

**Department of Transportation  
State Project No. 34-351  
Intersection Improvements on Route 39 at Beckerle Street and East Gate Road  
In the City of Danbury**

**Virtual Public Informational Meeting  
July 29, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.  
MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live**

**Report of Meeting**

**In Attendance:** There were 48 people in attendance for this event including Senator Julie Kushner, Mayor Mark Boughton, and some CT DOT representatives including Deputy Commissioner Eucalitto. The remaining attendees were residents who mostly chose to remain anonymous.

**Presentation:** The meeting went live at 6:45 P.M. with an informative introduction slide for attendees to view before the event began. The official start of the meeting was at 7:00 P.M. with an introduction from Mike Cherpak. Following the introduction, Mayor Boughton joined the meeting to say a few words in support of the project and thanked the project team for the work they did to put the event together. Mike Cherpak thanked the mayor and covered the process for how attendees can interact with the project team. Andrew Correia, Richard Franklin, and Jason Boice gave a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation on project **34-351: Intersection Improvements on Route 39 at Beckerle Street and East Gate Road in the City of Danbury**

The presentation covered the following items:

- ⇒ The project history and location of the project limits. The background of the OSTA agreement with the City of Danbury and Traffic Investigation Report leading to the inception of this project were highlighted. Crash history within the project limits was discussed as well
- ⇒ The proposed design was discussed next, including key design elements, project constraints, and possible solutions for existing substandard conditions.
- ⇒ ROW impacts, project cost, utility coordination, drainage, environmental permits, project schedule, and environmental impacts were covered as well.

**Comments and Questions:** Questions regarding sidewalks and impacts to specific properties were most prominent. The comments/questions are summarized below:

1. Email question: Will the project construction affect school traffic?

*Response: Highways responded that they are very aware of the proximity of the project to Danbury High School and they will be taking that into consideration. Highways will bring this up with the Traffic Engineering office and incorporate it into the contract.*

2. Chat question: Will there be speed bumps installed?

*Response: Highways responded saying no speed bumps will be installed on State roads. Speed bumps on local roads can be considered but that would need to be discussed with the City.*

3. Email comment and question: The resident mentioned they were in full support of the project and would like to know if it is possible to consider sidewalks on the southbound side of Route 39?

*Response: Highways responded saying that they always consider ways to improve all roadway users (vehicle, bike, and pedestrians) mobility within a project corridor. This particular job was initiated to improve safety at the East Gate Road and Beckerle Street intersections and there was no sidewalk component included in the scope. The possibility of sidewalks was analyzed but given the lack of sidewalks along Route 39 currently, the need to purchase additional right of way (private property) for construction, and the possible impacts to existing structures are all factors that went into the decision not to include sidewalks within this project.*

4. Chat question: Other than about one foot of widening, is there any other work anticipated on the south side of Route 39 between East Gate Road and Dogwood Drive?

*Response: Highways responded that due to the introduction of a new turn lane there will be widening on both sides of the roadway in the East Gate Road intersection area. After the roadway transitions back to two lanes there will be no more widening. Once back to two lanes existing conditions will be matched as much as possible until the East Gate Road intersection.*

5. Voicemail question: The resident at 44 Clapboard Ridge Road wondering if the septic tank in their front yard would be impacted by the construction?

*Response: Highways responded saying they do not expect to be doing any work on the private property aside from re-grading the driveway. The widening happening on the roadway has impacts to the front yard on state right of way so it is unlikely that the septic tank be located in this area. An as-built plan can be pulled to locate the septic tank to verify impacts.*

6. Chat question: If the State condemns property does the property owner still get paid?

*Response: Rights of Way responded saying that once evaluation has occurred, that is considered a registered value and that offer is made to the property owner. If the State and property owner cannot reach an agreement and the State files for eminent domain, that valuation amount is deposited into the court and the property owner can withdrawal it. Additional negotiations can occur but at the minimum that property owner is entitled to the original valuation. If an agreement still cannot be*

*reached the property owner has six months to file an appeal and at that point an argument can be made in front of a judge for additional compensation.*

7. Email question: Senator Julie Kushner wondering if a copy of the presentation will be made available?

*Response: Highways responded saying a link will be posted on the project web page and on the City of Danbury's website with a link to a YouTube video of the entire event. A report of meeting with all questions and comments will also be on the project web page.*

8. Chat question: With the current plan, no work will be done on the curve on Route 39 in front of Dogwood Drive?

*Response: Highways responded that the only work being done in that location will be roadway resurfacing and minor grading.*

9. Voicemail question: How long will construction take?

*Response: Highways responded that construction will take one year. Construction is anticipated to begin in April of 2022 and be completed by the fall.*

10. Chat question: Can city utilities be brought from Farm Street so that residents can connect to City water and sewer?

*Response: Highways responded that the project is mainly a resurfacing and safety improvement job. There is minor utility work involving the relocation of utility poles and there is no underground utility work anticipated. Any City utilities will not be included in this project.*

11. Chat question: Will there be future public info meetings as the project moves forward?

*Response: Highways responded by first addressing the process the Department uses. Plans are developed up to the 30% phase in which the Department and City are both in agreement on the proposal. Then the public's input is gauged at a public info meeting. From there the Department is in constant communication with the City about the project progress. If any major change occurred in the plans another public info would occur. Assuming no significant changes from 30% to 100% design there will be no further formal meetings.*

12. Chat question: Between the driveway at 44 and 42 Clapboard Ridge Road there is a drain that drains on to one of the properties and runs off into the roadway during significant rain or snow melting events. Will this be addressed?

*Response: Highways responded saying that a closer look will be taken at that location. A more personal conversation can be had with the property owners to get a better idea of what the situation is. Right now minor drainage work is expected but if further analysis determines the runoff to be hazardous then work will be considered to address it.*

13. Chat comment: Thank you for putting this together and finding a way to reach out to our community during this time, it was well presented and informative.

*Response: Highways responded with their appreciation for that comment. Highways also reiterated that if anyone would like a more personal conversation about the project they can send in their information and they will contact them.*

14. Chat comment: My house is at the corner of Beckerle and Clapboard Ridge Road on the southbound side and it will be highly impacted. I would like to speak with someone about it.

*Response: Highways responded by bringing up a visual of the project plans in that location. They then summarized the work to be done which includes minor widening, driveway regrading and slope regrading. Highways emphasized that all this work would be done within State right of way. It was reiterated again that further communication can be planned by contacting Highways through voicemail or email.*

15. Chat question: Can you repeat how to access the YouTube recording of the meeting?

*Response: Highways responded saying that the YouTube recording can be accessed the same way as the Virtual Public Info Meeting live event on the project webpage. The link will be posted after the meeting and a link to the optional survey.*

16. Chat question: How far does the one-foot widening go further south? Does it extend all the way from East Gate Road to Beckele Street?

*Response: Highways responded by first emphasizing that the widening amount is not exactly one foot, it is variable but that is the approximate amount. They continued saying that the widening is necessary to incorporate the new turn lane at East Gate Road and continues as the road transitions back down to two lanes. Once the roadway is back to two lanes the widening ends and this is approximately 300 feet past the intersection. Widening is not proposed again until the Beckerle Street intersection.*

Some private interactions were had with residents where they shared their thanks and support for the project. Only one resident showed displeasure with the project and the impacts to their property.

The meeting ended at 8:30 P.M. after all questions were answered. Attendees were reminded that the comment period would be open until August 12<sup>th</sup> should anyone wish to submit any further comments or questions to the project email or phone number.