Connecticut Department of Transportation

State Project No. 0156-0184
Federal-Aid Project No. 1156(110)
Replacement of Bridge No. 03612
West Haven & New Haven

June 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom and YouTube Live

Minutes of Public Informational Meeting

Present:

Derick Lessard	CTDOT
Brianna Ritacco	CTDOT
Lesgie Ruiz	CTDOT
Matthew Geanacopoulos	CTDOT
Benjamin Hawthorne	H&H
Sal Luzzi	H&H
Nicholas Davis	H&H
Lisa Slonus	VN Engineers
Jennifer Usher	BL Companies
Thomas Beckman	BL Companies

35 Public Zoom Attendees

2 YouTube Attendees

Presentation:

A Public Information Meeting was held for this project on June 27, 2024. This meeting was held virtually via Zoom. 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), BL Companies (BLC), the Consultant Liaison Engineer, Hardesty & Hanover (H&H), the designer, and VN Engineers, the designer. Thomas Beckman, BLC Liaison Engineer, and Benjamin Hawthorne, H&H Project Manager, gave a twenty five-minute PowerPoint presentation describing State Project No. 0156-0184, the replacement of Bridge No. 03612, Route 745 over West River, in the city of West Haven and city of New Haven.

This presentation included the following items:

- Bridge No. 03612, Officer Robert Vincent Fumiatti Memorial Bridge, was constructed in 1969 and consists of a four-span multi-girder structure supported on reinforced concrete piers and prestressed concrete piles. A navigational channel is located below span 2, as well as a timber fender system. Bridge No. 03612 is in poor condition based on the latest inspection report due to the piers of the existing structure exhibiting concrete spalling with exposed reinforcing with section loss.
- The project's purpose and need is to address the structural deficiencies of the existing bridge.
- The project includes replacing the existing 4-span superstructure structure and all substructure elements with a curved continuous 4-span steel multi-girder superstructure. Three new piers will be constructed to support the superstructure, maintaining or exceeding the existing vertical clearance and channel width. The proposed bridge will be supported by abutments at either end of the structure. Improvements to the north and south intersections, as well as accessible modifications are included in the planned replacement.
- The proposed structure consists of reinforced concrete parapets with protective fencing on either side of the structure. The proposed cross-section consists of a 5-foot sidewalk along the southbound lanes on the west side of the bridge, two 11-foot travels lanes with a 5-foot shoulder in each direction and a 14-foot shared use path along the northbound lanes on the east side of the bridge connecting into the existing trail along Ella T. Grasso Boulevard north of the bridge.
- Construction will be performed using a staged approach, maintaining traffic across the structure throughout the construction.

  Stage 1 of construction will shift traffic to the west, maintaining one travel lane in either direction, with a temporary concrete traffic barrier placed to protect the work zone. Pedestrian access will be maintained on the existing west sidewalk. Southbound traffic on Kimberly Avenue will shift to a single lane on the northern approach of Bridge No. 03612. Westbound traffic on Ella T. Grasso Boulevard will be reduced to two lanes, combining the left turn lane with the through lane. The existing water main at the bridge will be relocated to the east side of the bridge during Stage 1 construction to maintain service.

  Stage 2 of construction will shift traffic east, maintaining one travel lane in either direction, with a temporary concrete traffic barrier placed to protect the work zone. Pedestrian access will be maintained using a temporary sidewalk delineated with a temporary concrete barrier. The traffic pattern established in Stage 1 for southbound traffic on Kimberly Avenue and westbound traffic on Ella T. Grasso Boulevard will remain during Stage 2. The shared use path will be constructed after completion of the bridge deck.

- It is anticipated that the project will require the following permits.

  For Design
  - Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) General Permit for Minor Coastal Structures
  - United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) General Permit 15 (Self Verification)

  For Construction
  - CTDEEP Flood Management Certification
  - CTDEEP General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater & Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities
  - CTDEEP 401 Via DEEP Coastal Permit (Form C)
  - CTDEEP Structures, Dredging, Fill and Tidal Wetlands Permit (Form C)
  - CTDEEP Boating Permit
  - USACE Section 408 Approval
  - USACE Pre-Construction Notification (Section 404)
  - United States Coast Guard Bridge Permit
- Expected right-of-way (ROW) impacts include one construction easement from City Point Yacht Club.
- Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027 and finish in 2030. The current opinion of probable construction cost is approximately $60,000,000. Construction is expected to be 80% federally funded and 20% state funded.

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 Zoom Live Event chat:

Chat question: Will the slides be available after the session?

> *A representative of BL Companies stated that a YouTube recording will be available showing the presentation and Q&A.*

Chat question: Will there be bike lanes and if so, what is the reason for adding these bike lanes into taxpayer motor vehicle roads that may potentially put bikers in danger of personal injuries?

> *A representative of CTDOT stated that the current bridge section provides different options, which include a raised shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists that allow them to be separated from traffic, as well as 5-foot shoulders that more advanced bicyclists may prefer to use.*

Chat question: What processes are in the study plan for comprehensively understanding the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in preparing an improved design that serves all users?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the Department of Transportation recently released a Complete Streets directive, which requires each project to be individually evaluated for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit needs, noting that the evaluation includes reviewing nearby generators. Additionally, it was noted that the project team coordinated with the Cities of New Haven and West Haven and received concurrence on the proposed bridge design.

Chat question: That sidewalk doesn't feel 5' wide as we use it.

A representative of BL Companies stated that this comment seems to be regarding the existing sidewalk and that the project team will take a note of this concern.

Chat question: Is the concrete exceeding its life expectancy? Or is it spalling prematurely in terms of expectations?

A representative of BL Companies stated that typically a bridge is inspected once every two years and that the inspections review the condition of the concrete. It was noted that the subject structure is subject to a saltwater environment, which reduces the lifespan of the concrete.

Chat question: Why does the multiuse path occur only on one side of the bridge? People need to be able to use both sides, especially given the speed of the vehicular traffic on the 4 lanes of the road. Often drivers speed across the span.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the multiuse path was chosen to be placed on the east side as it connects to the existing multiuse path on Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, which continues onto Sea Street. The walk along the west side of the bridge will connect to the existing sidewalks at either end. Additionally, it was noted that speed enforcement is the jurisdiction of the local police.

A representative of H&H stated that the multiuse path will tie into the intersection improvements planned, including full sidewalks, with access to either side of the bridge provided.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the shared use path is bi-directional, allowing travel in both directions.

A representative of BL Companies stated that the planned design has been coordinated with the Cities of New Haven and West Haven.

Chat question: How wide is the multiuse path you proposed?

A representative of CTDOT responded that the current design shows a 14-foot shared use path.

Chat question: Can the design incorporate an ear-shaped bump out to allow pedestrians or cyclists to pause and enjoy the view of the water without clogging the path?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the project team will consider that comment as the design progresses.

Chat question: It concerns me that the wording used seems to assume that this proposed design will be the ultimate solution. It feels as if public input cannot possibly matter at this point. How much room for improvement is there?

A representative of BL Companies stated that the project is in the preliminary design stage, where CTDOT has identified this bridge as being in need of rehabilitation or replacement. The proposed plans are conceptual, providing a starting point for public outreach and coordination with the Cities and other interested groups. The purpose of this public information meeting is to listen to ideas and concerns that residents and users have and use this information to refine the design.

Chat question: Please repeat that people can ask questions via “Q&A”. I’m getting texts from residents saying they cannot use chat which is what most people are used to. Therefore, many aren’t able to ask questions.

A representative of H&H stated that questions should be asked through the Zoom Q&A function, not the chat, as the chat feature has been disabled.

Chat question: This bridge is the only realistic path between the western ‘burbs and New Haven. It concerns me that it might not be available during construction. I use the bridge frequently in my cycling between home and activities and medical appointments and access to the Amtrak station in New Haven.

A representative of BL Companies stated that the project team understands that the bridge is used heavily by cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles. It was noted that the bridge will be open to all previously mentioned modes of transportation, having one lane of vehicular traffic open in either direction while maintaining access to pedestrians and cyclists throughout construction.

Chat question: Have you decided on the design of the fence above the parapet? The bridge has a beautiful water view, and the fencing should block the view as little as possible.

A representative of H&H stated that the fence type has yet to be selected, and that t safety and structural requirements will need to be considered. It was noted that the aesthetics of this bridge are particularly important, noting that is serves as gateway between the cities and affords beautiful views.

Chat question: Thank you for this meeting, I'd really like to see more space for pedestrians and bikes, and less space for cars. Thomas Beckman described a vehicle count, but not a count for active transportation users. Has there been a pedestrian/bike count? And if not, why not? Also, NACTO recommends 10-foot lanes for safe travel in urban settings, why are these lanes 11 feet?

A representative of CTDOT stated that pedestrian/bicycle counts have not been taken for this project. Turning movement counts were taken from a nearby project. It was noted that the project contains a shared use path and sidewalk, which intends to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Ped count could be looked into internally.

A representative of VN Engineers stated that lane widths are designed in accordance with CTDOT's Highway Design Manual and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) which is based on the functional classification of the roadway.

A representative of BL Companies added that CTDOT has identified areas with the need for pedestrian/bicyclist accommodations; further noting that the nearby East Coast Greenway reiterates the need to these accommodations.

Chat question: As a nearby homeowner, I can tell you that traffic over the bridge is much worse than it was in 2021; there are times when both lanes westward are backed up into New Haven. Reducing the number of lanes from 2 down to 1 will exacerbate the problem, which is relatively new (past 6-12 months). Are there plans for handling the backup?

A representative of VN Engineers stated that the intersections at either end of the bridge will have traffic signal modifications to optimize the operations and that the traffic analysis will use current traffic counts.

Chat question: Can you show exactly how the protected bicycle path on the Northbound side will connect to the existing section of East Coast Greenway that runs alongside Sea Street and Ella Grasso?

A representative of BL Companies showed the proposed bridge replacement plan view, highlighting that the current proposed design carries the full width of the shared use path from Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, through the intersection and across the bridge, tapering to meet the existing sidewalks in West Haven.

Chat question: Will there be a recording of this video for residents to view?

A representative of BL Companies stated that a recording will be available on YouTube, and that the link to the video has been posted in the chat window.

Chat question: Slides would still be great. They are random access rather than requiring us to stream the YouTube recording to find the slides we want to refer to.

A representative of CTDOT stated that a pdf file of PowerPoint Presentation slides will be posted to the project website following the meeting.

Chat question: Should I repeat my question submitted when I registered?

A representative of BL Companies stated that reentering the question in the Q&A would allow for the question to be answered during the session. The question can be answered over email if it was not submitted during the session.

A representative of CTDOT Companies stated that the questions previously submitted are available and will be answered during the session.

Chat question: I'm glad you are including the shared use path in the design. Looks nice.

A representative of CTDOT responded thanking the attendee for the positive feedback.

Chat question: Will this project start after the two I-95 bridge replacements are completed?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the project team is actively coordinating with that project to minimize overlap.

Chat question: What will be done to mitigate impacts to area residents? These would range from extreme traffic backups and pollution to house damage from piling.

A representative of BL Companies stated that CTDOT and the project team analyzed different alternatives to mitigate impacts to residents, and the optimal design and construction is what was presented this evening. Additionally, it was noted that the design team considered accelerated bridge construction (ABC), however it did not significantly reduce the timeline of construction and did not allow for use of the bridge during construction, thereby having greater impacts. The chosen alternative would allow for all users to use the bridge during construction.

A representative of H&H stated that regarding construction activities such as piling, limitations on vibrations and structured monitoring will be taken into account when looking at the specific site characteristics.

Chat question: What opportunities might there be to expand on the scope of the narrative and current project design to address the new bridge aesthetics, including shape, materials, lighting and color in light of the importance of this gateway to the future of the area?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the project team appreciated the importance of this structure as a gateway to the area and noted that CTDOT's Commissioner has also requested that aesthetic enhancements be incorporated into the design. The project team will coordinate with the cities as to considerations of the bridge aesthetics.

Chat question: Motor vehicles should not be responsible for bikers riding on the road when there are sidewalks.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the proposed design includes a shared use path for cyclists, and that bicyclists will still have the ability to cycle along the roadway. The representative additionally noted that there is a state statute that requires motorists to provide 3-feet of distance (minimum) when overtaking or passing cyclists.

Chat question: Specifically, can you expand on the plans for lighting, crosswalks, signals?

A representative of H&H stated that the overall lighting requirements will be adhered to, and that aesthetic lighting is being considered in the design. Additionally, it was noted that there will be new crosswalks at the intersection with the Kimberly Avenue. At the intersection with Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, the current crosswalks and pedestrian signal facilities will be updated. It was also noted that new traffic signals at the intersection with the Kimberly Avenue are planned, to optimize traffic signal timing throughout the project.

Chat question: Any information on the design of the protective fence? It needs to be attractive to pedestrians. And yes to having a place to stop and enjoy the view.

A representative of H&H stated that that aesthetics of the protective fence are important and will be taken into account during of final design. Additionally, it was noted that the structure's ability to accommodate modifications to the width will need to be analyzed.

Chat question: Will residents have any input for the design?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the purpose of tonight's public information meeting is to gather public input regarding the conceptual design, for the project team to take into consideration. It was also noted that there is a public comment period open through July 11 for the public to provide their input on the project. Additionally, it was stated that residents should work through their municipal representatives to provide comments after the comment period ends, which will be given to the project team. The project team encourages the public to provide any input and/or voice concerns they may have.

Chat question: What is the impact this project will have on traffic?

A representative of VN Engineers stated that the impacts to traffic will be both temporary and permanent. There will be two stages of construction, during which one lane of travel in each direction, as well as the signalized intersections on either ends of the project, will be maintained. There will be temporary adjustments to the signals to accommodate the temporary conditions. Additionally, it was noted that the replacement and modification of existing intersection traffic signals will include an optimization of signal timing, which aims to improve the existing condition.

Chat question: One existing problem even in using the sidewalk, is that lots of road debris ends up on the sidewalk. Hazardous, especially for cyclists.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the width of the shared use path should help minimize the impact of debris. However, this concern is noted by the project team, which will coordinate with maintenance teams for future clean-ups.

Chat question: Is there a timeframe when the construction will start.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the anticipated construction start is 2027. It was noted that the team is in coordination with adjacent projects to minimize impacts to the public.

Chat question: I would like to ask you to greatly consider the design of the Beehive bridge in New Britian. The bridge is a model for the incorporation of art, lighting and history of the community.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the team will consider this comment and coordinate with the cities on the bridge's aesthetics.

Chat question: An attractive design for the fence could also help support traffic calming.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the project team is looking into different fencing options and will consider the aesthetics and access to the view. Additionally, it was noted that while the representative was unfamiliar with the benefits that fencing can have in regard to traffic calming, the team will review.

Chat question: Please consider slope as you plan the new bridge. And the radius of the curve for the join with the existing path along Ella Grasso/towards the traffic circle. Currently, a cyclist has to be pretty fit or adept with gear changing to easily manage the ride up the bridge heading towards West Haven. Note that I often see pedestrians using the sidewalk. Including families with shopping bags and strollers with children, families appearing to be walking back after a day at the beach. Please think carefully about slope, keeping in mind small children crossing the bridge, parents with strollers, and less-than-optimally fit cyclists.

A representative of H&H stated that the structure crosses a navigational channel, going from a low elevation to a higher elevation in a fairly short distance, however the project team will consider both the profile requirements and uses of the structure during as the design progresses.

Chat question: West Haven's Bike & Ped plan from 2023 has very different traffic count numbers than 2021. See table 2.

A representative of BL Companies stated that the project team will take note of this information and consider it as the design progresses.

Chat question: Would it be possible to incorporate more physical protection for the ped/bike paths, like a concrete barrier?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the Safe Streets Commission provided similar comments and that the project team will further look into those options as the design progresses.

Chat question: Is the bridge going to be higher than what it is now to allow bigger boats to go through?

A representative of H&H stated that given the existing steepness of the roadway profile, the intention is not to increase the vertical clearance of the navigation channel. The structural design efforts would be focused on spanning the channel without significantly increasing the slope of the roadway profile. Additionally, the representative of H&H noted that the width and vertical clearance of the navigation channel is expected to be maintained.

Chat question: Have you thought about the traffic when there is an accident on the highway and traffic is deviated into Kimberly Ave into the Kimberly bridge?

A representative of VN Engineers stated that a crash on I-95 would be considered a special condition and that designing Kimberly Avenue to accommodate the traffic on I-95 would result in a significant and costly overbuild in comparison to the temporary inconvenience that may be experienced on local roads if drivers were directed off of the highway.

Chat question: Will there be any planned improvement or integration of the multiuse path on the West Haven side on Elm Street? The description that the 14-foot multiuse pathway tapering into a standard sidewalk. How will the bicycle traffic be transitioned off the sidewalk and back into the regular roadway? Example west bound riders need to be transitioned over to the right-hand side of the road on Elm Street.

A representative of BL Companies stated that the purpose and need of the project is to address the condition of the bridge. The proposed shared use path is shown matching existing sidewalk width on the West Haven side of the bridge before the Kimberly Avenue intersection. The proposed intersection improvements at Kimberly Avenue intersection will allow

Chat question: Thank you Derrick and Brianna, as a Planning & Zoning Commissioner we plan to submit our thoughts as a commission and thank you for your consideration of our input. We would even welcome you to join us at a meeting to discuss this project.

A representative of CTDOT stated that CTDOT would be happy to attend one of the commission's meetings.

Chat question: What is the current posted speed limit, and can it be reduced as part of the project to promote traffic safety?

A representative of H&H stated that the current posted speed limit is 25 mph.

Chat question: Who are you working with at the Cities of New Haven and West Haven?

A representative of CTDOT stated that the project team has been coordinating with Giovanni Zinn and Abdul Quadir, the city engineers for New Haven and West Haven,

respectively. The representative additionally noted that the project team has also been coordinating with the Mayor's office of both cities.

A representative from BL Companies added that coordination with the cities will continue throughout the design and construction of the project.

Chat question: It might be worth mentioning, for the sake of public education, that not only are cyclists guaranteed access to all but limited access highways, by law, but the legality of riding our bikes on sidewalks is a matter of local control. It's tricky to know which of the more than 150 towns in CT allow cyclists to ride on sidewalks. Personally, I find the speed of the auto & truck traffic on the Kimberly Avenue bridge to exceed my comfort level for sharing the road with drivers and their heavy vehicles and the shoulder is often filled with items hazardous to cyclists. So I almost always cross the bridge on the sidewalk, but I keep an eye out for pedestrians or other cyclists. I dismount well in advance of pedestrians, so no one wonders what to do. Similarly, I get out of the way of cyclists riding uphill. I invite designers & planners to ride with me.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the proposed shared use path should eliminate those concerns and provide cyclists an area to ride legally without any question. The project team will note this comment.

Chat question: Great question about the integration of multiuse on one side of the bridge and shrinking to the currently inadequate sidewalks. It's an extremely hairy intersection at the gas station presently.

A representative of BL Companies stated that this feedback is appreciated and will be considered as the project design moves forward.

Chat question: Will CT DOT plow the sidewalks and bike lanes in winter?

A representative of CTDOT stated that CTDOT will continue to plow the sidewalks and bike lanes, including the proposed shared use path.

Chat question: Could the crosswalks at either end be raised, to improve safety by slowing speeders? Raised crosswalks appear to be working well at other locations in New Haven.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the comment will be reviewed internally with CTDOT's Traffic Division. The representative also noted that the project team will take this comment into consideration and look into examples of this option in New Haven.

Chat question: No one drives across the bridge at 25 mph, in my experience, unless congestion slows everyone down. I'd guess the ambient speed is often closer to 40mph.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the design speed of which the requirements and specifications are based on is 40 mph, which is the speed at or below 85% of vehicles observed travel under.

Chat question: Is there any coordination of the design of the bridge with the recognition that the East Coast Greenway runs along Second Avenue to Elm St across the bridge and then along Ella Grasso to Sea Street. This bridge will be a 50 year (at least?) set piece of infrastructure. Would love to maximize the utility of the Bridge for all those future years. Thanks.

A representative of CTDOT stated constructing the shared use path along the east side of the bridge allows for connection and extension of the East Coast Greenway.

Chat question: Given that the bridge spans 2 jurisdictions, and there's anecdotal evidence of a norm of drivers speeding across this bridge, are there any discussions about traffic calming? Or automated speed limit enforcement? Given the two towns involved, does that complicate the question of automated enforcement of the speed limit?

A representative of CTDOT stated that it is not in the CTDOT's jurisdiction to monitor or control the speeds of drivers, noting that this is under the jurisdiction of the local police. In terms of traffic calming, it will be looked into by the project team about alternatives to calm the area.

Chat question: Will there be cameras installed overseeing this area? Just curious.

A representative of CTDOT stated that installation of cameras, either during construction or permanently, is not currently planned.

Chat question: I respectfully ask that the planners dismiss the 85% guideline for this essential link between two communities in the same county. The 85% guideline normalizes unsafe and anti-community driving speeds. I'm sure the planners are aware that many ordinary people and safe-streets advocates question the custom of using the 85% guideline.

A representative of BL Companies acknowledged the comment, stating that the concern is a major reason behind CTDOT's complete streets initiative, which is being applied to this project and is depicted in the proposed cross-section.

Chat question: Sorry if I'm misunderstanding -- did Derick say that the bridge is being designed for 40mph speed, even though the posted limit is 25?

A representative of VN Engineers clarified that the response was accurate, noting that it is standard design practice to base the geometry of the roadway on the 85th percentile speed. The representative further noted that the design speed does not dictate cross-sectional elements such as sidewalk width, number of lanes, or lane widths, but rather the design speed is used to determine the horizontal and vertical geometry of the roadway to ensure that appropriate stopping sight distances are provided.

Chat question: I think there may be some confusion around what speed the bridge is being designed for -- is this road considered a highway? Is that why designers are using highway guidelines?

A representative of VN Engineers clarified that the roadway is classified as a minor urban arterial and not a highway.

A representative of CTDOT stated that the term "highway" is often used interchangeably when discussing various roadway types.

Chat question: So far no one has asked about how much the large parcel redevelopment on the West Haven side will be taken into account in the design for the replacement bridge. Thoughts?

A representative of BL Companies stated that the average daily traffic is on the cusp of justifying two travel lanes in each direction over the bridge, and that with future developments, an increase in vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic is anticipated and therefore, accounted in the proposed design.

Chat question: How about adding speed bumps?

A representative of BL Companies stated that the project team had not yet considered this option but will take it into consideration moving forward and incorporate if appropriate.

Chat question: Thanks for answering the "highway" question. I think regular road users might misunderstand and bristle upon hearing that term.

A representative of BL Companies stated that the request for clarification was appreciated, and that a better definition of the term will be considered for future public information meetings.

Chat/Email question: I live in the area and frequently use this bridge. I think the proposal does not do enough to calm traffic. Drivers will be speeding over the bridge at 60 miles per hour, causing significant harm. Please consider narrowing the travel lanes to reduce vehicle speeds. Also, I think the shared use paths for bicycles and pedestrians should be wider and added on both sides of the bridge. This is a key connection on the shoreline trail that a lot of people walk or bike on. As the area develops, there will be more demand for biking/walking on the side of the bridge where you currently only propose a sidewalk. At the very least, please add several feet of width to the shared use path on the harbor side.

> *A representative of BL Companies stated that the proposed design reduces the lane widths, which should facilitate traffic calming and that the widths of the sidewalk and shared use path are being increased.*

Chat/Email question: I am not able to attend the zoom meeting tonight, but I'm very excited about the possibility for foot and bike traffic to use the planned new bridge. Every year it's easier to get around New Haven by bike, thanks to traffic calming and improvements like these, and I'd love to be able to get to more places in West Haven as well.

> *A representative of BL Companies stated that the comment is appreciated by the project team. Additionally, it was noted that the Cities of New Haven and West Haven are working to make areas within their cities more accessible.*

Chat/Email question: Thank you for holding tonight's meeting. I am writing to express my support for the comments that were submitted by the New Haven Coalition for Active Transportation (NCAT). To summarize their comments: a design that has shared use paths on both sides of the street, with 3' shoulders and 12'' of tighter lanes to bring both sidewalks up to 12' shared use paths with 3' shoulders.

> *A representative of CTDOT stated that the coalition's comments have been received and will be taken into consideration by the project team.*

Email question: I am excited for this bridge replacement as it looks like the sidewalk is being widened and continuing down to the existing multiuse path on the New Haven side. This bridge is a critical connection for bikes and pedestrians traveling between New Haven and West Haven.

I am concerned though that 4 travel lanes are being maintained over the bridge. An ADT of 16,000 is under the threshold for two lane road diets per FHWA and CTDOT, plus, Kimberly Ave becomes a two lane road on the West Haven side anyways. It seems wasteful to rebuild this bridge with 4 lanes when only 2 are necessary. Lots of reconstruction cost could be saved with a narrower bridge, and the shoulders, which are shown on the plans as being used by bikes, could be constructed as wider buffered bike lanes, or a 12-14' multiuse path instead of the proposed 10'. I believe it would be fairly simple to carry just 2 lanes over the bridge - one of the southbound lanes on Kimberly Ave approaching Ella Grasso Blvd would become a left turn only lane, and coming northbound onto the bridge, the second lane would simply not appear until the Ella Grasso intersection where the lane is needed. I have **never** seen any kind of traffic congestion on this bridge in the many years that I have used it.

Again, I am excited for this new bridge to have better pedestrian connections, but as someone that relies on this bridge as essentially the only option for bicycling into West Haven, it would be

much more comfortable and safer to have fewer vehicle lanes and a wider shoulder or widened multiuse path.

> *A representative of CTDOT thanked the person for their comment on the project. The Department intends to construct the bridge with two lanes in each direction as reduction in lanes could limit future development in both New Haven and West Haven. The additional width of the structure will allow for opportunities in the future for alternate roadway configurations if warranted. In addition, the Department has revised the roadway configuration on the project to reduce the travel lane widths to 11 feet and increasing the shared use path width to 14 feet and has updated the documents on the project website to reflect this (0156-0184 West Haven (ct.gov)).*

Email Question: I watched the recording of last night's meeting, and I appreciate all the thought that has gone into providing a safe and comfortable shared use path for non-motorized users, in addition to committing to focus on bridge aesthetics down the line.

I do believe it is critical that the full width of the path extend onto the West Haven side, at least until the first crosswalk, where bicyclists will then be able to use the crosswalk phase to safely re-enter the road. Having a 14' path over the bridge that tapers down to the existing 5' condition will severely inhibit the actual usefulness of the path. A bicycle connection is only as good as its weakest link, and tapering back down simply because it's the existing condition means this path will be only as good as basically the condition we have today, which is narrow and not possible for a bicyclist and pedestrian to pass each other. If work is being done at the intersection anyways, including a new traffic signal, it is imperative to continue a proper shared use path width to the first crossing, which according to shared use path design guidelines must be at a minimum of 8', with the full 14' ideal.

I was very disappointed to learn at this meeting, however, around the 1:16:00 mark where it was stated by the engineer that the actual design speed of the roadway is 40 mph. The engineer shared this piece of information in addition to the fact that this is also the 85th percentile speed without seeing the contradiction. The reason that drivers are speeding in excess of the 25 mph speed limit over the bridge is **because** the design speed is 40 mph. Having a road design which promotes a high speed directly leads to a high operating speed. It appears as though CTDOT is still using the outdated 85th percentile rule to set speeds, which rewards speeding drivers by allowing them to set design parameters by breaking the law. If CTDOT would like to encourage driver speeds over the bridge in compliance with the posted speed limit, then a lower design speed should be chosen. The century-old method of setting the highest design speed practical while signing a lower speed limit has failed our country's roadway networks and contributes to the increasing roadway safety crisis we have today.

If this road is classified as a Minor Urban Arterial as the team stated towards the end, then the CTDOT Highway Design Manual provides for a design speed selection as low as 30 mph, which also includes lane widths down to 10' and narrower shoulders. This should be used instead.

Finally, I will echo others' comments regarding a barrier on the shared use path between the path and the roadway. Not only would this make the path more comfortable and safe; it may also help keep roadway debris off of the path itself if a solid type of wall instead of a rail is used.

Overall I am encouraged by this design and I look forward to a finished, revised plan which considers the above comments and designs the vehicular lanes to encourage speed limit compliance.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: I am a former resident of New Haven who used to bike and drive over the Kimberly Ave Bridge regularly. The cross section of the new bridge as proposed is retrograde and does not meet CT DOT's complete streets goals. Here are some comments:

- 11-foot travel lanes are too wide and encourage speeding, particularly with the large shoulders proposed. 10-foot lanes are adequate and desirable.
- Shoulder space serves no purpose here and should be reallocated to the buffer zone between the sidewalks and motor vehicle lanes. Shoulder space is actively counterproductive in that it encourages speeding.
- The bridge should have raised, barrier separated two-way bike lanes (NOT shared-use paths) on BOTH sides. If necessary, the bike lane on the north/west side of the bridge can be reduced to a one-way lane, but it is essential to have bike accommodations on both sides of the bridge considering that it would be impractical and unrealistic for southbound bicyclists on Kimberly Ave. to cross over twice to use a path that is only on the southern/eastern side of the bridge.
- The bike paths should be SEPARATE from the sidewalks, not combined. Shared use paths create conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians and are not appropriate except in extremely rural areas.
- The bike path on the south/eastern side of the bridge should be two-way to accommodate connecting trail traffic.
- The center two lanes of the bridge (and the whole Kimberly-Elm corridor) should be marked BUS ONLY to prioritize the 271 bus, which provides a key transit connection between New Haven and West Haven
- Attention should be given to improving pedestrian crossing conditions at crosswalks adjacent to the project by adding median islands, removing shoulders, reducing corner radii, and reducing the number of motor vehicle lanes.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: I am a New Haven resident and a cyclist. I believe that the new design for the Kimberly Ave bridge needs to plan for multi-modal transportation options. This bridge is the main connector of both the New Haven and West Haven shoreline bike paths, but is currently not designed for bikes. I hope to someday bike to the beach with my children, but I would not take them over this route at this time, and there is really no alternate bike safe path within a mile, either.

As the East Coast Greenway continues to extend up our shoreline and connect our communities, I hope that this bridge will help safely connect our neighboring cities with safe and healthy transportation options.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: The West River Watershed Coalition supports the plans of the Connecticut Department of Transportation to replace the Kimberly Avenue Bridge. We applaud the widening of the bridge to include bicycle and pedestrian lanes in both directions.

A goal of our Coalition is to support access to the West River and to connect walking and bicycling trails all along the watershed from Bethany to the Long Island Sound. 10 years ago, the West River watershed was designated an official CT Greenway. We want to make sure that this plan for the Kimberly Avenue Bridge allows for and supports access by pedestrians and bicycles to and from all four "corners" of the bridge. We are especially looking for connection between the Kimberly Ave Bridge along Water Street and First Avenue with the new bicycle and pedestrian lanes on Beach St. near Sandy Point, West Haven.

The West River Watershed Coalition consists of many partners and participants including individuals, five municipalities and other team members such as the Friends of Edgewood Park, Gather New Haven, the Menunkatuck Audubon Society, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven, the New Haven Bioregional Group, River Advocates of South Central Connecticut, Sandy Point Neighborhood Coalition, Save the Sound, SCSU Sustainability, and the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: The Kimberly Avenue bridge (Rt 745) is a critical active transportation connection between West Haven and New Haven.

The new bridge needs:

- 12 ft wide side paths on both sides with room for both bikes and people walking - Consider bollards or a barrier to prevent motor vehicles from leaving the roadway and hitting those using the side path.
- Traffic calming and bollard protected pedestrian crossing islands at the nearby intersections & crosswalks
- A safer 25 mph - 30 mph design speed, not the proposed deadly 40 mph - Designing for dangerous high motor vehicle speeds in a low-car ownership city and adjacent to a regionally important active transportation corridor would be negligent.

Human Scale Design - When designing active transportation corridors and multi-use paths, please consider human factors - especially with hotter summers. Is there an opportunity to include trees in this project or incorporate shade structures for sections of the side path? Is there a viewpoint that can be highlighted with a shaded stopping point and bench on the bridge?

The Kimberly Ave side paths would connect to the Long Wharf multi-use trail, Kimberly Ave sidewalks, and future bike lanes. This connection is important for the West River Greenway and East Coast Greenway routes.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: Regarding the proposed bridge design between New Haven and West Haven, I would like to advocate for the below, with the goal of working to connect the two towns in more meaningful way for people not in cars. This is important from an equity standpoint, for the environment, for the economy of both towns and their business, and from an enjoyability perspective. Let's build a bridge that reflects the future we want!

- Vertical protection (more than the curb) would make the bridge more safe and comfortable for people not in cars (and seems to be the standard for other large bridges with multimodal elements).
- The 5' shoulder should be added to the sidewalk so that the effective/perceived outer lane width is not 16' (which will encourage speeding).
- If the shoulder is added to the sidewalk, there could be a shared path on the harbor side and on the river side (so that bikers don't have to cross the street to get to the bike infrastructure if they're coming from the other side).
- If the speed limit is 25mph, the lanes should be more narrow (this article argues for 9', but 10 or even 10.5 would be an improvement) so that people drive that speed.
- Are we sure that 4 lanes is justified? Would 2 or 3 be sufficient for the volumes we see and want?
- Here and here are some examples of bridges with multimodal elements, significant protection and lane markings.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: I'm reaching out about the Kimberly Avenue bridge reconstruction / improvement plan. I've taken a look at the proposed plan. as a local resident whose only vehicle is a bicycle, I am wondering if the plan can be adjusted to include a shared use path on BOTH sides of the bridge? this would help bikers because they wouldn't have to cross the street to get to the bike infrastructure when coming from the other side. perhaps some of the shoulder(s) can be reduced to allow space for the additional shared use path.

Additionally, some basic vertical protection dividing the pedestrians/cyclists/etc. from the vehicle lanes would make the bridge safer overall.

Thanks so much for considering these ideas.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: Regarding the plans of the Connecticut Department of Transportation to replace the Kimberly Avenue Bridge, I support widening the bridge to include separate and protected bicycle and pedestrian lanes in each direction.

This bridge is a critical active transportation connection between West Haven and New Haven. The new bridge needs protected 12 ft wide sidepaths in each direction to permit separate lanes

for bicyclists and pedestrians, rather than having pedestrians and bicyclists share a 14 ft sidepath on the south side of the bridge as currently proposed. In my opinion, the difference in speed of bicyclists and pedestrians in a shared path is intrinsically more dangerous to both the pedestrians and the bicyclists. Additionally, there should be traffic calming and bollard protected pedestrian crossing islands at the crosswalks.

The pedestrian and bicycle sidepaths should connect safely to the Long Wharf multi-use trail, Kimberly Ave sidewalks, future multi-use pathways for auto-free travel, such as the proposed routes for the East Coast Greenway and the West River Greenway, and permit connection between the Kimberly Ave Bridge along Water Street and First Avenue with the new bicycle and pedestrian lanes on Beach St. near Sandy Point, West Haven.

> *Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.*

Email Question: Please take measures to protect pedestrians along the proposed new bridge to West Haven. Concrete barriers to protect the bike lane and pedestrians from cars should be added, along with raised crosswalks at the intersections.

Car accidents involving pedestrians can be avoided if protections are put into place to keep everyone safer and reduce driving speeds.

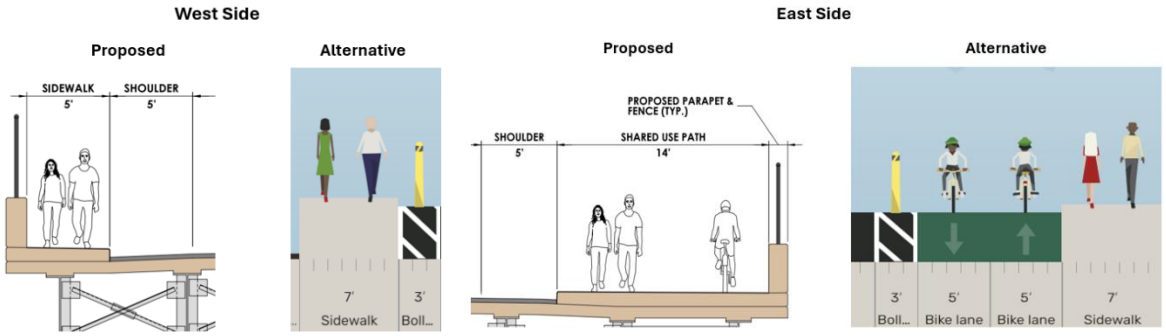
Thank you for your consideration.

> *Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.*

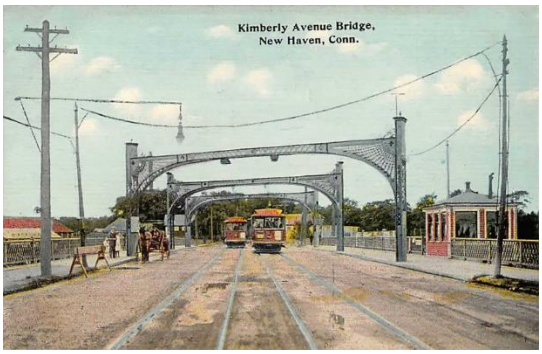
Email Question: I am a resident of New Haven who regularly uses Kimberly Ave to access the West Haven beach on my bike. I am excited to see the state DOT acknowledging the need to improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure on this bridge. Here are a few of my suggestions:

- Over-speeding cars: The proposed designs show reduced lane widths to reduce speeding and allocate more space for alternative modes. However, the shoulder widths of 5 ft may still give drivers the impression of a 16 ft wide lane, leading to continued overspeeding. Narrowing the proposed shoulder widths and reallocating this space to pedestrian and bike infrastructure could be very beneficial.
- Protection for vulnerable road users: Raised curbs are a good step toward enhancing safety. Given that at this bridge, cars travel at design speeds of 40mph rather than the posted speed limit of 25mph, a protective physical barrier could greatly improve peds and bikers' safety. Concrete barriers or guide rails as seen at Wallace St and Ferry St bridges in New Haven, could provide this protection and would require about 3 ft of space.
- Space for Pedestrians: Narrowing vehicle shoulder widths and adding physical barriers would improve pedestrian safety. Additional space of about 2 ft could be added to sidewalks giving users a 7 ft wide sidewalk.

- Space for Biking: After reserving 7 ft for sidewalks and 3 ft for physical protection on both sides of the bridge, we would still get about 10 ft for a dedicated two-way bike path on the east side. This will be a significant upgrade over the proposed shared path.



- Activation Elements: Historically, this bridge featured streetcars, wide sidewalks, and viewing decks overlooking the sea. While dreaming about streetcars can be seen as a pipe dream, adding an overlooking deck on the east side could be possible and help activate the bridge. This will enhance the bridge's appeal for pedestrians and cyclists, providing a place to relax and enjoy the beautiful sea views.



- During Construction: Typically, sidewalks and bike paths are closed while maintaining full car access during construction. Given the project's focus on active modes, could we maintain access for active mode on both sides of the bridge during both construction phases by reducing car lane widths? Alternatively, could we plan more sidewalk space for shared use on one side while ensuring safe crossing at both ends of the bridge?

This is a great project and will certainly improve accessibility for all modes of transportation. Thank you for considering our ideas.

Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.

Email Question: To whom it may concern:

Hope you're having a good week. I wanted to express my opposition to State Project No. 0156-0184, the Kimberly Ave bridge rebuilding project. As a society, we have finally started realizing the issues with car-centric infrastructure and have begun to fund pedestrian-focused, safe, green public infrastructure, which has been a wonderful progression for me to see Connecticut take. These past few years, drivers have become even more unsafe and fast, and with little enforcement of traffic laws, that is unlikely to change. Almost every time I drive I see someone blatantly run a red light. I am tailgated for driving the speed limit. Nobody uses their turn signals anymore, and folks fly at egregiously fast speeds, endangering everyone around them. I no longer feel safe on the road.

I ask you to please reconsider the design of this bridge: We need concrete buffers for the bike lane, we need the lanes to be 10 feet wide instead of 11, and raised crosswalks should be added at both ends.

Traffic deaths happen far too often. We need to prevent them with good design instead of having to respond post-accident due to our inaction. Prevention is much better than reaction.

Thank you so much for your time.

> *Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.*

Email Question: I wanted to add a public comment to please make sure to ensure that any bicycle paths are accessible in both directions and do not require crossing over several lanes of traffic. I notice that the current image looking north does not show the shared bicycle path on both sides. This will be dangerous and inconvenient and require cyclists going south (whose only choice along the shoreline is to use this bridge) to ride in the roadway, which I personally do now and find to be dangerous. Creating paths that have some barrier is also highly recommended as that will be safer for cyclists crossing this bridge. This is our one chance to get it right! Please consider all road users when designing this bridge, not just cars.

> *Project Team Response: The project will balance the needs of all users, including vehicles, bicyclist, pedestrians and boaters. The comments will be considered as the design of the project progresses.*

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 July 11, 2024.

The presentation was well attended and the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.