

# Meeting Summary | Advisory Committee Meeting No. 2

**Date/Time:** Thursday, April 4, 2013, 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Riverfront Community Center, Community Room B, 300 Welles Street, Glastonbury

**Purpose:** Review preliminary alternative shared use path connections for the Wethersfield and Glastonbury approaches to the future Putnam Bridge walkway.

**Attendees:** Attendee sign-in sheet attached.

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## Summary of Meeting Discussion:

1. Jeff Parker opened the meeting at approximately 9:00 a.m. Advisory Committee (AC) members, CTDOT staff, and CHA staff provided introductions.
2. CHA presented an overview of what was discussed at the AC kick-off meeting, including project design goals and objectives, and design considerations.
3. CHA presented three preliminary alternatives for the Wethersfield path connection, all three of which connect the walkway to the proposed terminus at the intersection of Great Meadow Road and the I-91 Exit 25 off ramp. The following summary provides a brief description of the Wethersfield alternatives:
  - **Alternative 1** – The most gradual transition from the walkway down to the terminus. Grades are 5% or less and the path curvature meets the design standards established for the project. The path is longer than the other alternatives to accommodate the lesser grades and standard curvature, but this layout will have wetland and floodplain impacts.
  - **Alternative 2** – The shortest connection from the walkway to the terminus, generally located within the limits of the temporary haul road that will be constructed for the Putnam Bridge Rehabilitation Project. This location will minimize new clearing impacts in the project area, but it requires sharper curvature and the use of steeper grades that are up to 8% (for 200 feet). No wetland or floodplain impacts are anticipated with this alternative.
  - **Alternative 3** – An intermediate path location that maintains grades of 5% or less from the walkway to the terminus. The path uses the sharper curvature of Alternative 2 and is slightly longer, but avoids the floodplain impacts of Alternative 1 and minimizes potential wetland impacts.

A detailed matrix comparing the alternatives was provided at the meeting (*Note: the matrix with a Preliminary Alternatives Summary is available on [CTDOT's Putnam Bridge Multimodal Trail Connections Feasibility Study webpage](#)*).

4. The following comments and questions (in italics followed by responses or additional discussion, where applicable) were provided in response to the Wethersfield alternatives:

- *Will Army Corps of Engineers' approval be needed?*
  - It is anticipated that there will be permitting through the Corps when the study moves into project design.
- *What type of separation will there be between Route 3 and the shared use path?*
  - A concrete barrier with fencing along the top will be provided between the roadway and the path.
- *Can a truck plow that is used to clear the shared use path also be used to clear the walkway on the bridge?*
  - The walkway is not designed to accommodate the width and weight of a truck; an alternative snow removal method will be required for the walkway.
- *Regarding Alternative 2, can the path alignment and side slope be modified to eliminate potential sight line obstructions (as looking from the ramp to Great Meadow Road)?*
  - It is possible to modify the alternative to address sight line concerns, however, the required path alignment could be located outside of the haul road footprint and could result in steeper grades for a portion of the path.
- *Are there any sight line issues with Alternative 3?*
  - There are no anticipated sight line issues with this alternative.
- *It was noted that during a March 28, 2013 meeting with Kathy Bagley (Wethersfield AC representative), potential river access from Great Meadow Road was discussed. It is possible that a connection could be provided from the path terminus to the river utilizing some of the area to be used for access to the bridge piers for the bridge rehabilitation project, though additional permitting could be required. A river connection could also be linked to potential parking accommodations for the path.*
- *What is included in the cost estimates provided in the comparison of alternatives matrix?*
  - The estimates reflect hard construction costs and do not include costs for design, project administration, utility relocations, property acquisition (if required), or environmental impact mitigation.
  - The estimates are developed in accordance with CTDOT's Preliminary Cost Estimating Guidelines and are intended to provide a reasonable order-of-magnitude comparison among the alternatives.
  - It was noted that significant environmental impact mitigation, particularly to address wetland impacts, could significantly increase overall costs.

[Note: This cost estimate discussion also applies to the Glastonbury alternatives.]

- *It was noted that a SHPO Phase 1 study may not be needed if the path (particularly in Glastonbury) is located on the existing embankment. An archaeological study along the entire alignment could very costly and may be required if the path is located off of the embankment.*

- *Are there concerns that the path will not be usable year-round due to flooding? What percentage of the time will the path be flooded?*
  - It is not anticipated that the Wethersfield path will experience seasonal flooding as two of the three alternatives are located above the 100-year flood elevation, and all are above the 10 year-flood elevation. However, flooding could be an issue for the Glastonbury path, where all alternatives have some portion of the path that is within the 100-year floodplain, and in some cases below the 10-year flood elevation.
  - It would be difficult to estimate the duration of flooding events and the amount of time for which each path alternative could be flooded on an annual basis due to seasonal, 10-year, or 100-year storm events. It was noted that generally there is a 10% annual chance of a 10-year storm occurring, and a 1% annual chance of a 100-year storm. For example, if the path is located below the 10-year flood elevation, there is a 10% chance of the path being flooded each year.
- *The potential issues associated with the sharper curves used in Alternatives 2 and 3 were discussed. CHA noted that the curve radius is 30 ft, which is less than the 60-ft minimum radius defined by the design standards and associated with a bicycle speed of 18 mph.*
  - It was noted that bicycle speeds approaching the curve from the bridge walkway should be relatively slow given that the narrowness of the walkway will require some users to dismount and walk with their bikes off the bridge.
  - It was noted that a small rest area located at the the curve could benefit some users.
  - Railing will be provided along the path to prevent bicyclists from riding off the path and down the embankment.
- *There was a general consensus among attendees that Alternative 3 is the most favorable alternative given that the maximum grade is 5%; it could be modified to eliminate potential wetland impacts; there are no floodplain impacts; and it is considerably shorter and a more direct connection than Alternative 1.*
- *CHA discussed potential parking accommodations in Wethersfield, including parking on-street in the vicinity of the path terminus, parking in a new lot located south of the Exit 25 ramp and west of Great Meadow Road, or parking in a new lot located on the east side of Great Meadow Road. CHA noted that any of the parking options could be paired with each of the alternatives. CHA also noted that the need for new parking could be assessed once the path is open and user demand for parking is better defined.*
  - Potential parking accommodations should be further considered as part of this study and included in subsequent permitting for the path, whether the parking will be constructed concurrently with the path or at some future time. This approach will streamline the approval process for new parking if it pursued in the future. There was general consensus from CTDOT and attendees for this approach.
  - Pervious pavement or granular surface treatments should be considered for new parking areas.

5. CHA presented five preliminary alternatives for the Glastonbury path connection, all five of which connect the walkway to the proposed terminus at Naubuc Avenue in the vicinity of the Route 3 overpass. The following summary provides a brief description of the Glastonbury alternatives:
- **Alternative 1** – Following the northbound side of Route 3 along the top of the roadway embankment for most of its length to maximize the path elevation (relative to the 100-year flood elevation) and to minimize the potential for flooding. The path will be separated from the Route 3 shoulder by a concrete barrier and fence providing approximately 13 ft of separation between path users and vehicular traffic. A retaining wall will be used along the right side of the path to minimize new embankment fill within the floodplain and to minimize the potential for wetland impacts.
  - **Alternative 2** – Following the northbound side of Route 3 along the embankment at an elevation at or above the 10-year flood elevation. This elevation allows for greater separation (approximately 25-30 ft) between path users and Route 3 traffic and helps lessen the impact of traffic noise. No retaining wall will be used to reduce costs, but there will be considerable embankment fill within the floodplain and there will be potential wetland impacts along the bottom of the new path embankment.
  - **Alternative 3** – Following the northbound side of Route 3 along the embankment at an elevation at or above the 10-year flood elevation and cut into the side of the existing embankment slope. This path location will have less separation (approximately 18-20 ft) from Route 3 traffic than Alternative 2, but the elevation below the roadway will help lessen the impact of traffic noise. A retaining wall (assumed to be sheet piling) will be required between the roadway and the path to accommodate construction of the path inside the existing embankment slope. There will be no fill in the floodplain (existing embankment will be removed) and potential wetland impacts are anticipated to be minor.
  - **Alternative 4** – Providing significant separation (up to 100 ft or more) between path users and Route 3 traffic by diverging from Route 3 and running on the northbound side of the road outside of the existing roadway embankment for most of its length. This path location will minimize the effect of traffic on the user experience and will provide the most natural trail environment, but will be most susceptible to flooding. This alternative will also require considerable new embankment fill within the floodplain and wetland impacts will be the greatest of the alternatives.
  - **Alternative 5** – Looping from the walkway to the southbound side of Route 3 and following along the top of the Route 3 roadway embankment for most of its length. Similar to Alternative 1, the location will maximize the path elevation (relative to the 100-year flood elevation) and minimize the potential for flooding. The path will be separated from the Route 3 shoulder by a concrete barrier and fence providing approximately 13 ft of separation between path users and vehicular traffic. A retaining wall will be used along the left side of the path to minimize new embankment fill within the floodplain and to minimize the potential for wetland impacts.

A detailed matrix comparing the alternatives was provided at the meeting (*Note: the matrix with a Preliminary Alternatives Summary is available on [CTDOT's Putnam Bridge Multimodal Trail Connections Feasibility Study webpage](#)*).

6. The following comments and questions (in italics followed by responses or additional discussion, where applicable) were provided in response to the Glastonbury alternatives:
- *Where would existing light poles be relocated for Alternatives 1 and 5?*
    - CHA noted that the light poles could be mounted to the concrete barrier, which would require widening of the barrier at each light pole location. The widening would reduce the width of the path shoulder along the barrier but would not affect the overall paved width of the path.
  - *Any fill within the 100-year floodplain will require compensatory flood storage. Can the amount of fill below the 100-year flood elevation be quantified for each alternative?*
    - It was noted that Alternative 3 would provide a net increase in flood storage as existing embankment material would be removed to accommodate the path.
    - It was questioned whether Alternative 3 could be modified to increase the separation between Route 3 and the path while creating no net change in the existing flood storage. CHA will assess this possibility.
  - *CHA noted that the 10-year flood elevation is several feet higher upriver of Route 3.*
  - *Is the rest area adjacent to the bridge necessary?*
    - CHA noted that the space shown for the rest area is intended to serve several purposes including: to accommodate amenities such as a trail sign/kiosk, benches, bike racks, and/or trash receptacles; to provide room for a maintenance or emergency vehicle to turn around at the bridge; and to provide a rest area for users.
    - It was noted that this space also allows bicyclists to mount/dismount at the bridge without blocking through movements on the path and it provides an overlook area for nature-watching.
  - *How long will construction of the path take? When is it anticipated the path will be built?*
    - Generally it will take one construction season to build the path.
    - The schedule for when construction will begin and end cannot be determined at this time. Several factors will affect the duration of the overall implementation process, including: the source and availability of funding; design schedule; and the regulatory review/environmental permitting process.
  - *Have potential parking opportunities been identified in Glastonbury?*
    - CHA noted that there is a possibility for existing commercial parking (in nearby Stop & Shop lot) to be formally allocated to parking for path users.
    - Potential parking impacts to other nearby businesses is a concern for the Town and it was stressed that formal alternative parking accommodations need to be identified.
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- *Have potential parking opportunities been identified in Glastonbury (continued)?*
    - The lack of space along Naubuc Avenue for on-street parking was noted.
    - There may be space within the Route 3 right-of-way for some parking.
    - Parking at Whitney Avenue for the Farmington Canal Trail was a noted example.
    - CHA will investigate other parking opportunities for discussion at the next meeting.
  - *Can Alternative 2 be built with a retaining wall?*
    - Yes. Alternative 2 was developed without a retaining wall to determine comparative costs and impacts with Alternative 1.
  - *It was noted that separation between Route 3 and the path is key both from a maintenance perspective and a user perspective.*
    - During the winter months, a greater separation will reduce the amount of snow from Route 3 that could be plowed onto the path.
    - From a user perspective, greater separation will help buffer/reduce traffic noise, road spray, and headlight glare from the roadway.
    - It was noted that Alternative 1 was not attractive because of limited separation.
  - *Alternative 3 assumes that a sheet piling retaining wall would be used. It was noted that an aesthetic façade could be installed on the sheeting if desired.*
  - *Potential connections to the planned Goodwin College trail system should be shown so that any additional environmental/regulatory considerations for these connections can be identified and documented as part of the study.*
  - *The potential extension of the shared use path along residential segments of Naubuc Avenue to connect the path to the Putnam Boulevard intersection was a noted concern of the Town due in part to increased activity and noise levels adjacent to residences.*
    - It was noted that maintenance of a path, if extended along a segment of Naubuc Avenue, would not be provided by the Town.
    - Sidewalk should be considered an alternative to any potential extension of the path.
  - *Several attendees noted that Alternative 3 appears favorable based on the preliminary assessment. Alternative 3 provides separation between the roadway and the path and is located within the existing embankment which will help reduce environmental impacts.*
7. CHA highlighted the next steps for the study including:
- The next AC meeting is anticipated for late May 2013. The purpose of the meeting will be to review and discuss preferred alternatives for presentation at the public meeting.
  - A public meeting is anticipated for June 2013.
  - CHA will follow up with Wethersfield and Glastonbury regarding the need for additional coordination meetings with other town representatives.
8. The meeting concluded at approximately 11:00 a.m.