STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Date: October 22, 2024
Project Name: Safety Improvements on Route 82 (Phase 1)
State Project Number: 0103-0274
Municipality: Norwich
Staff Contact: Kevin Fleming

This assessment is being conducted in conformance to the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Environmental Classification Document (ECD) to determine Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) obligations.

The Safety Improvements on Route 82 (Phase 1) project consists of implementation of a "road diet" in conjunction with installation of a raised median from Dunham Street to Fairmount Street. The "road diet" will reduce the current four-lane roadway down to two lanes, while restricting driveway access to right-in-right-out only. The project also includes removal of the traffic signals to install a single-lane roundabout at Osgood Street and Asylum Street/Mechanic Street, and a left- turn median opening at Mount Pleasant Street to provide eastbound traveling vehicles access to the existing plaza. U-turn capability at the Dunham Street intersection will be provided for Route 82 westbound traffic to access driveways on the south side of Route 82 between Osgood Street and Dunham Street. Sidewalks will be replaced throughout the project area and improved crosswalks will be implemented. Since the time of the initial project scoping in June 2022, the project has undergone a reduction in scope to include fewer roundabouts and reduced rights-of-way impacts. An additional Public Information Meeting was held on January 18, 2024, to further inform the public of the project.

This project was scoped in the Environmental Monitor on June 7, 2022; a Public Scoping Meeting was held on June 23, 2022. The public comment period remained open until the close of business on July 8, 2022. During the scoping period CTDOT received comments from one State agency, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), as well as from the public at the Scoping Meeting. A report of the public scoping meeting is attached along with CTDEEP's comments. Comments are addressed in the appropriate sections below where needed.

The proposed action is non-site specific, or encompasses multiple sites;	☐
Current site ownership:	☐ N/A, ☒ State; ☒Municipal, ☒ Private, ☐ Other: Please Explain.
Anticipated ownership upon project completion:	☐ N/A, ☒ State; ☒Municipal, ☐ Private, ☐ Other: Please Explain.

Locational Guide Map Criteria:
http://ctmaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ba47efccdb304e02893b7b8e8cff556a

Priority Funding Area factors:
☒ Designated as a Priority Funding Area, including ☒ Balanced, or ☐ Village PFA;
☒ Urban Area or Urban Cluster, as designated by the most recent US Census Data;
☒ Public Transit, defined as being within a ½ mile buffer surrounding existing or planned mass transit;
☒ Existing or planned sewer service from an adopted Wastewater Facility Plan;
☒ Existing or planned water service from an adopted Public Drinking Water Supply Plan;
☒ Existing local bus service provided 7 days a week.

Conservation Area factors:
☐ Core Forest Area(s), defined as greater than 250 acres based on the 2006 Land Cover Dataset;
☐ Existing or potential drinking water supply watershed(s);
☐ Aquifer Protection Area(s);
☐ Wetland Soils greater than 25 acres;
☐ Undeveloped Prime, Statewide Important and/or locally important agricultural soils greater than 25 acres;
☐ Storm Surge Inundation Zone(s);
☐ 100 year Flood Zone(s);
☐ Critical Habitat;
☐ Locally Important Conservation Area(s),
☐ Protected Land (list type): Enter text.
☐ Local, State, or National Historic District(s).

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) Section 22a-1a-3 Determination of Environmental Significance (Direct/Indirect)

1. **Impact on water quality, including surface water and groundwater**

   Water Quality – No negative impacts are anticipated. All CTDOT projects must conform to the CTDOT Standard Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities, and Incidental Construction Form 819. Section 1.10.03, Environmental Compliance, specifically deals with water pollution control and Best Management Practices (BMP).

   Surface Water – No negative impacts are anticipated.

   Stormwater – No negative impacts are anticipated as Best Management Practices will be employed regarding stormwater management. Registration under *CTDEEP's General Permit for Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters Associated with Construction Activities* will be completed if needed. Any CTDOT project that changes impervious area, stormwater drainage or drainage patterns pre to post construction shall meet the requirements of the CTDEEP's General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Department of Transportation Separate Storm Sewer Systems (DOT MS4 Permit) and submit a CTDOT MS4 Designer Worksheet.

Groundwater – No negative impacts are anticipated. All CTDOT projects conform to the CTDOT Standards Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities and Incidental Construction Form 819. Section 1.10.03, Environmental Compliance, specifically deals with water pollution control and Best Management Practices. As design progresses, a testing plan will be developed to assess soil and groundwater in any moderate- to high-risk areas within which intrusive construction activities are proposed. Remediation measures will be put in place to mitigate potential impacts if contaminated soils or groundwater is confirmed by the testing.

2. **Effect on a public water supply system -** No negative impacts are anticipated. The project is not located within a source of public drinking water.

3. **Effect on flooding, in-stream flows, erosion or sedimentation:**

   Flooding – No negative impacts are anticipated. The project is not located within a 100-year flood zone.

   In-stream flows – No negative impacts are anticipated.

   Erosion or Sedimentation – No negative impacts are anticipated. All work will be consistent with the 2024 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

4. **Disruption or alteration of an historic, archaeological, cultural, or recreational building, object, district, site or its surroundings –** No negative impacts are anticipated. A CTDOT project review, with concurrence from SHPO, resulted in a conditional No Adverse Effect finding under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This finding is made conditional upon avoidance of any structural impacts to the architectural resources at 6 Asylum Street, 14 Asylum Street, 17 Asylum Street, 28 Maple Street, 41 Peck Street, or 181 Elizabeth Street – all found to be NRHP-eligible as part of local group resources. These structures are to be protected through bounding with high visibility safety fencing during construction.

5. **Effect on natural communities and upon critical species of animal or plant and their habitat; interference with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species –** The project is not located within a Natural Diversity Database area. According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) mapping, the Northern Long-eared Bat appeared to be present, however USFWS reporting indicated the project will have no effect on this federally listed species.

6. **Use of pesticides, toxic or hazardous materials or any other substance in such quantities as to create extensive detrimental environmental impact –** No negative impacts are anticipated. Land use in the vicinity of the project limits and the potential for excess soil as a result of construction will be considered during project design. Should there be any sites with known contamination issues in the vicinity of the project, additional study will be performed within the project area and/or adjacent right-of-way. As design progresses, a testing plan will be developed to assess soil and groundwater in any high-risk areas within which intrusive construction activities are proposed. Remediation measures will be put in place to mitigate potential impacts if contaminated soils or groundwater is confirmed by the testing. If needed, registration under CTDEEP's *General Permit for Contaminated Soil and/or Sediment Management* (Staging & Transfer) will be obtained, and soil management will be conducted in accordance with the General Permit.

7. **Substantial aesthetic or visual effects –** No negative impacts are anticipated.

8. **Inconsistency with (a) the policies of the State Plan of Conservation and Development developed in accordance with Section 16a-30 of the CT General Statutes, (b) other relevant state agency plans, and (c) applicable regional or municipal land use plans –**

   This project is consistent with the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development. CTDOT has adopted a programmatic approach for meeting the requirements of CGS Chapter 297 Section 16a-31(a) and Chapter 297 Section 16a-35(c) and 16a-35(d) for determining consistency of proposed actions with the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development, as indicated in a memo from CTDOT to OPM. In accordance with that memo, CTDOT has determined that this Project is exempt from the consistency requirements of CGS Section 16a-31(a) since the proposed action consists of Traffic Improvements.

9. **Disruption or division of an established community or inconsistency with adopted municipal and regional plans, including impacts on existing housing where sections 22a-1b(c) and 8-37t of the CGS require additional analysis –** No negative impacts are anticipated. This project is not in conflict with any municipal or regional plans.

10. **Displacement or addition of substantial numbers of people –** This project results in five (5) total property acquisitions, four are commercial businesses and one is a commercial/residential mix. Since there are acquisitions associated with the project, the Department will follow a relocation process that will work to prevent injurious displacement of the people and businesses affected by the proposed action. Specifically, the Department's Rights of Way Office will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act). The Office of Rights of Way completed a Stage Relocation Survey in October 2023 that found a sufficient inventory of properties to accommodate displacements were available based on typical market conditions and inventories found during the time of the survey.

11. **Substantial increase in congestion (traffic, recreational, other) –** No negative impacts are anticipated. Pedestrian detours during construction will be required while sidewalks are being replaced. All temporary impacts to pedestrian mobility during construction will be coordinated in advance so signage can be placed. Vehicular detours will be required and will be developed as the project design moves ahead. There will be no closures of Route 82 and all businesses will remain open during construction. However, temporary closures of side streets may be required for short periods of time. Once the project is complete, traffic congestion will be reduced within the project area.

12. **A substantial increase in the type or rate of energy use as a direct or indirect result of this action** No negative impacts are anticipated.

13. **The creation of a hazard to human health or safety –** No negative impacts are anticipated. The project will be reviewed for the potential of having hazardous material constituents in existing infrastructure components. Testing will be performed on any suspect materials. Should the presence of hazardous materials be confirmed through the testing, specifications to properly handle and dispose the hazardous materials will be incorporated into the design to mitigate

potential health or safety. Therefore, significant impacts associated with hazardous materials or waste sites are not anticipated.

14. **Effect on air quality -** No negative impacts are anticipated. Any potential temporary impacts during construction can be avoided or limited by proper operation of construction equipment and adherence to regulations limiting idling of engines.

15. **Effect on ambient noise levels -** No negative impacts are anticipated. If the potential for noise impacts are identified as design progresses, a noise study will be conducted accordingly. Any noise impacts during construction will be temporary and will be minimized to the best extent practicable by compliance with CTDOT Standard Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities and Incidental Construction Form 819 regarding construction noise pollution:

    "1.10.05 – Noise Pollution: The contractor shall take measures to control noise intensity caused by his construction operations and equipment, including but not limited to equipment used for drilling, pile driving, blasting, and excavating or hauling. All methods and devices employed to minimize noise shall be subject to continuing approval of the Engineer. The maximum allowable level of noise at the nearest residence or occupied building shall be 90 decibels on the "A" weighted scale (dB(A)). Any operation that exceeds this standard will cease until a different construction methodology is developed to allow work to proceed within the 90-dB(A) limit."

16. **Effect on existing land resources and landscapes, including coastal and inland wetlands –** No negative impacts are anticipated.

17. **Effect on agricultural resources –** No negative impacts are anticipated.

18. **Adequacy of existing or proposed utilities and infrastructure –** No negative impacts are anticipated. Coordination with utility companies will take place as needed.

19. **Effect on greenhouse gas emissions as a direct or indirect result of the action –** No negative impacts are anticipated. Construction phase impacts on greenhouse gas emissions will be limited. Any potential temporary impacts during construction can be avoided or limited by adherence to regulations limiting idling of engines.

20. **Effect of a changing climate on the action, including any resiliency measures incorporated into the action –** No negative impact is anticipated. The project is located outside of the coastal boundary and will not be uniquely exposed to climate change hazards.

21. **Any other substantial effect on natural, cultural, recreational, or scenic resources-** No other substantial effects are anticipated.

22. **Cumulative effects –** This project does not involve any cumulative effects that have the potential for significant effects on the environment.

Conclusion:

After examining any potential environmental impacts and reviewing all comments received, CTDOT has concluded that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) will not be required for the Safety Improvements on Route 82 (Phase 1) project. Publication of this document to the Environmental Monitor shall satisfy the agency's responsibilities under Section 22a-1a-7 of the RCSA. Coordination with CTDEEP will continue, to address comments received, as appropriate.

Connecticut Department of
ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION
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Memo

To: Scott Bushee, Supervising Transportation Engineer

From: Frederick Riese, Sr. Environmental Analyst Frederick Riese

CC: Peter Zaidel, DEEP Remediation Division

Date: 7/7/2022

Re: Safety Improvements for Route 82, Norwich

These scoping comments on the above-referenced project reflect review by the DEEP Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) and the Remediation Division.

To address the simplest issue first, the project area is not located within any NDDB review area.

The Remediation Division files within the project area were reviewed for any known or potential impacts to environmental media and potential impacts that could result from the proposed actions under this project. Our CEPA comments would ideally focus around 5 general themes for your consideration:

1. The resources of the proposed site of the project,
2. The environmental limitations of the site,
3. Any potential alternatives to the action proposed,
4. Any permits or approvals that may be necessary for the proposed action, and
5. Any appropriate measures that would mitigate the impact of the proposed action.

However, at such an early stage of the CEPA process, Remediation does not have enough information from the project description to offer considerations on items #1, 3, or 4, and likely would not be able to until more detailed engineering plans and more specific project plans (e.g., which 44 properties DOT anticipates impacting and which 5 properties DOT anticipates acquiring). We look forward to offering additional insights at such a later time as is helpful to DOT.

We can however speak to items #2 and 5 above, which are largely intertwined.

#2 – Limitations of the site

There were several properties located within the study area that were in a formal Remediation program– 401, 564, and 565 West Main Street. The entries are largely 20+ years old and suggest minimal known impact, though it appears that groundwater in the vicinity of 564 West Main Street (a gasoline station) was impacted with MTBE in the past. A note from 2005 suggested groundwater was impacted above the Groundwater Protection Criteria of 70 ug/L at the site. Given MTBE's discontinued use, it's likely the concentrations would have come down over time, but the possibility remains for impacted media to still be present. Little to no information could be found for 401 and 565 West Main Street.

Several spill reports were found on our public portal suggesting releases <10 gallons in volume of gasoline occurred at 406 West Main Street, at another gasoline station. The site is not in any known cleanup program, so the impact to environmental media at the site is unknown.

While the sites were never enrolled in a formal remediation program, there is also the possibility for soil and groundwater in the vicinity of 425 and 456 West Main Street to be impacted by chlorinated solvents due the presence of a dry cleaners (Westgate Dry Cleaners) who appear to have operated at the two facilities. Based on hazardous waste manifests and City of Norwich online information, it appears as though Westgate operated at 425 West Main Street until around 2008 or so, and then moved across the street to 456 West Main Street after that time. Hazardous waste manifests found on our public portal suggest that waste TCE and PCE were both generated at these sites and may have impacted environmental media in the vicinity of these two properties. However, as the sites were not in a formal cleanup program, we have no information about the condition of soil and groundwater in the vicinity of these two properties.

Fortunately, it appears as though public water runs through the project area and we could not identify any known private drinking water wells within the project area that could be impacted, which of course does not guarantee that there are none, but reduces the likelihood of drinking water wells that have been or could be impacted by project activities.

#5 – Mitigation measures

As mentioned above, we cannot offer much in the way of distinct mitigation measures until more detailed project specifics are known. In the meantime, the Remediation Division would suggest that the above potentially-impacted sites and associated environmental media (soil and groundwater) be carefully considered if DOT plans to acquire or impact any of these above-referenced properties as part of this project. DOT should be aware that there exists a potential for both petroleum-impacted soil and groundwater and/or chlorinated solvents-impacted soil and groundwater within the project area that could be exposed to site workers and the public as part of this project. However, the current environmental conditions within the project area are unknown due to a lack of recent data or a lack of any data for these sites.

DEEP appreciates the opportunity to review the scoping notice and to submit these comments. Please feel free to contact me ((860) 424-4110 or frederick.riese@ct.gov) should you have any questions.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REPORT OF PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

State Project No. 0103-0274
Safety Improvements on Route 82 in Norwich

June 23rd, 2022 – 7:00 PM
Kelly STEAM Magnet Middle School, Norwich, CT

ATTENDANCE:

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Scott Bushee P.E.	Highway Design - Project Manager *(Presenter)*
Michael Laurice P.E.	Highway Design - Project Engineer *(Presenter)*
Dennis McDonald	Rights-of-Way - Coordinator *(Presenter)*
Mark Lenters P.E.	Kimley-Horn (Consultant firm) *(Presenter)*
Garrett Eucalitto	Deputy Commissioner
Shannon King	Strategic Communications Manager
Michael Calabrese P.E.	Highway Design - Transportation Division Chief
Matthew Vail P.E.	Highway Design - Principal Engineer
Colin Baummer P.E.	Traffic Design – Project Manager
Kevin McKernan	Traffic Design – Project Designer
Eileen Ego P.E.	District 2 Construction – District Engineer
Jason Burgess P.E.	District 2 Construction – Supervising Engineer
Mark Elliot	District 2 Construction – Project Engineer
Jessica Darling P.E.	Highway Design - Project Designer
Zachary Duell	Highway Design - Project Designer
Michael B. Julian	Highway Design - Project Designer
William Strong	Highway Design - Project Designer

Additional Notable Attendees

Catherine Osten	Connecticut State Senator
Peter Nystrom	City of Norwich - Mayor
Patrick McLaughlin P.E.	City of Norwich - Public Works Director
Joseph DeLucia	City Council Member - President Pro-Tempore
Swarnjit Singh	City Council Member
Stacy Gould	City Council Member
Derell Q. Wilson	City Council Member

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this meeting was to present the 30% design plans for State Project No. 103-274, *Safety Improvements on Route 82 in Norwich (Phase 1*). This project is the first of two planned corridor safety improvement projects on Route 82 in Norwich. This meeting was held in-person and was also live streamed to YouTube.

PRESENTATION:

Beginning at 6:30 PM, informational roundabout videos were played on screen for the public to watch as they entered the meeting facility. Project handouts with comment sheets were provided to attendees outside the auditorium -- available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Approximately 120 people attended the meeting, including residents, property owners, and local business representatives.

The formal presentation started at 7:00 PM and was initiated by Mayor Peter Nystrom who introduced the Department and noted the meeting format. A technical presentation was delivered by Scott Bushee (Project Manager) and Michael Laurice (Project Engineer), which covered the purpose and need of the project, location of improvements, existing conditions, proposed design, and cost/schedule. Rights-of-Way information was provided by Dennis McDonald (ROW Coordinator). Mark Lenters (Kimley-Horn) explained his involvement with the Department's design development over the past few years. Mr. Lenters expressed support for the proposed design based on his extensive roundabout corridor experience. Mr. Lenters also reviewed examples of other roundabout corridors on a national level, including safety and operation benefits, as well as business and tax growth.

The presentation covered the following items:

- Title VI Civil Rights details and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) process
- Project Location: The entire project area of Route 82, encompassing Phases 1 and 2, extends from approximately Salem Plaza east to Fairmont Street, between I-395 and the Thames River/downtown in the City of Norwich. Phase 1, the subject of this public informational meeting, runs from Banas Court to Fairmount Street.
- Purpose and Need / Existing Conditions: To address the safety and access needs on Route 82, which experiences higher-than-average crash rates at both intersections and driveways. Seven intersections along this stretch of Route 82 are currently controlled by traffic signals, and the existing lane configuration makes turning left into driveways and at intersections difficult.
- Proposed Design: The proposed safety solution involves the construction of a raised median along Route 82 for access management, combined with replacing seven traffic signals with six modern roundabouts. Phase 1, which was the focus of this presentation,

would replace three traffic signals at Asylum/Mechanic Streets, Mount Pleasant Street, and Osgood Street with modern roundabouts. The Dunham Street intersection would be redesigned to allow for U-turn capability but would remain a signalized intersection until its conversion to a roundabout during Phase 2. A video was presented showing a visual simulation of the proposed Phase 1 design. Safety and environmental benefits, as well as multimodal accommodation of the proposed design, were presented as part of the project.

- Impacted Properties & Rights-of-Way (ROW) Processes: It was noted that several private properties would be affected by the proposed work including the probable acquisition of five businesses. The ROW process and relocation procedures were described in detail by Dennis McDonald.
- Technical Review – Mark Lenters with Kimley-Horn: Mark Lenters, a leader in roundabout design, corridor studies, and safety audits, provided a national perspective on the proposed design. Mark emphasized the safety and economic benefits of roundabout corridors by providing examples across the country where roundabout corridors were successful in traffic safety, operation, and commercial development.
- Construction Considerations: Traffic delay and impacts to local businesses during construction could be mitigated by:
    - Substantially relocating utilities prior to the roadway work
    - Focusing work on a single intersection at any given time
    - Closing select side streets for two-week periods
    - Utilizing nightwork for certain construction operations
    - Providing a community and business liaison to communicate with the contractor, residents, and business owners.

DISCUSSION (QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS):

Following the presentation, a question-and-answer session was held for meeting attendees to communicate their questions, concerns, and feedback to the project team. Some attendees expressed their support and recognized the need for the project, while others expressed concern and were in opposition.

- Many concerns were related to the impact of businesses, including:
    - Total acquisitions associated with the proposed design (five in Phase 1 and four anticipated in Phase 2).
    - Loss of business revenue during the relocation and re-establishment period including the potential for job loss by employees.
    - Business relocations in regions with less traffic volume and visibility, which may result in loss of revenue due to less advertising.

- Loss of revenue for all businesses along the corridor while each Phase is under construction, due to the public avoiding the area.
  - Response: The Department explained the ROW process – appraisals, negotiations, relocation benefits and reminded everyone of plans to hire a community and business liaison and plans to phase construction in a way that could mitigate some of the traffic delays during construction.

- Multiple requests for a smaller scale project and/or for alternative safety measures to implement prior to the proposed design were made, including:
  - Left-turn lanes at each intersection
  - Solar-powered speed signs
  - Speed bumps
  - Increased police enforcement
  - Traffic cameras
    - Response: While left-turn lanes would help solve some safety problems at intersections, it would not provide the same level of intersection safety that could be achieved with a roundabout and would not solve traffic operation and safety problems occurring between the intersections which account for a significant percentage of crashes. The Department previously investigated adding a two-way left-turn lane as a potential solution; however, this would likely make left turns from driveways more difficult and would involve more extensive impacts to properties between intersections due to widening for a full additional lane along the corridor.
    - Speed bumps do not address the left-turn operation and safety needs at driveways or intersections and could result in drivers accelerating rapidly between speed bumps resulting in further safety problems. Traffic volumes are too high for application on Route 82.
    - Other solutions, such as solar-powered speed signs, increased police enforcement, and cameras at intersections are not permanent solutions. Although they may slow speeds for a period, they do not address the need for access control, speed mitigation and driver behavior resulting from traffic congestion, which lend themselves to crashes and injuries.

- Suggestion was made for a larger gap between construction of Phases 1 and 2 (15-20 years) to give local businesses time to recover from construction and provide a trial period for the Phase 1 roundabouts.

- Concern was raised that side streets will be used as a cut-through to avoid roundabouts, during and after the construction process.
  - Response: Some additional side street traffic is expected during construction as people will use their GPS to find alternate routes. If it becomes a problem, DOT can discuss mitigation strategies with the city. The Department is confident that fewer drivers will use side streets as a cut-through once roundabouts are installed, because Route 82 will operate much more efficiently.

- Concerns were raised regarding congestion at the New London Turnpike intersection, part of Phase 2. Traffic is rerouted to New London Turnpike when there is a crash on Interstate-395.

- Request was made for the outside shoulder to be marked as a bike lane.
  - Response: The Department will coordinate with the City of Norwich to determine if the shoulder can be designated as a bike lane.
- Question on how delays from school buses will be addressed, since they can no longer be passed in between stops, and if drivers will need to stop for school buses traveling in the opposite direction.
  - Response: The project intent is to provide a safer roadway environment for all users.
- Who is responsible for removing snow from the center median?
  - Response: Only the crosswalk requires snow removal, and the Department will coordinate with the city.
- Question on how large trucks will be able to make their deliveries.
  - Response: The Department has coordinated with business owners along Phase 1 of the corridor to best ensure the design allows trucks to enter and exit each driveway. These large vehicles may utilize the truck apron provided at each roundabout to proceed through the intersections, however, are not permitted to travel on or over the center median, except for emergency vehicles.
- Comments suggesting the public is unclear on how to use a roundabout.
  - Response: The Department acknowledged that public outreach and education could be beneficial. For pedestrians, crossing is simplified because of reduced speeds, larger gaps, less unprotected crossing distance, and only needing to cross one lane at a time.
- Question on whether utility lines can be re-located underground.
  - Response: The Department investigated with Norwich Public Utilities and estimates that relocating the overhead utilities to underground would cost $18 million, while relocating in-kind (above-ground) is $850,000.
- Request for beautification of green spaces at and adjacent to the roundabouts, and question on who is responsible for maintenance.
  - Response: The Department is open to working with the city on what is desirable in the green spaces. The current plan is to utilize native/multi-colored plantings, illuminated from below, that require minimal maintenance and provide good aesthetics and visibility to drivers.
  - The city will be responsible for maintenance of the central island, trees along the median, and other green spaces.
- Concerns about impacts to the public bus system, which currently stops as needed to pick-up passengers and is not limited to stops at bus shelters.
  - Response: The Department will work with public transit system, SEAT, and the city to ensure this is addressed. At this time, the bus shelter within phase 1 will be moved a few hundred feet west across the Mount Pleasant Street intersection.
- Question on lighting at each roundabout.
  - Response: The Department explained that a thorough engineering study will be performed on the lighting at each roundabout to ensure all road users will have adequate visibility.
- Was a feasibility study performed to find other solutions that had less impacts on properties?

- Response: The Department performed a detailed feasibility study evaluating different alternatives and found that roundabouts with a raised median were the best solution with respect to safety and the most limited in project footprint/property impacts. Many design iterations have been performed to limit the number and extent of impacted properties.

- Concern that the underground water main is old and fragile and that it should be upgraded during project construction to ensure proper service.
- Comment made that emergency services will not be able to utilize a pre-emption system in this section of the corridor since there will be no traffic signals.
- Some residents stated support for the project, recognized the need for safety and acknowledged the need for the roundabout corridor.
- Concern on available gaps in traffic for vehicles exiting driveways after reducing from two lanes in each direction down to one.
  - Response: The Department presented the traffic model that displayed larger gaps due to improved efficiency; traffic will be steadier and will not come in large platoons. Vehicles will only be able to make right turns and only need a gap in one lane of traffic, which will make for an easier maneuver and require shorter gaps. Reduced speeds will further assist with access and safety.
- Question on when the estimate for the cost of the project was made and if it had built-in contingency.
  - Response: The project cost estimate accounted for inflation and has approximately 15% built-in contingency.
- The Department noted that there are socioeconomic costs due to emergency services needing to respond to a high number of crashes on this corridor, which would be reduced after completion of this project.
- Question on why the decision was made to begin construction on the eastern side of the corridor and if each phase is independent of the other.
  - Response: The eastern end of the two projects has less traffic volume and all roundabouts would be single lane designs, which are simpler for drivers to navigate and become acquainted with.
  - Phase 1 of the safety improvement work is independent of Phase 2 and can provide good traffic operation and safety within its section, without Phase 2 being constructed.
- Questions on if there will be a 'choke point' at the Dunham Street traffic signal.
  - Response: The Department's Traffic Engineering Unit has reviewed adjacent signalized intersections and does not anticipate any operation problems. The traffic volumes being managed through the signal will not change as a result of the project.

The meeting was adjourned around 9:45 PM. Mr. Bushee reminded everyone of additional resources on the project website and contact information on the hand-out. Mr. Bushee reiterated that the design team could be contacted for on-site or virtual meetings for specific property inquires or additional information at any time.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REPORT OF PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

State Project No. 0103-0274
Safety Improvements on Route 82 in Norwich

January 18, 2024 – 6:00 p.m. Open Forum - 7:00 p.m. Presentation
Kelly STEAM Magnet Middle School – 25 Mahan Drive, Norwich, Connecticut

In Attendance:

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Scott Bushee	Highway Design – Principal Engineer (*Introductions*)
Salvatore Aresco	Highway Design – Project Manager *(Presenter)*
Michael Laurice	Highway Design – Project Engineer *(Presenter)*
Matthew Geanacopoulos	Rights-of-Way – Coordinator *(Presenter)*
Mark Lenters	Kimley-Horn (Consultant Firm) *(Presenter)*
Michael Calabrese	Highway Design – Division Chief
Shannon Burnham	Public Involvement Manager
Colin Baummer	Traffic Design – Project Manager
Jared Newton	Traffic Design – Engineer
Jason Burgess	District 2 Construction – Supervising Engineer
Michael Julian	Highway Design – Project Designer
Stephen Nahorney	Highway Design – Project Designer
William Strong	Highway Design – Project Designer

Additional Notable Attendees

Peter Nystrom	City of Norwich – Mayor
Patrick McLaughlin	City of Norwich – Public Works Director
Joseph A. DeLucia	City of Norwich – President Pro-Tempore
Swarnjit Singh	City of Norwich – Council Member
Shiela Hayes	City of Norwich – Council Member
Mark M. Bettencourt	City of Norwich – Council Member
Christopher LaRose	Norwich Public Utilities – General Manager
Kate Rattan	Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECCOG)
Derell Wilson	State Representative

PURPOSE/HISTORY:
The purpose of this meeting was to present the updated design plans for State Project No. 0103-0274, *Safety Improvements on Route 82 in Norwich (Phase 1)*. This project is the first of two planned corridor safety improvement projects on Route 82 in Norwich. This meeting was held in person and live streamed to YouTube.

A public informational meeting was previously held for this project on June 23, 2022. Following feedback from the public and local leadership, the project scope was revised to have fewer roundabouts and reduced rights-of-way impacts. Information on the June 23, 2022 presentation is available on the project website: *https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Projects/0103-0274-Norwich*.

OPEN FORUM:
An open forum began at 5:30 p.m. in a large conference room adjacent to the auditorium to provide the public an opportunity to speak with the project team, consisting of representatives of State Highway Design, Division of Rights-of-Way, Traffic Design, and roundabout expert Mr. Mark Lenters. During this time, members of the project team spoke with the public one-on-one to answer questions and explain the changes in the updated design plans. The open forum was well attended, and Channel 3 WFSB Eyewitness News was also present to broadcast the forum and interview attendees.

FORMAL PRESENTATION:
The formal presentation began at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Project handouts with comment sheets were provided to attendees as they entered – available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting, including: residents, City/State government representatives, local business owners, and Channel 3 WFSB Eyewitness News.

The presentation was initiated by Mr. Scott Bushee, Principal Engineer, who provided a brief history of the public involvement for this project. A technical presentation was then delivered by Mr. Salvatore Aresco, Project Manager, and Mr. Michael Laurice, Project Engineer, which covered Title VI civil rights information, project location/history, purpose and need, existing conditions with crash data, the proposed design solution, construction considerations, project cost, and project schedule. Temporary closures of local side streets with potential detours were presented. Rights-of-way (ROW) information was provided by ROW Coordinator Mr. Matthew Geanacopoulos. Mr. Lenters, a roundabout expert with Kimley-Horn, provided a technical review on the success of roundabout corridors on a national level. The formal presentation concluded around 8:00 p.m. Special thanks were given to Kelly STEAM Magnet school for providing their facilities and IT support for the meeting.

DISCUSSION (QUESTIONS & COMMENTS):
Following the presentation, a question-and-answer session was held for meeting attendees to communicate their questions, concerns, and feedback to the project team. Some attendees expressed their support and recognized the need for the project, while others expressed concern and were in opposition.

- → Many concerns were related to the impact to businesses: loss of business and tax revenue during the construction period, total acquisitions associated with the proposed design, potential relocation of businesses outside of Norwich. It was requested to consider a longer duration between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects.
- → Multiple requests for a smaller scale project and considering alternative safety measures. Suggestions included dedicated left-turn lanes, two-way left-turn lanes, only reconstructing the driveway aprons, installation of red-light cameras and increased police enforcement. The Department of Transportation (Department) clarified that the State statute only allows the installation of red-light cameras by a municipality and alternate project scopes have been reviewed, but would not adequately address safety and still involved substantial reconstruction.
- → There was concern as to why the Osgood Street roundabout was kept in favor of the Mount Pleasant Street roundabout under the 4 roundabout corridor proposal, because of its low traffic volume. There was also concern with loss of business at the Willow Tree Plaza as a result of the driveway becoming right-in-right-out only access. The concept of bookends with the roundabouts at Osgood Street and Asylum Street was detailed for speed reduction and safety and how the distance between the two allow for better access

management, providing consideration for other area curb cuts. The Department clarified that access for customers exiting Willow Tree Plaza with eastbound travel in mind (currently a left turn, sometimes with a long delay at the signal), would become an easy right turn followed by a U-turn at the Osgood Street roundabout. It was suggested by Department staff that the converted left turn movement would be safter and more efficient converted to a right turn out of the driveway and a U-turn at the next roundabout.

→ Although the presentation focused on Phase 1, the removal of the roundabout at New London Turnpike was questioned. It was noted that Phase 2 is still at a conceptual level, but additional engineering was performed following local leadership requesting a smaller scale project. The roundabout at New London Turnpike was found to require two full circulating lanes, which would not have the same level of safety benefits in terms of crash reduction as the single lane and hybrid roundabouts planned to the east. In reducing the scope of the project, that was the best roundabout to remove from the plans when considering overall safety within the corridor.

→ Traffic volumes were discussed as a result of concerns with the proposed road diet's capability of handling existing and future traffic volumes. It was noted that growth rates are included in design year traffic volumes, as well as any potential major traffic generators. The increased efficiency of the roundabouts in comparison to the traffic signals allows traffic to flow continuously and still function adequately with the road diet. It was also stated that The Department has performed a full traffic analysis to properly vet the concept.

→ Concerns were mentioned related to City resources required to take on maintenance responsibilities including plantings. The Department responded by confirming they would still be plowing Route 82 including the crosswalks and all plantings require maintenance infrequently (every 5 years).

→ It was noted that all utilities owned by Norwich Public Utilities requiring relocation as a result of the project would be 100-percent funded through the use of State and Federal sources, not City dollars. The Department stated there would likely be a need to relocate and replace a significant portion of the aging water main with the project.

→ Concerns were raised with pedestrian accessibility without phased walk signals. The Department explained during the presentation the safety benefits of only having to cross two lanes within the road diet planned for phase 1, as opposed to the 4 and 5 lanes to cross today. The ease and safety benefits of performing these street crossings with speeds closer to 25 m.p.h. and having an island of refuge midway during the crossing where only one lane at a time needs to be crossed, was further clarified.

→ Concerns were brought forth with emergency vehicles passing a disabled car with the road diet. The Department explained that there would be enough space to pass if the vehicle pulled to the right. If not, the median island would be designed with 4-inch mountable curb and adequate space between street trees to cross the median if necessary.

→ A number of residents stated support for the project and recognized the need for safety improvements the proposed design will provide.

The Q&A ended around 9:45 p.m.. The Department again thanked Kelly STEAM Magnet school and all of the residents for coming in and participating.