

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**State Project No. 102-295
Federal-Aid Project No. 0951(228)
Median Reconstruction and Resurfacing of I-95
Norwalk and Westport**

**June 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via MS Teams Live Event & YouTube Live**

Minutes of Pre-Construction Public Informational Meeting

Present:

Andy Fesenmeyer, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) – Highway Design
John Deliberto, CTDOT – District 3 Construction
Robert Nowak, CTDOT – District 3 Construction
Meziane Meziani, CTDOT – Bridge
Matthew Geanacopoulos, CTDOT – Rights of Way
Robert Moore, CTDOT – Office of Communications
Brett Stark, BL Companies (CTDOT Consultant Liaison Engineer (CLE))
Justine Hines, BL Companies (CTDOT CLE)
Dominick Celtruda, BL Companies (CTDOT CLE)
Daniel Bycenski, BL Companies (CTDOT CLE)
John Hapkiewicz, AECOM (Design Consultant)
Jeffrey Keefe, AECOM (Design Consultant)
Timothy Ryan, AECOM (Design Consultant)
Jonathan Ives, AECOM (Design Consultant)
Keith Wilberg, Town of Westport
Paul Sotnik, City of Norwalk

There were approximately 19 attendees (6 on YouTube Live and 13 on Teams Live)

Presentation: A Pre-Construction Public Information Meeting was held for the subject project on the night of June 3, 2021. The meeting was held virtually via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live. At 6:45 p.m. the meeting went live with an informative introductory slide for attendees to view prior to the event. At 7:00 p.m., Brett Stark, Liaison Program Manager of BL Companies, began the formal presentation beginning with instructions for the virtual platform including how to participate in the Q/A portion of the meeting, language assistance, and Title VI requirements. Brett Stark then introduced the project team including representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), BL Companies (BL) (Consultant Liaison Engineer), and the design consultant AECOM, followed by a forty-minute PowerPoint presentation describing the design status, project schedule, and what to expect during construction.

The presentation included the following items:

- Project location, purpose, and need
- Proposed improvements including upgrading the roadway to meeting current standards, addressing drainage deficiencies, enhancing rideability, bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction and expansion of the Interchange 16 Park & Ride lot, and stormwater quality treatments

- Highlighted specific design updates since the last public information meeting including Interchange 16 Northbound On-Ramp extension, improvements along Hendricks Avenue, and tree removal and reforestation, some of which were incorporated in response to feedback received during previous meetings.
- Status of design, schedule and cost
- Summary of construction phase activities including anticipated impacts along I-95 (maintain three lanes of thru traffic during peak hours, off peak lane and shoulder closures with short duration overnight stoppages for designated activities), a detailed description of how the lateral slide accelerated construction for the replacement of Bridge No. 00062, I-95 over Route 33 (Saugatuck Avenue) would be implemented (noted impacts to both I-95 and secondary roadways both before and during the two lateral slide weekends and described plans to close one barrel of I-95 and institute a temporary crossover with two thru lanes of I-95 traffic for both the northbound and southbound directions of I-95 during these two weekend periods), and a brief discussion on the proposed detour routes and the need for an extended (two week) closure of the Interchange 17 northbound ramps.
- Summary of specialized work, anticipated night work, and noise
- Summary of public outreach and regional coordination efforts

Public Comments and Questions: Following the formal presentation, a live Question and Answer session was opened to attendees. The questions and comments below were provided via MS Teams Live Event Chat and email. No voicemails were received during the meeting period.

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Why are new shoulder widths so wide?
 - *Brett Stark responded – This project is a safety improvements project and the proposed 12 foot shoulder widths are consistent with current CTDOT and Federal design standards. The required width is determined in part by the volume of truck traffic in this area.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Yankee Doodle Bridge project will be 2 years behind schedule when completed, what steps are you taking to mitigate time and cost overrun?
 - *John Deliberto responded – The Yankee Doodle Bridge project is unique in that the nature of project led to the delays. The scope of work includes steel rehabilitation and deck repairs in which the extent of the deterioration couldn't have been known until the contractor removed the rust and evaluated the deck. In this case the level of deterioration was much greater than anticipated and led to a re-design of the repairs. For Project 102-295, the conditions are more known and involve fewer variables to better mitigate time and cost overruns.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: So East Norwalk STILL won't be getting sound barriers?
 - *Brett Stark responded – As noted in the presentation, this project does not meet the criteria for sound barriers from a Federal standpoint to make use of federal*

dollars. To use State funds for new barriers at a new location, a Legislative Act would be required.

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Where are property takings?
 - *Jeffrey Keefe responded – The project includes two temporary construction easements, both of which are on the east side of Route 33 (Saugatuck Avenue) at Interchange 17, immediately north and south of the highway right-of-way line that encompasses Bridge No. 62 (north of Charles street). Both easements will be extinguished once the work is completed.*

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: This time frame conflicts with Walk Bridge and East Ave reconstruction in East Norwalk. Detours off of exit 16 will create gridlock. Lane closures will result in cars and trucks cutting thru to Route 136 to Westport.
 - *Brett Stark responded – As noted in the presentation, we recognize that multiple construction projects will be occurring at the same time in this area. When it comes time to do the lateral slide replacement of Bridge 62 over the two weekend periods, the construction activities will be publicized and coordinated in advance to ensure no simultaneous full closures or major activities are going on that would cause extensive gridlock. For detours during the lateral slide periods, traffic will be signed to use Interchange 18 Sherwood Island Connector. This also applies for the closure of the Northbound On-Ramp at Interchange 17. While it is otherwise difficult to control what local traffic will do during these periods, we will be seeking to use State and Local police officers at key intersections to assist in mitigation where possible.*
 - *Jeffrey Keefe added – Work on other ramps where detours are required will be performed during off-peak hours and will be re-opened during peak hour operations.*

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Since this project is approved, funded and ready for summer bids, is there any opportunity to postpone it until after all the East Norwalk projects are complete?
 - *Brett Stark responded – At this point in time we are not looking to postpone this project. There are environmental permits that have expiration dates attached to them that we don't want to let lapse, and this project has already been around for a long time and includes much needed improvements along the corridor. While we recognize the potential concerns, the project schedule continues to be coordinated with the Walk Bridge.*

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: We want to know PRIOR to bid awards exactly where construction staging will be, for equipment, materials and employee vehicles.

- *John Deliberto responded – It is extremely difficult to map out the staging areas ahead of time. There are quite a few areas available within State Right-of-Way including gore areas at the Interchange ramps and along the side of the highway. While we anticipate the contractor to use those areas, the contractor may also elect to seek out agreements with private and public property owners on their own. What staging areas they use depends on the type of equipment, sequence of operations, and materials and stockpiling, and are subject to change depending on the contractor's specific means and methods. It really isn't possible to delineate these areas prior to award and working with the contractor.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: What are you planning for noise attenuation during overnight construction? People need to sleep. Regardless of decibel standards.
 - *Robert Nowak responded – We understand that sleep is important, and that construction comes with a lot of noise. Most all the equipment comes with some sort of muffler system though some activities may require modification for a short durational period. The construction team will field any complaints regarding noise. The procedure is to evaluate the complaint by using a noise meter to determine the noise level at the location in which the complaint is made. If it exceeds the allowable 90dB threshold or is in close proximity, construction will modify their operations to minimize the amount of noise at the specified location where the meter is being read. The contractor is also aware of the requirements necessary to maintain a noise level less than 90dB. In any case, construction will make every effort to accommodate the residents in the area regarding noise concerns.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Why can't STATE FUNDS be used to finally install sound barriers for the missing highway portion in Norwalk???
 - *Brett Stark responded – As noted in our previous response and discussed in the presentation, the allocation of State funds for new noise barriers at a new location requires an act by the State legislature. A local legislator must be the one to initiate the request, it is not the matter of DOT requesting the funds.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: So did DOT actually request the State funds for barriers? They can't allocate if you don't ask.
 - *See response provided above.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: IS DOT still considering a Diverging Diamond Interchange for Exit 16?
 - *Andy Fesenmeyer responded – The Diverging Diamond Interchange at Exit 16 is being considered under State Project 102-331. This project is currently in the concept stage and options are being evaluated. For more information, the contact person for this project is Matt Vail at matthew.vail@ct.gov.*

- Email from Westport Shellfish Commission: How will the project remediate stormwater runoff into the Saugatuck River? Does this project meet the new EPA MS4 mandates about stormwater runoff remediation as well as CTDEEP's 2019 General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater. It is requested that runoff abatement provisions be addressed now while the bridge is being worked on.
 - *Brett Stark responded – This question has been previously addressed as part of the permitting process for Project 102-295. The work that is being performed on the Saugatuck River Bridge (Bridge No. 64), is effectively maintenance type work including deck joint repair and minor concrete repair. The Saugatuck River Bridge was previously replaced under a separate project and was permitted in accordance with all pertinent environmental policies that were in place at that point in time. Regarding the MS4 question, under the MS4 program, DOT is responsible for reducing stormwater runoff from impervious areas to the maximum extent practical. On this project we've looked at opportunities to install stormwater quality best management practices. DOT's overall goal as an organization is to attain a two percent (2%) statewide reduction in directly connected impervious areas (DCIA), relative to its owned infrastructure. The proposed improvements under Project 102-295, as designed, will decrease DICA for the project corridor from 29.90 acres pre-construction to 19.10 acres post-construction, an overall reduction of 36.12 percent. This project has been developed in accordance with the MS4 Program and will achieve those quantifiable reductions. Again, the scope of work for the Saugatuck River Bridge is limited within the larger context of the overall safety improvements project and does not involve any work within or direct discharge to the Saugatuck River.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Back to staging again, Contractor agreements with private property owners can and do negatively impact residential abutters. Can you make it mandatory that DOT must approve all staging agreements prior to signing?
 - *John Deliberto responded – If the contractor is operating in accordance with all State and Local regulations and the property owner agrees for them to use their property, and there is no environmental restrictions then DOT does not have the ability to restrict the contractors use of private property. We do require the contractor to furnish a written agreement to the State. However from the communities perspective, if there are complaints or reasons why there are issues with the contractor staging area, DOT will work with the community and the contractor to see if an alternate area can be used, maybe put up some fencing, try to alter the contractors hours of operations, if possible, in order to accommodate those concerns. If the contractor's activities are negatively impacting the community, please reach out to the project team and we'll do what we can to mitigate those.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Comment: 90 decibels is way too loud! Especially in winter when there is reduced foliage and humidity.
 - *Robert Nowak Responded: The project includes a typical winter shutdown period between December 1 and March 31 (when foliage is reduced) in which no major*

activities are anticipated. Major generators for noise on this project will be associated with the demolition of Bridge No. 62. Other noise that can be anticipated throughout the project duration include banging of tailgates and use of heavy equipment, primarily along the highway. The amount of local noise should be less than that seen as part of the Strawberry Hill Bridge Replacement project and is not expected to reach the 90dB threshold. Any concerns regarding noise should be directed to the construction team.

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Off peak closures will coincide with heavy overnight truck traffic. Will trucks be required to use only US1?
 - *Jeffrey Keefe responded – It is anticipated that construction operations along I-95 will require off-peak lane and shoulder closures, a full detour is not required. For the ramp work at Interchange 17, traffic will be routed to Interchange 18 Sherwood Island Connector. For ramp work at Interchange 16 ramps, traffic will be routed to Interchange 14.*
 - *Andy Fesenmeyer added – A big part of this project includes messaging and public outreach. The messaging efforts are intended to extend far beyond the project limits and are especially important for trucks who are long hauling through this area, so they know to seek alternative routes. This has been very beneficial on other projects to help reduce truck traffic during construction.*
 - *Brett Stark requested District Construction confirm the anticipated limits for messaging.*
 - *John Deliberto responded – DOT is hiring a professional public relations firm for the outreach effort during construction. Messaging will likely cover New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. These states will run messages on their message boards advising traffic of the upcoming construction operations associated with Project 102-295 and to seek alternative routes.*

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: How does this work impact any future Northeast Corridor High Speed Rail system alongside or underground abutting I95?
 - *Andy Fesenmeyer responded – Project 102-295 should not have any impact on the rail system in this area. All our work is generally within the highway corridor that is already there. Our work shouldn't affect the rail plans either way.*

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Why is I95 being reconstructed under the East Avenue Bridge #60 when the entire bridge structure may need to be reconstructed?
 - *Brett Stark – The goal of this project is to tie into the work being done on the Yankee Doodle Bridge and geared towards the median reconstruction / roadway improvements. Regarding Bridge No. 60, we did obtain a design exception for the shoulder widths, recognizing there may be a planned future project there. The work that we are going to do is really focused on the limits of the highway including resurfacing, drainage improvements, etc. and is necessary to leave this stretch of highway in a state of good repair, even up until such time that any project for Interchange 16 may be undertaken.*

- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: How do we access the chat and Q&A transcript?
 - *Written and Verbal response provided: Please send us your contact information and we can provide you with a list of questions asked. All answers are provided verbally, and a recording of the entire meeting will be posted to the web page within a few days.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: How many people, not including presenters, are on this forum?
 - *Written and Verbal response provided: There have been 18 separate attendees (not presenters) noted up to this point.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Please provide details on project 102-331 East Ave Bridge.
 - *Andy Fesenmeyer responded – Again, the contact person for Project 102-331 is Matt Vail. Any questions can be directed to him. (matthew.vail@ct.gov)*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Comment only: Environmental Justice advocates might suggest East Norwalk not being treated fairly. Darien and Greenwich both got sound barriers and without additional capacity as far as we know. In fact, Darien even got replacement sound barriers, and in some areas they have double runs of barriers. Seems Norwalk is being neglected again by DOT and our State legislators.
 - *Noted.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: There is serious flooding on I95 just north of Exit 16, especially since Norwalk removed retention pond. How will this project reduce flooding? Merely by reducing impervious surface?
 - *Brett Stark responded – As part of the presentation we discussed that the flooding at Interchange 16 is attributable to the existing highway drainage being undersized. As part of this project, we will be installing a supplemental drainage system that splits off of the existing system in the vicinity of East Avenue to an underground infiltration system below the Hendricks Avenue commuter parking lot, then to a vegetative channel along Hendricks Avenue and below the Yankee Doodle Bridge, and back into a new culvert underneath Hendricks Avenue where it ultimately outlets through the reconstructed outfall into the Norwalk River.*
- Chat Question from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association: Can you bring up the detour maps? What will stop traffic from going down East Ave to Route 136? YOU NEED TO POST NO TRUCKS ON EAST AVENUE! Please.
 - *Brett Stark Responded – (Using google maps to re-iterate the plans for detour routes) During overnight periods when we are paving the ramps at Interchange*

16 traffic will be directed to Interchange 14 to Route 1 back into Norwalk as needed. At Interchange 17, for ramp closure periods, traffic will be directed to Interchange 18 Sherwood Island Connector to Route 1 and back into Westport as needed. Regarding the aspect of trucks on East Avenue to 136, we are not planning to sign that as a detour route as part of this project.

- Chat Question received from East Norwalk Neighborhood Association following the conclusion of the Live Teams Event: East Norwalk Neighborhood Assn truly appreciates the detailed presentation and your responses. Can you provide us link to video in a format that we can post on our website and social media and in email blasts.
 - *Noted. Separate response provided.*

Adjournment: The email address, telephone number and project webpage address were provided for any additional questions or comments regarding the project following the meeting. Attendees were reminded that any additional comments will be received until June 17, 2021 and to please take the voluntary survey so we can continue to improve upon future presentations.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m. and was generally well received by those in attendance.