

REPORT OF MEETING
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC INFORMATION/CEPA SCOPING MEETING
STATE PROJECT NO. 0061-0156
Route 15 Interchange 51 Improvements
Towns of Hamden and North Haven

September 15, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Hamden Government Center
2750 Dixwell Avenue, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Hamden, Connecticut 06518

PURPOSE OF MEETING: The purpose of this meeting was to present the project to residents and Town officials and to gather their feedback and address any questions and concerns that they had.

CTDOT REPRESENTATIVES:

HIGHWAY DESIGN:

- Michael N. Calabrese, P.E. - Michael.Calabrese@ct.gov
- Nicholas A. Ivanoff, P.E. – Nicholas.Ivanoff@ct.gov
- Eric T. Smith, P.E. – Eric.T.Smith@ct.gov
- Katie LeClerc - Kathleen.LeClerc@ct.gov

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING:

- Ethan Donecker, P.E. - Ethan.Donecker@ct.gov
- Quinn Becotte - Quinn.Becotte@ct.gov

RIGHTS OF WAY:

- Kathleen Ericson - Kathleen.Ericson@ct.gov

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:

- Susan Fiedler - Susan.Fiedler@ct.gov
- Patrick Bibeau - Patrick.Bibeau@ct.gov

POLICY AND PLANNING:

- Kevin Fleming - Kevin.Fleming@ct.gov
- Mark Hood - Mark.Hood@ct.gov

PRESENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE:

At 6:00 P.M. CTDOT representatives were available to answer questions about the project during an open house held before the formal presentation. Display boards were set up to introduce the purpose and need of the project and to show the proposed design and potential detour routes for ramp closures during construction.

At 6:30 P.M. Mr. Ivanoff called the formal meeting and presentation to order. Approximately 20 individuals were in attendance, including the Town Engineer and Economic Development Director, no other city or elected officials were present.

Mr. Ivanoff began the presentation by informing attendees that comments could be submitted following the meeting via the comment form provided, to the project email, or to the phone voicemail which were displayed on the screen and on the back of the handout and could be accessed from the project webpage. A review of the meeting agenda and introductions from himself and the CTDOT representatives followed by a review of civil rights as outlined under Title VI.

Mr. Mark Hood provided an overview of the Connecticut Environment Policy Act (CEPA) as it pertains to the project and discussed the review of the project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. CTDOT's Office of Environmental Planning reached a finding of no historic properties affected with this project's undertaking conditional upon avoidance of a stone masonry retaining wall in front of 2155 Whitney Avenue. The public involvement and comment period for review under CEPA was stated to conclude after 30 days when a final review and determination would be published in the Environmental Monitor.

Mr. Smith followed by presenting the project location and existing conditions, including roadway characteristics, crash history, and roadway deficiencies. The project scope was described to address a high number of front-to-rear crashes at the interchange in association with the stop-controlled on-ramps, and to also address gaps in the existing pedestrian network along Whitney Avenue, making the corridor safer and more accessible for all roadway users.

Mr. Smith discussed the proposed interchange ramp reconfigurations on Route 15 for the removal of stop controls and the installation of acceleration lanes on both northbound and southbound on ramps. A deceleration lane is proposed for the northbound off ramp and the removal of the southbound exit 51 off-ramp and reconfiguration of the southbound exit 52 ramp. The intersections at the ramp termini with Whitney Avenue were described to include the ramp reconfigurations, the addition of traffic signals with pedestrian push buttons and marked crosswalks, and lighting. Additional pedestrian improvements on Whitney Avenue include additional sidewalks on the North Haven side to the southern project limits. Rights of Way involvement was described to include easements to construct sidewalks, rights to grade and reconstruct walkways and driveways along Whitney Avenue, and slope easements and sliver acquisition needed for sidewalk realignment at the Hamden Townhouse Restaurant.

Ms. Ericson explained the functions of the CTDOT Division of Rights of Way and the standard process involved with rights of way acquisitions following the Connecticut General Statutes Section 13a-73 and

13a-98e, and the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Mr. Smith continued the presentation by discussing construction considerations for maintenance and protection of traffic including the use of temporary lane shifts and lane reductions on Route 15 and the potential for night work. The suggested detour routes utilizing state routes during ramp reconstruction were also presented.

Mr. Smith concluded the presentation by reviewing landscaping installations to reestablish vegetative cover to areas disturbed during construction activities including drainage infiltration areas, tree canopy restoration and residential buffer plantings, as well as the opportunity for street trees along applicable pedestrian facilities to promote traffic calming on Whitney Avenue. The current project cost, funding, and schedule was reviewed at the close of the presentation. A presentation slide with the project contact information was displayed at the conclusion of the presentation with encouragement to submit comments or questions following the meeting should they arise.

A formal question and answer period was held following the presentation with a few attendees remaining after for individual discussions and questions with CTDOT staff. The Q&A and open conversation was held with attendees for approximately 45 minutes before the meeting concluded.

PUBLIC RESPONSE SUMMARY:

Members of the public expressed support for the project in the form of complaints about the existing traffic queueing at the on ramps onto Whitney Avenue, frustration with accelerating onto Route 15 and the associated front to rear crash history. Some residents felt that the official detours would be too long and expressed concern that if the existing ramps were to remain in a stop control configuration while a detour was in effect, how the additional traffic would affect crashes or vehicle queues. Some concerns were raised with the timing between this project and the planned construction of 100-182; Interchange 52 (ADV 2/17/2027) might interfere with construction activities or MP&T on this project. Lastly, there was interest in how the northwest corner of the interchange would be landscaped with the removal of the southbound off ramp.

The property owners at the Hamden Townhouse Restaurant have experienced several run off the road crashes from vehicles exiting the southbound ramp at an excessive speed crossing all four lanes of traffic and ending up on their front lawn or hitting their building. The project will realign the off ramp away from the front of their building and should address this issue. CTDOT has committed to review the issue internally for an interim solution to increase driver awareness.

Several residents expressed support for the sidewalk connection on the North Haven side of Whitney Avenue and welcomed the additional crosswalks and illumination, though some questioned how the additional signals would affect traffic on Whitney Avenue.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Questions could be asked during the meeting or submitted to the project email, CTDOT voicemail, or CTDOT mail. The question and comment period closed on September 29, 2026.

• PRIOR TO PRESENTATION:

- A question was asked for why CTDOT decided to initiate this project.
 - *CTDOT responded that the crash history at the stop-controlled entrance ramps was a main factor.*
- A question was asked about if this project will be connecting with Route 40.
 - *CTDOT responded that the scope of this project does not extend to Route 40. The northern limits on Whitney Avenue for this project end near Worth Avenue.*
- A local resident asked about the funding source for the project.
 - *CTDOT clarified that funding will be provided using 80% Federal, 20% State funds.*
- A question was asked about illumination at the intersections.
 - *CTDOT confirmed that illumination will be installed at marked crosswalks within the project limits.*
- A resident asked whether the project would enter any residential property near Route 15 southbound mainline.
 - *CTDOT response was that there would likely be no need to enter any residential properties at that location as the project work could be accomplished within the state Right of Way.*
- CTDOT stated that the existing wooden noise barrier will be replaced with a precast concrete wall panel system and that the final location and wall type will be determined pending completion of a noise analysis that is currently underway.
- CTDOT stated that environmental permitting has not been initiated at this phase of preliminary design.
- CTDOT stated that the signals to be installed at the ramp intersections will be Town owned and maintained. Signal phases will be coordinated with nearby signals along the corridor.
- The owners of the Townhouse Restaurant mentioned that the entrance to the restaurant gets blocked at times by traffic and expressed concern that adding signals at the ramp intersections could make this worse.
 - *CTDOT replied that the addition of a pavement marking “No Block Box” could be investigated.*
- A local resident asked if any eminent domain will be needed for the project.
 - *CTDOT replied that eminent domain is only invoked when property owners and CTDOT cannot reach agreement during the Rights of Way process. Affected property owners will be contacted by a Rights of Way Agent as the project progresses.*
- A local resident asked if the road diet on Whitney Ave has been considered in relation to this project.
 - *CTDOT replied that this project has been coordinating with the current road diet paving project to the south of this project’s limits and this project will tie into the road diet and then transition to the existing lane configuration at the Worth Avenue intersection.*

- A local resident commented that 2 PM in the afternoon being a time of particularly bad congestion on Whitney Avenue.
- Several individuals had asked about the location of the Route 15 northbound off ramp and whether it could be moved prior to crossing Whitney Ave.
 - *CTDOT stated that a modified location was looked at as part of project scoping and it was determined that layout would not be feasible for permitting due to encroachment on the river and additional fill in the regulatory floodway adjacent to Route 15.*
- A local resident asked if there will be night work.
 - *CTDOT replied that night work is being considered for the work on Route 15 to minimize construction duration and disruptions to traffic.*
- Will construction be phased or will everything happen simultaneously?
 - *CTDOT replied construction will be staged to minimize the impact to the traveling public while completing the work as efficiently as possible. Staging plans will be finalized once the design progresses further.*
- A resident asked if wetlands will be affected.
 - *CTDOT mentioned several pipe outlets will need to be relocated as a result of roadway widening, resulting in minor wetland impacts. A soils investigation is underway, and we hope to use a reinforced 1.5:1 slope adjacent to Route 15 northbound to minimize wetland impacts adjacent to the Mill River.*
- Residents cited concerns regarding the Mill River and stated that the river is very high after rainfall.
 - *CTDOT's Hydraulics and Drainage Unit is conducting a hydraulic analysis to ensure the river and adjacent properties are not negatively impacted.*
- Several residents mentioned that they have been in crashes at this interchange, or someone they know has been in a crash at this interchange and indicated the need for changes at the ramps.
 - *CTDOT explained the goal of this project is to create a safer interchange, and the removal of stop controls will likely significantly decrease the number of front-to-rear crashes.*
- Concerns were noted by CTDOT reps regarding intersection and ramp configurations and potential impacts to the Mill River due to its proximity.
- A resident asked about whether the existing trees would be removed where the new southbound ramp configuration is proposed.
 - *CTDOT Landscape design provided information for potential tree canopy restoration and residential buffer plantings that are proposed for the restoration of that area.*
- A local resident was skeptical as to how effective the acceleration and deceleration lanes would be at reducing crashes and traffic congestion.
 - *CTDOT replied that acceleration and deceleration lanes will give drivers time to adjust speeds prior merging onto and exiting the flow of traffic on Route 15 whereas the current configurations require drivers to abruptly accelerate or decelerate to get on or off Route 15 which contributes to a high number of crashes.*
- A member of Preservation CT mentioned the possible presence of a boulder with a plaque on it that could use historical protection if in an area where it may be disturbed by construction activities.

- **AFTER PRESENTATION:**

- A local resident asked if a bike lane was part of the proposed lane configuration on Whitney Ave.
 - *CTDOT replied that there will be shoulders provided on both sides of the roadway that will be of adequate width for bicycles up to where this project ties in with the pavement limits to the north and south on Whitney Avenue. Beyond the project limits, the roadway width varies, making shoulder widths narrower in some locations, particularly at the northern project limits where this project ties in with the existing roadway configuration.*
- A local resident asked about coordination with adjacent projects on Route 15.
 - *CTDOT confirmed that there is coordination with adjacent projects.*
- A local resident asked if funding had been secured.
 - *CTDOT replied that the project is earmarked for funding on the obligation plan.*
- A local resident asked about wildlife and river considerations.
 - *CTDOT has been in contact with Reginal Water Authority who provided recommended best management practices that will be followed as part of the environmental permitting requirements.*
- A local resident asked about the order of the proposed detours, and concern was raised that crashes may temporarily increase elsewhere.
 - *CTDOT replied that the impacts to traffic during construction and the implementation of detours will be considered as part of the construction staging development in the final design phase.*
- The Town of Hamden Engineer confirmed that the existing river Hydraulic Grade Line will be maintained.
- The Town Engineer requested confirmation of sidewalk and ramp compliance with ADA.
 - *CTDOT confirmed that sidewalks and curb ramps within the project limits will be upgraded to meet ADA compliance where technically feasible.*
- A local resident asked if the northbound off ramp could be relocated to the other side of Whitney Avenue and adjust the northbound on ramp to be further away from the river and reduce the impact in the floodway. (Similar to the proposed layout shown for the southbound ramps).
 - *CTDOT will investigate this option further.*
- A local resident asked about the purpose of the painted median between Millbrook Rd and NB ramps intersection.
 - *CTDOT explained that location ties into the proposed Two Way Left Turn Lane that's part of the Whitney Avenue road diet. The painted median at Millbrook Road will accommodate vehicles making a left turn from Whitney Avenue.*
- A local resident asked if a buffer can be incorporated with the sidewalk at the overpass and ramp intersections.
 - *CTDOT replied that a narrow sidewalk buffer can be incorporated there limited by the bridge abutments but not at the bridge over the Mill River where the existing curbline will remain.*
- A resident asked about historic impacts on Route 15.

- *CTDOT replied that the bridge carrying Route 15 over Whitney Avenue is eligible for the National Historic Registry, the Section 106 determination and historical review concluded that the work from this project will constitute no adverse effect to the bridge itself or Route 15.*
- An attendee asked about hours of construction.
 - *CTDOT replied that traffic volumes, time of day, and the day of the week are all factors in determining work shifts, and that night work is an option, subject to local feedback/opposition.*
- An attendee asked if similar projects have already been completed on Route 15.
 - *CTDOT gave an example of a project that had been completed on the Merrit Parkway section in Norwalk (Exit 17B at Creeping Hemlock Dr). Deceleration lane was added with positive effect.*
- A resident asked what the difference in crashes is compared to the Exit 60 (now 50, at Dixwell Ave) interchange.
 - *CTDOT replied that this can be looked into.*

• **PROJECT EMAIL / VOICEMAIL:**

- **7/19/26** – Email expressed support for the project and mentioned a neighbor had been rear ended at the exit 51 southbound ramp. Clarification was requested regarding the statement on the project description referring to speeds on Route 15.
 - *CTDOT replied and revised the statement to state “The posted speed limit is 55mph, with 85% of drivers traveling at speeds of 77 mph or less and 15% of drivers exceeding that speed.”*
- **7/16/26** – Expressed interest after reading about the project planned for Route 15 exit/on ramp stop sign removal and stated that it has been a problem for many people including them who had a relative who was involved in a rear-end collision at that location. The email requested a map of the proposed changes to the interchange to better visualize the improvements.
 - *CTDOT: Reducing rear end collisions is one of the goals of our project by eliminating the stop signs onto Route 15 and replacing them with acceleration lanes to allow vehicles to reach freeway speeds. Deceleration lanes will also be added to allow vehicles taking the exit enough space to separate from traffic and decelerate. A link was provided to the project’s website which includes additional information and a colorized plan showing the ramp reconfiguration.*
- **8/24/26** – Email expressed approval for the project and stated that the interchange would be the fastest to use as part of their daily commute but they have specifically avoided this route due to the stop sign entrance to Route 15. The email stated that the stop sign is dangerous and should be removed as it makes no sense to expect drivers to go from 0 to 60 mph in such a short distance.
 - *CTDOT: We will be holding our formal public information session tomorrow night. Details can be found on our project website [0061-0156 Hamden-North Haven](#) and*

we hope that you are able to attend to voice your support. The design team will be available for questions and discussion prior to the formal presentation at 6:30.

- **9/14/26** – Question about speed and noise considerations in CT, if there are any maximum speeds and maximum noise laws.
 - *CTDOT: The maximum speeds are posted on the signs adjacent to the roadway and set by the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA), adherence to them is by law enforcement. The primary goal with this project is to reduce the number of crashes at the interchange and provide sufficient space for a vehicle to reach the speed of freeway traffic. The existing stop signs at the interchange not only create an operational issue but also exacerbate the noise levels due to rapid vehicle acceleration. This project is undergoing a noise analysis to determine if additional mitigation in the form of noise barrier is required.*
- **9/23/26** – **Email attachment letter is saved in project file.** Two issues raised were the removal of mature trees adjacent to the southbound entrance ramp and the proposed noise barrier location which were not shown to change on the color plan. Concern was given if the plan is revised to include expansion of the noise wall beyond its current footprint or removal of the trees abutting the Meadowbrook Third Co-Op property.
 - *CTDOT: The bands of trees beyond the limits of landscaping shown on the color plan are not expected to be disturbed with construction activity. However, the trees within the loop formed by the existing southbound exit ramp are expected to be impacted by construction activity. The existing noise barrier will be replaced following its current alignment and extended slightly to the East to align with the new southbound on ramp for optimal sound absorption.*
- **9/25/26** – **Scoping Comments from Preservation CT – attachment letter is saved in project file** – Provided support for the safety and operational improvements for the interchange. Comments spoke of the concern that the historical aspect of the Wilbur Cross Parkway was focused on the bridges and not the parkway itself. The parkway design should be reflected in the landscape design for the project, including appropriate sign plantings that tie into the overall landscape.
 - *CTDOT: The email letter was saved to the project file and shared with the Landscape Design Unit and the Office of Policy and Planning for NEPA and CEPA for consideration as the project progresses in design.*
- **9/28/26** – Resident is in favor of eliminating the stop signs at the entrance to Route 15 and adding merge lanes and welcomes the addition of a sidewalk on the North Haven side of Whitney Ave. Concerns were expressed about the proximity of the project to the Mill River and the effect that construction activity will have on the river and floodway. The question was asked if the northbound entrance ramp could be removed completely to allow for a larger buffer between the road and the river. Also, concern was noted about the potential for increase in Traffic into the Millbrook neighborhood caused by the addition of two traffic signals on Whitney Avenue as drivers will seek that as an alternate route. Since there is no signal at the northbound ramps now is one really necessary.

- *CTDOT: Removal of the northbound on ramp is presently beyond the scope of our project and would require additional analysis to impacts to traffic if directed to use alternative entrance ramps. We are working closely with our Hydraulics and Drainage unit to evaluate the floodway area and ensure that both the final design and the construction activity do not result in an increase in the flood elevations.*
Preliminary studies performed at the ramp termini indicate that the intersections will perform better if they are signalized as opposed to being stop controlled. CTDOT is proposing to interconnect the new signals with the ones already on Whitney Avenue to better facilitate traffic through the corridor.
- **9/29/26 – Regional Water Authority Comments** – Provided a letter attached to the email including comments and a list of items to include in the project contract to ensure Best Management Practices for stormwater quality are in place during and after construction for the protection of the adjacent watercourse.
 - *CTDOT: Comments were shared with the Environmental Compliance Unit to be included in the project specifications.*

CONCLUSION:

The CTDOT representatives encouraged the attendees to submit additional questions and comments via phone, email, or mailing in the comment form included with the meeting handout. For more project information, Mr. Ivanoff directed attendees to the project handout, which included a weblink to the project website. It was explained that the comment period would run for two weeks, until September 29, 2026. The meeting concluded at approximately 8:00 P.M. This report of meeting includes all comments received prior to the closing of the comment period on September 30, 2026.

Submitted By: Eric T. Smith
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