document is recommending
10 that alternate 26 move forward into design as the
11 preferred alternate, and for all the reasons that we
12 kind of already talked about, the less impacts to
13 natural resources, and if you look at the document, and
14 I'm not going to discuss wetlands but, again, wetlands
15 is one where alternate 21D is doubled the amount of
16 impacts to wetlands. Less visual impacts, as Gary
17 talked about. Very important for what we're going.

18 The lower capital and ongoing
19 maintenance. I'm glad we put ongoing maintenance on
20 here because what I just talked about was the initial
21 cost. That's not talking about less maintenance for 7
22 bridges versus 14, for all that roadway land. So
23 that's an important part to understand.

24 And the ease of construction. If
25 you just look at the complexity of the two

1 alternatives, it's going to be easier to construct 26.
2 I won't say it's painless. Construction is
3 construction. But it will be easier moving forward.
4 With that, I'm going to turn it back to Amy.

5 MS. STULA: We will now be starting
6 the public states and comment portion of the hearing,
7 so that all attending have the opportunity to
8 participate. We ask that you please limit your
9 statements to the allotted 3 minutes. I will interrupt
10 you after 3 minutes. If you still have additional
11 questions, we will be happy to remain here tonight to
12 speak with you one-on-one regarding any other
13 individual questions you might have. You may also use
14 the comment sheet to submit your comments and I do have
15 them, if you want. Just raise your hand and I will
16 bring you one.

17 Since the City of Norwalk is the
18 host town this evening, I would like to extend the
19 courtesy of allowing the mayor to speak, if they are
20 here. And, if not, any elected public officials who
21 would like to speak. All right. Let's start with the
22 speaker list that people signed up. Anthony Costanzo.

23 MR. COSTANZO: Hello. Okay. So
24 good evening, everyone. I am Anthony Costanzo from
25 Stamford here representing myself as a member of the

1 public. I am glad that we have the crash specific
2 slide here, because this really supports my point.
3 Currently, Exit 40 has over 300 crashes in the 2015 to
4 2018 timeframe. It is statistically the most dangerous
5 interchange on the parkway. Right next door, Exit 39,
6 only had 65 in the same time period, which is rather
7 impressive considering the volume of traffic that moves
8 through that interchange, so it's really one of the
9 safest interchanges on the parkway. But that's not as
10 in jeopardy with the preferred alternative, because
11 there is a proposal to add two traffic signals which
12 means conflict points where vehicles will be crossing
13 each other's paths which creates opportunities for more
14 crashes. Now, in the statement of purposes and need
15 talks about improving safety, so why are we doing this
16 change to Exit 39 that going to make it less safe.
17 Yes, it will create connections, but it's not worth it.
18 You're going -- you're playing with peoples' lives
19 here. So I would say that the alternative that I
20 haven't seen considered, but I really think should be
21 considered is that Exit 40 should be fixed, it needs to
22 be fixed, it's old and dangerous, but if we can't come
23 up with an alternative to do something to Exit 39 to
24 create the missing connections in a free flowing manner
25 that preserves the safety that's already there, just

1 leave it alone. Fix 40, leave 39 alone. Thank you.

2 MS. STULA: The next speaker is Ben
3 Hanpeter.

4 MR. HANPETER: Hi everyone. Thank
5 you offering us the option to speak tonight. My name
6 is Ben Hanpeter. I live at 14 Haviland Street in South
7 Norwalk, Connecticut, and I work in Wilton and I ride
8 my bike to work every day. I'm well-acquainted with
9 how the current state of the project area is an
10 impediment to people trying to walk or bike between
11 Norwalk and Wilton. My main feedback for the project
12 team tonight is I think that there's a need for
13 additional planning for a fully separated route through
14 the NRVV project area. I think that, as probably most
15 people in this room know, the NRVV will one day make up
16 the whole backbone of the whole region's bike network.
17 But a change is only as strong as it's weakest link.
18 The current proposed route on Perry Ave will put trail
19 users in with mixed traffic, and I think that will make
20 it a much less attractive option for a lot of people
21 who don't feel comfortable riding in mixed traffic and
22 you'll see a lot less usage of the trail if that is the
23 route that is ultimately chosen.

24 I think this project provides a once
25 in a generation opportunity to provide a safe, great

1 separated route through the project area that all users
2 will feel comfortable using. I think this is better
3 for regional connectivity, reducing congestion and
4 putting in air quality, all of which are stated project
5 goals. So I think that a separated path is really key
6 for making sure that the project, in its entirety, all
7 users can meet its goals. Looking through the EIE, I
8 haven't seen a lot of evidence that the project is
9 considering this. It does show the baseline routing on
10 Perry, but it doesn't really give much priority to
11 alternative routings, especially ones that are fully
12 separated. I think that this is the best change that
13 we have to do this and planning for the NRVt needs to
14 be fully integrated with planning for the project as a
15 whole. I hope that you're working closely with the
16 NRVt organization, and whatever other relevant
17 stakeholders are involved, to make sure that we do this
18 right, because this is our best chance and it also
19 would be really cheap. You know, as the cost was just
20 shown, over \$100 million for the cheap option. No
21 matter how crazy you want to get with bridges or
22 tunnels for bikes, it's going to be on the order of a
23 few percent of the total project cost. So I think it's
24 very feasible to do, and I think we should do this the
25 right way because the region deserves a quality bike

1 path in this area. Thank you.

2 MS. STULA: Thank you. Tanner
3 Thompson.

4 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I have
5 notes on my phone, and my phone just died. So do you
6 mind if I go after the next person?

7 MS. STULA: Sure. Diane Keefe.

8 MR. KEEFE: I'm Diane Keefe, and I
9 fully agree with the previous speaker on every element.
10 Norwalk River Valley Trail is what he was talking
11 about, and I think it's vital that, given even with 365
12 crashes, we're talking about something like, if I'm
13 doing the math right, 300,000 per crash, the cost of
14 this project. So I really think we need to give more
15 attention to cyclists and pedestrians in what is
16 becoming a very dense urban area and will be even more
17 dense by 2045, and I hope that there's more density in
18 Norwalk near the Metro-North and that there's more
19 investment in the Metro-North, and this doesn't really
20 contemplate that, except in a very small way. And the
21 other piece I note from the super highway that was
22 created only up until Grist Mill Road is that it went
23 right through a big body of water and that there's
24 development right encroaching on the other side of that
25 body of water, and there are birds are in there and

1 everything, and I just want to be careful before doing
2 a whole bunch more.

3 And the other piece is that I happen
4 to live really close to the Merritt Parkway in Norwalk,
5 and I never realized that all of the trees were going
6 to be denuded. There is an member of our planning and
7 zoning department, who is a good friend, and he
8 explained to me that they were native trees that are
9 going to be replanted and that a lot of the trees that
10 were cut were diseased. All of that is well and good,
11 but it has really taken a way a large carbon sink for
12 us for the next 20 years before those replanted trees
13 get mature, and also the views have changed for,
14 especially a lot of my neighbors who live really right
15 on the Merritt, and they didn't get compensated for
16 that. That super highway part is a lot wider, so the
17 risk to cars, which was the whole justification of
18 cutting down all the trees, from increased climate
19 changes is much lower from the midsize, so I hope that
20 the plans in response to this public hearing will
21 consider that more seriously. We need more urban
22 reforestation, and that goes throughout the state. So
23 thank very much, and I live on Chestnut Hill Road in
24 Norwalk.

25 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.

1 Tanner.

2 MR. THOMPSON: I really appreciate
3 the flexibility. I know there weren't any elected
4 officials. I'm an appointed official. I'm the chair
5 of the Bike/Walk Commission here in Norwalk and I'm
6 also speaking as a resident and representative of an
7 advocacy group called Sustainable Streets, which is
8 somewhat new. Some of our members are here.

9 I do want to put the request for the
10 NRVt in context, first by acknowledging all the things
11 that the project is doing well. The lower cost of the
12 preferred alternative over 21 is great. The fact that
13 connection are being made is going to make peoples'
14 lives easier. I think that re-characterizing Route 7
15 is the right move. It will enable traffic calming and
16 opening the door for maybe re-imagining all that land
17 that's north of the interchange. I think the point
18 that was made about stoplights is a valid one, and I
19 would love to see whether, in the past or in the
20 future, roundabouts have been or could be considered in
21 place of those stoplights because they have a much
22 better safety record, but still move a comparable
23 amount of traffic in a lot of cases. The fact that the
24 project is going to alleviate some of the traffic and
25 the pressure on Main Avenue is a huge win for

1 pedestrian and bike safety, because that's a very
2 unsafe corridor right now. I have biked it and I have
3 walked it, and I know firsthand. I really appreciate
4 the stated commitment to mobility for all users,
5 especially on the Main Avenue corridor, especially
6 going under the Merritt bridge. I don't want that to
7 be lost in all the requests for accommodations for
8 NRVT, because that's going to be a game changer for that
9 area, but the requests for that sort of mobility
10 accommodation and the request for the accommodations
11 for the actual route of the NRVT serve two different
12 purposes; one's local, one's regional. One serves more
13 commuters and adults, frankly, and the other serves
14 people of all abilities and all ages.

15 But I want to provide a little
16 context for why we should care about the NRVT. The
17 interest in the NRVT and walking and biking generally
18 has grown dramatically since this project started.
19 During the pandemic, the usage of the trail has spiked
20 like three times and it has stayed stable like over two
21 times the baseline right before the pandemic.

22 Norwalk just opened a new section of
23 trail, the Federal Department of Transportation just
24 awarded a one half a million dollar grant for planning
25 and design for the entire rest of the trail, so it's a

1 much bigger deal than it was in 2016 when I understand
2 this project started and it started before that even;
3 right?

4 Additionally, Norwalk is investing
5 in a citywide complete streets project; a plan, a
6 commitment. There's ambitious goals in our
7 transportation master plan about access for walking and
8 biking. There's a transit oriented focus of our draft
9 zoning code that's being reviewed right now. There's a
10 new train station at Merritt 7, which is right next to
11 the project area, and then we've got this increasing
12 job density along Route 7 in Wilton, which is outside
13 the project scope, but the fact that we're putting more
14 jobs on a road that is pretty narrow and is already
15 pretty congested, it just speaks to the need for a
16 greater vision for non-car and for structure for
17 walking and biking and public transportation. That's
18 why we're all talking about the NRVt today.

19 The NRVt board has done a lot of
20 work and they've spent a lot money of that they had to
21 fundraise for to look for alternatives as to how to get
22 the main route of the NRVt through the project area and
23 what they found is that, by their standards, they have
24 to spend a ton of money to do it. This is a group,
25 again, that is fundraising their own money and they're

1 getting money from grants to do their stuff.

2 Like Ben mentioned, in the context
3 of this project, we're talking like peanuts. So we
4 could get like a top quality connection for the NRV
5 through the project area on the order of 1 percent or
6 maybe 2 percent of the total project cost. So that's
7 what I'm asking for. I understand that the official
8 scope of the project doesn't include the NRV, but I
9 guess I'm asking for the to be officially expanded to
10 include that, because it is critical regional
11 connectivity and will make the project more holistic
12 and not just about moving more cars. Thank you.

13 MS. STULA: Thank you so much. Our
14 next speaker is Eric Honck.

15 MR. HONCK: My name is Eric Honck.
16 I'm a resident of Haviland Street in South Norwalk. I
17 just want to thank everyone for the work they've done
18 on this project. I'm also in favor of alternative 26,
19 the cheaper one. I think I would like to see some of
20 the money that the state of Connecticut and the federal
21 government was willing to fork over for alternative 21D
22 potentially be repurposed into adding the NRV, as a
23 couple of people already mentioned, through the project
24 area. Yeah. That's it.

25 MS. STULA: Thank you so much.

1 Daniela Posada.

2 MS. POSADA: Hi everyone. I just
3 want to say the alternative that will had additional
4 traffic lights if it's being considers like to make
5 them kind of like smart lights not add additional
6 driving time for the people in the project. So I
7 didn't really see how much information on how much
8 travel time would be impacted, so it's important to be
9 included maybe for future. That's all.

10 MS. STULA: Thank you so much.
11 Harrison Knowles. We'll come back if he comes back.
12 Jo-Anne Horvath.

13 MS. HORVATH: I'm going to read my
14 speech. My name is Jo-Ann Horvath, and I live at 1
15 Commerce Lane in Norwalk near Exit 40B of the Merritt
16 Parkway. Also, I am a member of the Merritt Parkway
17 Advisory Committee for the 7/15 project. I have been
18 working on this project since 1990 and have had many
19 conversations with numerous DOT engineers about this.
20 Currently, the state DOT has put forward alternate 26
21 as a preferred choice for the 7/15 project. This
22 alternate would convert Route 7 to a full -- currently
23 the state DOT has put forward alternate 26 as a
24 preferred choice for this project. This alternate
25 would convert Route 7 to a 4-lane boulevard by changing

1 the character of the roadway using intersections and
2 introducing traffic signals on Route 7. It may be the
3 state's preferred plan, but it is not mine. The
4 following is my opinion on alternate 26:

5 A, by adding traffic signals on the
6 Route 7 expressway, I think that too many rear-end
7 collisions would results since motorists are extremely
8 inpatient, especially in densely populated Fairfield
9 county.

10 B, if you add traffic signals, the
11 road becomes like the existing Main Avenue, state road
12 719. The purpose of the expressway is to avoid the
13 traffic signals. Traffic signals will create further
14 backups, which already exist at the a.m. and p.m. rush
15 hours.

16 C, there are many Norwalk projects
17 in the pipeline that will impact the Main Avenue
18 corridor, mainly new apartments and a hotel on the I
19 part property on Main Avenue, BJ's or another big box
20 store being proposed on a 5-acre property on Main
21 Avenue. In Wilton, on Danbury Road, there is a huge
22 apartment building under construction right now. When
23 the Walmart closes on Connecticut Avenue in Norwalk
24 soon, the existing Walmart on Main Avenue will
25 definitely have more shoppers using this store, which

1 is across the street from Hyde Park. Consequently,
2 there will be much more traffic in this area. Is
3 alternate 26 really the answer to this increased
4 traffic?

5 Some questions that I have
6 concerning the alternate 26 are:

7 1. How will CONN DOT prevent
8 drivers from blocking the box at the traffic signal.

9 2. Will CONN DOT install lighting
10 at the traffic light.

11 3. How will traffic lights be timed
12 to ensure smooth flow of traffic on the expressway.

13 4. Does CONN DOT plan to implement
14 methods to slow traffic on the busy expressway heading
15 up to the traffic lights.

16 MS. STULA: Excuse me. Time is up.
17 Did you want a comment form and submit the rest of that
18 for the record?

19 MS. HORVATH: Well, I have submitted
20 it, but I only have this much more to go. It's not a
21 lot.

22 MS. STULA: Go ahead.

23 MS. HORVATH: It took me two days to
24 put this together.

25 MS. STULA: I can come back to you.

1 MS. HORVATH: It will break up
2 the -- I'm going to keep going.

3 MS. STULA: That's fine. Keep
4 going.

5 MS. HORVATH: No. 5. Has this type
6 of boulevard plan been instituted in other parts of
7 Connecticut.

8 6. What about a power outage during
9 an Nor-easter or hurricane or emergency evacuation,
10 what will happen then.

11 Think about the future.
12 Implementing alternate 21D is very shortsighted since
13 the expressway should be completed all the way to Route
14 33 near Orem's Diner in Wilton as proposed many years
15 ago. I support alternate 21D with free flow traffic
16 with direct on and off-ramps. In my opinion 21 --
17 alternate 26 is going to be a traffic nightmare with
18 its traffics lights resulting in heavy congestion and
19 long delays. Lets do it right the first time. Thank
20 you.

21 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.
22 Our next speaker is Heather Dunn.

23 MS. DUNN: Hi. My name is Heather
24 Dunn. I'm the president of the Norwalk Association of
25 Silvermine Homeowners. That you very much. You guys

1 have been great, very transparent and collaborative
2 with us as part of the PAC. Thank you very much. It's
3 great to see.

4 My biggest concern is that we're
5 getting slammed in Norwalk and, you know, we talk about
6 timing and stuff like that, and I just want to make
7 sure that, as much as it can be, 95 is done being
8 constructed, I know there's another project for Grist
9 Mill to be continued on, which is a separate DOT
10 project group, and it doesn't seem like there's a lot
11 of coordination in timing. We have the Rock Bridge
12 being constructed. Norwalk really needs help with
13 coordinating so that it's not happening all at once for
14 us.

15 And my second comment is on a
16 personal level as someone -- I do ride my bike to work
17 across town down Main Avenue, and the lights are almost
18 never really coordinated really well, so as part of the
19 project if we can make sure that if there are lights
20 added to the expressway, that there is a real look at
21 how lights are coordinated for safety. Thank you.

22 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.
23 The next is Paul Cheverd.

24 MR. CHEVERD: My name is Paul
25 Cheverd, I live 36 Windsor, Norwalk, and I'm here to

1 speak about the lack of connectivity incorporated in
2 the project for NRV. The NRV is originally -- it's a
3 regional spine in regards to the bicycle network. I
4 ride it quite often and, as we all know, it's
5 disjoined because it's going -- it's being built in
6 piecemeal fashion, but it really lends itself to being
7 a good corridor that people can go to jobs and
8 businesses on the north side. It's great for
9 recreation, not just for cycles, but for pedestrians
10 and all walkers. It provides a lot of economic
11 activity. By not having it fully connect through this
12 project could possibly jeopardize that economic
13 activity it provides, because we all know that
14 businesses and property values go up when there's an
15 off road bike path of this sort there including in NRV
16 in it and have a really robust right of way
17 incorporated in the project. I would also like to see
18 if we go with the alternative 26, those signals be
19 turned into roundabouts. With more traffic they've
20 been shown to be better for safety and also reduce some
21 articulate matter and ozone gasses. So thank you.

22 MS. STULA: Thank you. Wes Haynes.

23 MR. HAYNES: My name is Wes Haynes.

24 I'm the executive director of the Merritt Parkway
25 Conservancy. I have a longer statement, but I'll kind

1 of condense it right now. The Conservancy, as many of
2 you probably know, is a private nonprofit organization
3 that was established by the governor about 20 years
4 ago. We have a 3-prong mission. Our first is to --
5 we're committed to ensure the Merritt Parkway's beauty
6 is kept and revitalized in construction and maintenance
7 projects and changes necessitated to upgrade safety are
8 done with the spirit of it's delightful original
9 design, and we also strive to keep the public informed
10 about the history and value of this really unusual
11 resource.

12 Our mission was stress tested by
13 this interchange soon after we were organized 20 years
14 ago when demolition of the historic Main Avenue bridge
15 began for the interchange designed with a large network
16 or flyover bridges and ramps that was not parklike by
17 any means. We successfully litigated to stop the
18 construction, and we're here tonight and very pleased
19 to say that for the first time, out of all the
20 alternatives that have been discussed, we strongly
21 support alternative 26.

22 The compact interchange between
23 Route 7 and the Merritt is clearly preferable to the
24 much larger one in 21D in terms of conserving natural
25 features, wetlands, wildlife habitat and minimizing

1 impervious cover with the watershed.

2 At least half the size of all
3 previous proposals with significant cost saving to the
4 taxpayers are an important benefit. We do represent
5 the public aspect of the Merritt Parkway. It
6 substantially reduces both construction costs, as well
7 as ongoing maintenance costs in the future.

8 So, in closing, I just want to say
9 that I really appreciate on behalf of the Conservancy,
10 and I speak for the board, Stantec and CONN DOT and
11 NHWA for their thoroughness in this alternative
12 analysis and in hearing our concerns over the scale
13 compatibility and costs and incorporating them all in
14 alternative 26. Thank you.

15 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.
16 Are there any other first time speakers? Please come
17 up and give your name and address for the record.

18 MR. REESE: Thank you for this
19 opportunity to make a few comments. I'm Fred Reese.
20 I'm with the Department of Energy and Environmental
21 Protection, and I will be submitting comments in that
22 capacity later on.

23 Two or three short things. One, I
24 had a note in the EIE/EA, page 31, it talks about
25 looking at traffic volumes for the low impact and for

1 the no build and the two builds for the year 2045,
2 which would be 20 years after the completion of the
3 project in 2025. I don't think anybody here really
4 believes that the project is completed in 2025, so I
5 think that number may be left over from some previous
6 iteration of this project.

7 Second comment, I appreciated
8 Anthony's opening remarks and some of the other remarks
9 about changing the character of Route 7 from the
10 expressway to signalized, I'm just wondering if,
11 looking at the traffic, the accident rates for Route 9
12 going through Middletown, which has signalized
13 intersections with full expressways through north and
14 south, if that might provide any guidance as to how to
15 successfully bring about what you're trying to bring
16 about.

17 The other comment that I had -- I
18 spent this afternoon, it was a much warmer day than I
19 anticipated, walking much of the alignments and the
20 neighborhoods and side streets and working up with
21 pretty good sweat. The point I wanted to bring up is
22 both of the build alternative show a new 2-lane on the
23 northern side or westbound side of Route 15 between
24 Main Avenue and Route 7 and going between the existing
25 highway and the 1 Glover apartment building and having

1 walked behind the 1 Glover apartment building, there is
2 a very, very small width between the bottom of the
3 embankment of the highway and the back of the apartment
4 building. So I'm hoping the EA -- the final EA can
5 maybe address that, and a couple of things I would
6 think might be helpful. One is if the new lane can
7 encroach into the existing embankment, maybe with
8 retaining walls, or something, to give you a little
9 more width to work with, and the other would be some
10 kind of noise barrier/light barrier could be
11 incorporated those new lanes and the 1 Glover apartment
12 building, because it really seems like additional lanes
13 there are going to be almost like in the windows of
14 those apartments. It's a really narrow corridor, so I
15 wanted make those comments. Thank you very much.

16 MS. STULA: Thank you so much.
17 There was another hand up.

18 MR. KEI: Phil Kei (phonetic), here
19 in Norwalk. I like the alternative 26. It has less
20 permeable services, less of that water runoff coming
21 from all those vehicles contaminating the soil,
22 contaminating the water, ultimately going back into our
23 drinking water, which we're having a problem with now,
24 and I also concur with a lot of NRVT. I mean, that
25 should be a priority. Everything should be built

1 around that, to be totally honest with you, in my
2 perspective. I was actually hit by a car on Main
3 Avenue right after that bridge, because it's really
4 that unsafe for your bicycle. Crossed over two lanes,
5 a lady I hit me head on. Luckily, I'm fine, but still
6 I'm glad that it's being taken into consideration how
7 important that is, not just for recreational cyclists
8 but other micro mobility. That's it.

9 MS. STULA: Thank you so much.

10 MR. FOX: Hello. My name is Paul
11 Fox. I live at 26 Belden Avenue in central Norwalk. I
12 want to echo earlier comments about the importance of
13 the NRV. I really think that if we're looking at
14 providing better connections, we need to not just
15 consider cars, we need to consider pedestrians and
16 bicyclists and right now the Merritt Parkway kind of
17 cuts off pedestrian and bicyclists, and the proposal to
18 run through Perry Avenue, that's a very narrow bridge.
19 It's probably not sage for a protected bike path on
20 that, so it would be mixed traffic. I don't think that
21 would be very safe. It's not a pedestrian friendly
22 road. So finding a path for the NRV where it can be
23 fully protected, I think is crucial.

24 The other comment that I had was
25 just also to echo concerns about putting traffic lights

1 on Route 7. There's obviously a lot of risk there.
2 I'd like to ask that alternatives, like roundabouts, be
3 studied for that as well. That's all.

4 MS. STULA: Thank you so much. Sir?

5 MR. FORNARO: Hi folks. My name is
6 Frank Fornaro (phonetic). I live in the southwest
7 quadrant of that intersection we've been talking about.
8 I appreciate the transparency of this process. I think
9 this is my first meeting in Norwalk with the people in
10 the city, so I'd like to take the opportunity to make
11 some noise about the noise. I notice that the noise is
12 one of the very top things people are concerned about.
13 But paraphrase what I've heard, noise is really
14 important, but our alternative doesn't change or abate
15 the noise in any way. I have no expertise on how you
16 do this, but I want to tell you that, as I sit on my
17 back deck amongst the lovely trees around the
18 Riverside, River View Drive, I occasionally end up with
19 lemonade on my lap because a motorcycle has gone racing
20 by, and this is a real impact on the quality of life.
21 I don't know how many of the rest of you feel this, but
22 for me to hear bird songs punctuated by people racing
23 in cars that are made to be as loud as they can
24 possibly be or to have motorcycles racing to show off
25 their gear shifting skills while I'm trying to enjoy

1 myself is a problem for me and I wonder if it is for
2 you. So physical solutions to that, I don't know.
3 Maybe let's talk about roundabouts. I'm trying to
4 picture a motorcycle trying to show off on a roundabout
5 a flipping up in the air and ending somewhere on the
6 curbing, which would probably please me. In any event,
7 there may and must be some ways to abate sound. Thank
8 you.

9 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.

10 MR. LEVIN: Hi. My name is John
11 Levin. I live at 249 Chestnut Hill Road in Norwalk.
12 I'm really quite impressed with this process, and I do
13 want to share my thoughts on this project and
14 transportation in Connecticut, in general.

15 I would like to draw our attention
16 to the future. I think that much of this project is
17 focused on solving the problems that we had in the past
18 with that intersection and accessibility. But this is
19 an exciting time for transportation. Technology is
20 changing. Things are going to be different in the
21 future, and I think we should look forward to some of
22 these important changes.

23 Cars, in particular, in the future,
24 actually the present, but certainly more in the future,
25 cars are going to be electric. Cars will be shared,

1 cars will also be autonomous, and they will be smart,
2 and they're actually going to be much, much safer than
3 they are now.

4 Besides cars, roads are going to be
5 different. Roads are actually going to be smarter and
6 things like traffic enforcement and safety and traffic
7 monitoring is all going to be more accessible, cheaper,
8 and better.

9 Besides roads and cars, I actually
10 think people are going to be different. I think that
11 the residents are going to be much less interested in
12 spending much time commuting, and we will see job and
13 lifestyle choices by people that live in Connecticut
14 that will cause them to be commuting much, much less.

15 I think also the residents of the
16 future, actually the present but certainly more so in
17 the future, resident are going to crave lifestyle
18 oriented recreational resources, which will enhance
19 things like bike ability and walkability.

20 Also, I think that public
21 transportation will finally and, rightly, enjoy a much
22 greater share of public transportation funding relative
23 to private transportation. That's long overdue, and I
24 think we'll be getting that.

25 So this all circles back to an

1 extraordinary resource that's just been developed over
2 the last couple of years, although long planned, and
3 that's the NRVV trail. It is an amazing resource, not
4 just for the people that live in Norwalk and
5 surrounding communities now but especially for the ones
6 that are moving to this area, who are going to look at
7 this resource as being a transportation network for
8 them for things like recreation and commuting and work.
9 It is already, but certainly for more in the future.
10 Further in the future, that amazing resource, the NRVV,
11 is going to be enhanced even further because
12 eventually, I'm quite confident, we'll have a green way
13 along the length of the Merritt Parkway, as we should
14 have. And that's going to even further enhance the
15 value of the Norwalk River Valley Trail as a recreation
16 and transportation resource.

17 So I just want to say, please make
18 sure that you look to the future and recognize that the
19 NRVV is an absolute gem of a resource that will be
20 growing in value for the residents of the future.

21 MS. STULA: Thank you. Are there
22 any other first time speakers? Come on up.

23 MS. MOLINARI: Hi, I'm Lucia
24 Molinari (phonetic), and I live on Grey Hollow Road in
25 Silvermine and thank you for having us, you know,

1 having this presentation, I really appreciate it, to
2 become more aware of what has been going on. Given
3 these different alternatives, one, I've been watching
4 this go on for -- since 1972. So I've seen the changes
5 when this road was going to start and nothing happened.
6 Then we got it started and then they tore down all the
7 trees and made a mess and the road was stopped. It
8 only goes to Grist Mill Road. I go on those roads
9 every other day or so. It's horrendous. No one knows
10 how to stop at the traffic light, they don't know which
11 lane to be in. We're very unintelligent on using all
12 these facilities and we -- you know, the alternative
13 may be a good thing, but I don't know with putting more
14 traffic lights. I mean, I see all the people stopping
15 and I worry about the pollution, and I don't know who's
16 measuring that, and now we're going to put in a couple
17 more traffic lights. What are we doing? This is all
18 happening to Norwalk, and I don't think it's right. I
19 mean, it's almost leave it alone, unless you can come
20 up with something better. Fix the roads the way they
21 are.

22 We talk about the number of
23 accidents, and I don't know number wise. I go on the
24 Merritt Parkway a great deal. I'm really surprised
25 that there's been that many in that area versus a lot

1 further south more towards Stamford. It's very
2 surprising to me. Because I move in that traffic, I'm
3 always aware of it. My children have grown up here,
4 one of them lives in Trumbull. We're always worried
5 about the traffic coming the other way, so I'm very
6 aware of what goes on. I don't know if they're that
7 dangerous or how bad the accidents have been or if
8 they've been minor, but I haven't seen that much of it
9 here.

10 I mean, I appreciate it all, but I
11 don't -- you know, maybe doing something without the
12 traffic lights, doing a roundabout may be a way of
13 going. But I think before we do anything, this road
14 should have gone -- I never wanted the road, but if it
15 was going, then it should have gone through Wilton,
16 through Ridgefield and finished the road. I have a
17 husband who leaves at 6 o'clock in the morning just to
18 go to Danbury, because the traffic is so horrendous,
19 and the pollution, and I don't know who's studying
20 that, because I haven't heard anything, going up Belden
21 Hill Road, there are stoplights. There's only a
22 stoplight because the road goes for a mile, then
23 there's a stoplight and then the next one, until you
24 get all the way up about five miles into Wilton.
25 Anyway, that's what I had to say. Thank you.

1 MS. STULA: Are there any other
2 first time speakers that would like to come up? How
3 about any second time speakers that wanted another
4 chance to speak?

5 MS. KEEFE: So I'm Diane from
6 Norwalk again, and I didn't say which one of the
7 alternatives, because I clearly wanted the cheaper one
8 of the two we were given, but the -- I was an air
9 quality transportation planner in Middletown for the
10 state regional planning earlier in my career, and so I
11 studied the air pollution that comes from traffic
12 signals, and it's not good. Carbon monoxide is
13 generated every time a car is idling, and that is bad
14 for people with lung conditions and heart conditions
15 and for children and for pregnant women. So it's
16 really not a great idea. And there was a great article
17 in the New York Times about traffic circles, and I
18 happened to have traveled to Sedona, Arizona where
19 there's a million traffic circles and it actually
20 cultivates courtesy among people and it slows traffic
21 down. So I think that that would be a much preferable
22 design, so I'm wondering whether DOT actually
23 considered that in the 20-plus original ideas and, if
24 not, can we go back to the drawing board and look at
25 that. Thank you. And I do appreciate the whole

1 process. It's been delightful.

2 MS. STULA: Thank you very much. Do
3 we have any other second time speakers? I'll advise
4 when you've reached a reasonable amount of time.

5 MR. LEVIN: Just like that previous
6 lady, I also forgot to say which of the alternatives I
7 thought was the one that I liked. Also 26. You know,
8 I say people are like, I guess, quite concerned that
9 there would be traffic lights on Route 7. It's not
10 going to be a concern. I'm telling you, in the future
11 cars are going to be safe and they're not going to be
12 jumping into each other and not going to be running
13 over kids and bicycles. Traffic lights will be fine.
14 The lights are going to be so much more efficient and
15 wait time there is going to be so reduced at all of
16 these intersections, just because it's going to be a
17 smarter transportation device. So -- and also the cars
18 are going to be electric. So the Norwalk problems are
19 going to go away, which is a good thing, and the cars
20 are going to be electric so the air pollution problems
21 are going to be -- not entirely go away, they're just
22 going to be moved to the location where the electricity
23 is produced and, hopefully, that will be green
24 electricity in Connecticut.

25 I think it's going to be -- is going

1 to work out just fine and there's really good
2 technological solutions coming down the pike. People
3 are going to look back and say traffic lights are no
4 big deal.

5 MS. STULA: Thank you.

6 MS. HORVATH: It's Joanne again. I
7 totally agree with Mrs. Molinari, the person that spoke
8 before this gentleman. She told it like it was and
9 she's absolutely correct on every count, as far as I'm
10 concerned. She knows Norwalk, she's lived here, she's
11 seen what has happened. Nothing really has happened to
12 Norwalk in a long, long time, in my estimation. The
13 marker dates back to 1992. We in Fairfield county,
14 especially in Norwalk, it's a growing city day by day
15 and traffic is going to get worse. Believe me. I live
16 right next to the Merritt Parkway. I see it morning
17 and night. I hear the sirens. I hear the sirens on
18 Route 7, so good luck. If you try 26, you're going to
19 have a lot of honking horns. Thank you.

20 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.

21 Any other second time speakers?

22 MR. HANPETER: Yeah, I just had a up
23 couple of other followup questions about something that
24 I read in EIE. The first one is about projected
25 traffic. I did read over the numbers and I was pretty

1 interested to find that the projected traffic over the
2 no build alternate is about negligible and actually
3 went down a little bit. I'd be curious to hear some
4 more followups from the parties about how those numbers
5 were generated because I think that the typical line of
6 thought is if you build -- I'm sure you're all very
7 familiar with the concept. So I didn't know how that
8 was generated. I saw that there was like a framework
9 provided, I'm not an expert in this field, by any
10 means, so I'm not like familiar with exactly how those
11 numbers are come up with, but I didn't know if maybe
12 the analysis looked at changes in land use spurred by
13 additional highway development, and I know you see this
14 a lot, especially in the sunbelt, a build out, a new
15 highway, and then you start seeing a bunch of
16 developments cropping up where you wouldn't have seen
17 them previously, and with this added productivity in
18 the project, you can say that it's now easier maybe to
19 live in some areas and commute to others because you're
20 not needing to take this detour off the highway anymore
21 and will that generate any difference in land use over
22 the following decades after the project is completed.

23 Am I going to completely forget my
24 second question? It's possible. I'll give someone
25 else a second chance to speak, because I lost my train

1 of thought. Thank you, though.

2 MS. STULA: Any other second time
3 speakers or first time if something has come to mind
4 that you want to say?

5 MR. THOMPSON: So following up on
6 Ben's point about the VMT numbers. I actually read
7 them with Ben, and we took a look at the travel times
8 and the average speed through there, as well. I want
9 to call attention to them, not because I suspect that
10 they're wrong, I think actually that they're probably
11 right, and that is the travel times through the
12 intersection projected into 2045. I don't have them in
13 front of me, but if my memory serves me right, in 2045
14 the travel time through the interchange, I want to say
15 it was on the Merritt, currently -- I'm sorry, it's not
16 the travel time, but the current average speed. The
17 current average speed is something that we would all
18 expect like around the speed limit, it was right on the
19 order of 45 to 50 miles an hour, but in 2045, with the
20 know build option, it's like a 20 mile an hour figure,
21 and with either of the alternatives, the number was
22 even lower than it. It was 17 or 18 in one case and
23 like 13 in other case. We're talking average speed in
24 miles per hour through the corridor. I think that it
25 is interesting, in this particular case, that the

1 building of the interchange makes the traffic move even
2 slower, but what I also want to call attention to is
3 the fact that in the next 20 years the traffic is,
4 regardless of whether we do it or not or which
5 alternative we pick, is going to get a lot slower, and
6 I think that really speaks to the need for us to invest
7 in other forms of transportation. We could continue
8 widening the Merritt, but we would have to keep doing
9 it every few years, because that how it works. That's
10 what the data bears out. Right? If you widen it,
11 you've got to widen it again five years later. That's
12 the only way to keep the traffic flowing, whereas there
13 are a lot of other forms of transportation that are
14 much more space efficient. Right? We could be
15 investing, like John mentioned, in more robust public
16 transportation. On the east/west corridor that
17 probably looks like investing in MetroNorth; right?
18 Which if we're going something, we can do more of that.
19 Right? And \$100 million, which is a difference between
20 the two alternatives, that goes a long way and it goes
21 an even longer way when it comes to walking and biking
22 transportation, as I've already pointed out, but I
23 wanted to bring up that data point, because I think it
24 speaks volumes. Thank you.

25 MS. STULA: Thank you very much.

1 Any other second time speakers or first time speakers?

2 MR. HANPETER: My other question. I
3 know a lot of speakers have talked about the potential
4 safety issues of the traffic lights and the potential
5 for roundabouts. For people who haven't spent an
6 entire evening gazing through the appendices of the
7 EIE, EIE there was actually an alternative looked,
8 which is alternative 7A, which is a high speed
9 roundabout, and I know that the reason that was axed is
10 because it introduced weaving into the traffic pattern
11 and traffic design, but I'm curious if the, if it's
12 better practice to have traffic lights on a high speed
13 road, such as Route 7, versus introducing weaving, if
14 weaving is worse. You know, anecdotally, I find
15 weaving to be kind of annoying but, you know, I guess I
16 don't know, in industry standards, how bad that really
17 is. So, yeah, I would just be curious to hear a little
18 bit more justification for why that's considered to be
19 a deal breaker on this project. Thanks.

20 MS. STULA: Thank you so much. Any
21 other firsts or second time speakers or third time
22 speakers? If there are no further comments, I will now
23 close tonight's hearing. On behalf of the commissioner
24 I would like to thank you for coming and expressing
25 your thoughts tonight. You have until August 31st to

1 submit your comments to the Connecticut Department of
2 Transportation. Thank you for coming and have a good
3 evening, and if you have any comments to submit, please
4 bring them to me.

5 (Whereupon, the public hearing
6 concluded at 8:42 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

I, DEBRA A. CHASSE, Court Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of Connecticut, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that pursuant to Notice, the foregoing 69 pages were reduced to writing by me and are a fair and accurate transcription of the hearing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal this 7th day of September, 2023.



Debra A. Chasse, CSR
Notary Public
State of Connecticut

My Commission Expires:
June 30, 2026
CSR No. 00055