

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**State Project No. 0103-0278
Safety Improvements at the Intersection of SR-642 (West Town Street)
And Sturtevant Street
City of Norwich**

**November 13, 2024 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom**

Minutes of Virtual Public Informational Meeting

Present:

3 Attendees viewing via Zoom Live Webinar

Team Presenting from the Connecticut Department of Transportation:

Andrew Cardinali, Principal Engineer, Bridge Design
Kevin Blasi, Supervising Engineer, Bridge Design
Quasem Alajjan, Project Engineer, Bridge Design
Joseph Jazwicz, Project Engineer, Highway Design
Joshua Marchinkoski, Design Engineer, Highway Design
Kathleen Ericson, Office of Rights of Way

Presentation:

Quasem Alajjan opened the meeting promptly at 7:00 pm with a brief welcome and introduced the project design team.

Quasem offered information to the attendees on how to contact the design team during the live Question and Answer session following the formal presentation. The following means of contact were provided:

Project email: DOTProject103-278@ct.gov

Project phone: (860) 594-2020

Zoom Q&A Chat (available during the live stream event only)

The period to provide comments and questions to the project team extends through November 27, 2024.

The following are the key points of the presentation:

- The project limits along SR-642 (West Town Street) were shown, located to the east of Route 395 and north of the Yantic River with a traffic volume of approximately 11,000 vehicles per day
- There are 7 retaining walls within the project limits that are located on private property. Retaining Walls 100, 101 and 102 carry a substandard 3 cable guiderail. There is an existing unmarked South East Area Transit bus stop near Wall E1.
- Crash data gathered from 2018 to 2021 shows that there were 9 total crashes through the curve with 2 resulting in injuries. There is a pattern of roadside departures through

the curve, including a 2019 crash that resulted in compromising a section of 3-cable rail and damaging retaining Wall 102.

- The super elevation and curve radius through SR-642 do not meet current design standards.
- The purpose and need of the project is to replace substandard 3 cable guiderail with a MASH system and improve highway geometry
- The top of masonry Wall 102 will be removed and a concrete moment slab will be installed which will carry the new federally compliant (MASH) rail system.
- Existing 3 cable rail systems will be removed at two retaining walls and the need to install a replacement system will be eliminated by burying the walls and grading out at a 2 (horizontal) to 1 (vertical) slope.
- Provide 5'-0" sidewalks on the south side of SR 642, replacing the non-ADA compliant existing sidewalk
- Improve sightline along SR642 by cutting back an embankment along a curve
- Move the existing unmarked South East Area Transit bus stop to a new location
- Alternating one way traffic will be handled through temporary signalization and flaggers.
- The underground gas main may require temporary support or relocation during construction operations for the sidewalk. Other required utility relocations will be finalized as the design progresses.
- ROW impacts include construction easements, sloping for the safety of the highway, sliver acquisitions for sidewalk work, access easement for DROW.
- Business and residential property access will be continuous throughout construction
- Kathleen Ericson presented an overview of the Rights of Way process and relevant laws and CT DOT procedures pertaining to property acquisition
- The project is currently scheduled to start construction Fall 2026 and will cost approximately \$3 million. It will be funded with 80% Federal and 20% State funds and will go on through Summer and Fall 2027.

The presentation ended with Kevin Blasi reminding attendees how to contact the design team with questions and comments. The presentation was opened for questions and comments.

Public Comments and Questions During the Live Q&A that followed the presentation:

- A question transmitted via Zoom Q&A chat: I am concerned about the speed on West Town st. If you straighten the road, cars will increase their speed. How will this be controlled?
 - Response: We are reducing travel lane widths to provide more consistency through the corridor. We will be rotating the road along its centerline and raising the outside edge of the road adjacent to the sidewalk to keep vehicles on that trajectory and navigate the curve appropriately. We recognize speed has been an issue here, but with these treatments it will give more comfort to the driver while not increasing vehicle speeds.
- A question transmitted via Zoom Q&A chat: I understand with the Complete Streets program, pinch points can be installed to help slow them down. Will you do this?
 - Response: We would like to ask for elaboration on what a "pinch point" is. We took a balanced approach when we designed this not to have other adverse effects on adjacent property. We will be providing a safe pedestrian path

connecting the sidewalks throughout the corridor and provide pedestrian access to both sides of the streets for bus stop accessibility.

- A question transmitted via Zoom Q&A chat: I am also wanting to advocate for Norwich aesthetics, meaning attractive roadways. What are the concrete barriers you mentioned? How would they look? The sidewalk does need protection but how would it look?
 - Response: There is no plan to do any aesthetic treatments at this time, however it is something we may consider. There will be a standard sidewalk and standard rail system.
- A question transmitted via Zoom Q&A chat: Are you then considering jersey barriers?
 - Response: No, there will be no jersey barriers. To clarify, there will be no barrier between the sidewalk and roadway. But there will be a 2 ft buffer between the sidewalk and roadway.
- A comment transmitted via Zoom Q&A chat: Anything that could be done for minimal care sidewalks would be appreciated. Meaning if there are new products that are available to assist in winter care.
- A comment transmitted via Zoom Q&A chat: I am also in favor of jersey barrier protection when walking. However there isn't a beautiful design yet.

Adjournment:

The project was generally well received by those in attendance. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 PM.