

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**State Project No. 0156-0181
Federal-Aid Project No. 0951(373)
Replacement of Bridge No. 00162
City of West Haven**

**October 14, 2021 6:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live**

Minutes of Public Informational Meeting

Present:

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11 Public MS Teams Attendees
4 Public YouTube Attendees

Presentation: A Public Information Meeting was held for this project on October 14, 2021. This meeting was held virtually via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live. At 5:45 p.m. the meeting went live with an informative introductory slide for attendees to view prior to the event. The formal presentation began at 6:00 p.m. Transportation Project Engineer Lesgie Ruiz began the presentation by introducing the representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), A. DiCesare Associates (ADA), the Consultant Designer, HDR, Design-Build Consultant, BL Companies (BLC), the Consultant Liaison Engineer. Lesgie Ruiz, CTDOT Transportation Project Engineer, and Julie Georges, ADA Engineer-in-Charge, gave a thirty-minute PowerPoint presentation describing State Project No. 0156-0181, the Replacement of Bridge No. 00162, Interstate 95 over Metro North Railroad in the City of West Haven. Kevin Fleming with the CTDOT Office of Environmental Planning also presented information regarding the CEPA Scoping process.

The presentation included the following items:

- The existing condition of the bridge, consisting of a simply supported, six-span, steel multi-girder superstructure with a reinforced concrete deck and a bituminous concrete wearing surface. The existing roadway supported by Bridge No. 00162 consist of three 12-foot travel lanes, a 4-foot left shoulder and a 4-foot right shoulder in both the northbound and southbound directions.
- The project purpose and need describing the deteriorated superstructure, inadequate deck geometry and traffic congestion.
- Project will be delivered via Design-Build method.

- Proposed project goals include:
 - Reduce the length of the bridge/number of spans.
 - Improve shoulder widths.
 - Add southbound operational lane from Exit 44 on-ramp to the Exit 43 off-ramp.
 - Improve acceleration lane for northbound Exit 43 on-ramp.
 - Improve roadway geometry.
 - Minimize environmental impacts.
 - Maintain three lanes of traffic in each direction during construction.
- Utility, railroad, environmental, and rights-of-way impact:
 - United Illuminating Transmission Towers and Metro North Railroad tracks and facilities exist within the project limits and will be protected and maintained throughout construction.
 - CTDOT Illumination and Incident Management System facilities will be relocated as part of the project.
 - Environmental Permits are anticipated for the project.
 - Rights-of-way impacts are not anticipated.
- Project schedule, construction cost, and project funding.

Public Comments and Questions: Following the formal presentation, a live Question and Answer session was opened to the attendees. The questions and comments below were provided via voicemail, email, and MS Teams Live Event chat:

Chat question: I am most concerned with the impact to the exit 43 southbound ramp, and whether people will still be able to utilize the ramp during construction?

A representative of ADA stated that the proposed widening of the highway to the north will allow for the exit ramp to be maintained during construction.

Chat question: Will a sound barrier be including at exit 43 southbound?

A representative of CTDOT stated the project must also meet the definition of a Type 1 project. Type 1 projects, as defined under 23 CFR 772.5, involve one of the following:

- *Construction of a new highway on new location.*
- *Substantial horizontal or vertical alteration to an existing highway (that meet certain conditions).*
- *The addition of through-traffic lane(s).*
- *The addition of auxiliary lanes exceeding 2,500 feet in length or greater.*
- *The addition or relocation of interchange lanes or ramps.*
- *Restriping of existing pavement for the purpose of adding a through-traffic or an auxiliary lane exceeding 2,500 feet in length.*
- *The addition or substantial alteration of a weigh station, rest stop, ride share lot, or toll plaza.*

The proposed I-95 southbound operational lane to be installed under Project 0156-0181 (~2,200 feet in length) does not meet or exceed the 2,500-foot auxiliary lane threshold defined by the Federal Highway Administration. Additionally, the proposed widening does not halve the distance to any noise

sensitive receptors. As a result, Project 0156-0181 does not meet any of the Type I project criteria and therefore is not being considered for a noise study which would determine if noise barriers are warranted, reasonable, and feasible. In the future. If the project scope changes to include any of the above listed items, a noise study will be conducted to establish the possible need for new noise walls as part of the project.

Email question: Will the contractor be working at night?

A representative of ADA stated that it is anticipated that the contractor will be working at night; noting that specific activities, such as the work required in the vicinity and over the railroad, will be restricted to night work when track outages can be obtained. The representative of ADA stated that this work is expected to be performed during the hours of 12am and 5am.

Voicemail question: Will there be a lot of construction noise?

A representative of ADA stated there will be noise associated with the bridge construction. There are limitations that will be established as part of the contract documents in terms of minimizing the noise caused by construction.

Chat question: What are the potential impacts to watercourses or wetlands and where are those areas located?

A representative of ADA stated that there is a watercourse called Club Creek, originating in the vicinity of First Avenue (Route 122) which travels east to West River through the project area. Conceptual plans have been developed that prevent impacts to the adjacent watercourses by providing feasible maximum slope limits and construction limits while allowing the contractor adequate space to work. There are wetlands within the project area, some low-quality wetlands beneath the existing bridge and in the drainage ditches to the north of the highway east of the railroad tracks, which are expected to be affected. The State will obtain permits as required for the proposed project.

Chat question: There are businesses and houses just under the part of I-95 by southbound exit 43. I am assuming greater safety precautions will be taken around that part of the construction project.

A representative of ADA stated that this ties into the maintenance of the exit ramp and the improved conditions as a result of the widening of the highway. Safety improvements will be made such as the widened shoulder and replacing the existing guiderailing in this location. The footprint of the improvements is not anticipated to have impact on existing homes or businesses in the vicinity of the project.

Email question: When was the bridge last inspected?

A representative of BLC stated that conditional bridge assessments are typically completed every two years by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The subject bridge was last inspected on March 4, 2021.

Voicemail question: Will any City funding be required?

A representative of CTDOT stated that City funding will not be used on this project and further elaborated that the project is currently 100% State funded. It was also noted that federal funding may be used to supplement the project if it becomes available.

Chat question: What is Design-Build?

A representative of CTDOT stated Design-Build is an alternative project delivery method where the Department hires a contractor team based on best value approach. This accounts for the Contractor/Designer qualifications, price, and technical approach. The Design-Build team then completes the final design and builds the project based on this design. CTDOT will provide the Base Technical Concept, as described earlier in the presentation, and other project requirements which explains what CTDOT wants built and criteria the contractor is required to follow to design and build the project.

Email question: Is the bridge safe to drive on?

A representative of BLC stated the bridge is safe to drive on; another representative expanded upon this describing the Department's process of conducting inspection every two years with the intent to identify deteriorating bridge condition early and allowing time for design.

Email question: When is construction anticipated to Start?

A representative of ADA stated that construction is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2023.

Email question: Will the project impact rail service?

A representative of BLC stated that in order to facilitate the construction of the new bridge, track outages will be required from Metro-North Railroad during off peak hours. Performing this work at night should prevent impacts to rail service.

Chat question: Why Design-Build and not Design-Bid-Build?

A representative of CTDOT stated that Design-Bid-Build is when CTDOT designs a project and the contractors bid and then, based on low bid, the project would be awarded and constructed. Design-Build is a different delivery method under the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) authorizing the Commissioner to use alternative delivery methods for projects. The Office of Construction has a process to evaluate a project to determine if Design-Build is suited for projects.

For Project 0156-0181 that process was used and it was determined to be well suited, based on the risks, restraints, and goals of the project. The Commissioner has approved the selection as required by CGS. Now that this has been approved the documents are being prepared to deliver the project as Design-Build.

Voicequestion: Where will the contractor place his equipment?

A representative of ADA stated the exact location where the contractor will place their equipment is unknown, but there is area beneath the existing bridge and within the existing right of way which will provide adequate space. A representative of BLC added that no right-of-way needs, such as easements or takings are anticipated for the project.

Voicequestion: Will this project require an Environmental Impact Evaluation?

A representative of CTDOT stated that an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) is only required in two instances. First being project type listed in environmental classification document being a new expressway, new rail facility, or new busway, e.g. CT Fastrack. Project 0156-0181 does not meet these project types. Second an EIE will be required if the project significantly impacts the environment. An early screening has been conducted for this project and nothing was identified but the determination requires the scoping process to be completed. It is not anticipated an EIE will be required but the final determination will be made at the end of the scoping period.

Voicequestion: Did you meet with the City to discuss the project?

A representative of BLC stated the Department has met with the City a few times to discuss the project and will continue to coordinate with the City throughout the design and construction process.

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 October 29, 2021.

The presentation was well received, and the meeting was adjourned around 6:50 p.m.