

Route 10 Steering Committee Meeting #10
Simsbury Town Hall, Main Meeting Room
Minutes of June 9, 2011 – 7:00 PM

ATTENDEES:	<u>Name</u>	<u>Company*</u>
	Mary Glassman	First Selectman – SC
	Margery Winters	CC IW – SC
	Emil Dahlquist	Design Review Board – SC
	Rick Wagner	Representing local business in corridor – SC
	John Hampton	Deputy First Selectman - SC
	Alan Needham	Planning Comm. – SC
	Nancy Haase	Board of Selectmen - SC
	Kirsten Griebel	Resident – SC
	Mike Fish	Representing local business in corridor – SC
	Mark Deming	Economic Development Commission – SC
	Emily Moos	CRCOG – PT
	Jennifer Carrier	CRCOG – PT
	Sue Benardczyk	Member of the Public
	Harald Bender	Member of the Public
	Tom Evans	Member of the Public
	Sarah Nielsen	Member of the Public

* SC = Steering Committee
PT = Project Team

Welcome and Business

Public Comment

Sue Benardczyk stated that although she is supportive of the efforts to date completed by the Steering Committee and Project Team, she has several concerns regarding the existing town guidance documents and regulations. She noted that in her opinion, existing regulations and the POCD could encourage a “pave over” of many large properties in the corridor. She recommends that the Town proceed with caution.

Adoption of Minutes

The May 11th, 2011 Minutes were adoption with a motion by Alan Needham seconded by John Hampton with some minor corrections:

Correct page 7, second paragraph, under concept 5 A-B change “RT 315” to “Wolcott Road”
Correct header on each page from April 13th to May 11th.

Rick Wagner stated that the minutes are very good and contain a lot of detail.

MEETING NOTES

June 9, 2011

ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9

PAGE 2 OF 11

Emily Moos stated that the May 19th minutes would be available shortly.

Discussion of Draft Existing Conditions Report, Additional Preliminary Modeling and Draft Improvements Matrix

Emily Moos went over the list of handouts for the meeting.

She stated that CRCOG is issuing the Draft Existing Conditions Report and that the committee can spend some time over the next weeks with the document and send any comments they might have to CRCOG. Ms. Moos stated that CRCOG would deliver the balance of the report in one week. She stated that the Committee could meet again after the balance of the report is issued to discuss and share comments.

Ms. Moos stated that the first two chapters issued this evening give an overview of what the study is about. She stated that Chapter 2 gets into the existing conditions analysis, much of which was presented at the time of the charrette.

Mary Glassman said that it will be important to get copies of these chapter to committee members not present she stated that Nord Christiansen has withdrawn and so has Ed Pabich and that copies of the report should go to any replacement members brought onto the committee.

A committee member asked whether CRCOG has a sense of how big this document will be?

Ms. Moos referred the Committee to the Table of Contents on the second page

Mary Glassman reiterated that if anyone has comments to please send them to Emily Moos and that it would be helpful to have CRCOG will come back in 2 weeks after the committee has had a chance to review this and the balance of the report chapters.

Ms. Moos stated that after the committee has had a chance to review the draft plan, there will be a public comment period.

Ms. Moos went over the traffic variations maps showing results of the CRCOG model for four alternatives in the Corridor. CRCOG took direction from last meeting in our discussion of regional connections to look at a few more alternatives to our models.

Concept 1A, Southern Gateway Parallel Connection

Ms. Moos stated that taking out concept 2B, the extension that had the bridge from Latimer Lane to Nod Road probably impacted the ability of this parallel connection to pick up significant traffic.

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 3 OF 11**

A committee member asked to explain the reason for this.

Jennifer Carrier stated that this has to do with what we input into the model for speed and other variables. Ms. Carrier stated that the committee had talked about safety and access management as being the benefits of this connection as it would allow for closing curb cuts on RT 10. Ms. Carrier indicated that there would be complexities to this and that property owners would have to work together to coordinate.

A committee member stated that funding must be considered and that if this improvement is desired, but doesn't provide any traffic benefit, the town may need to pay for it on its own.

Concept 3, One-way slip road from RT 185 to RT 10 & Stratton Brook

Ms. Moos stated that this alternative proves to take on a significant amount of vehicles coming off of RT 185 onto RT 10. Also, at the intersection west of the slip road it reduces a significant amount of volume.

Emil Dahlquist asked if there is a baseline for this relief valve and if CRCOG would do a comparison between the two.

Jennifer Carrier stated that when we show this to DOT, we are going to have to bring out the analysis.

Concept 4, Extending Iron Horse Boulevard to the South

Ms. Moos stated that the percentage change was added to the map of this alternative so readers could get a sense of the magnitude of the volumes.

A committee member asked whether the state would fund an alternative that produced only a 1-1.5% change?

Jennifer Carrier stated that it depends upon what the 1% is. She stated that it would also depend upon the cost of the project, the safety benefits, etc., but that because it is showing 800-900 cars and some reductions on RT. 10, the volumes are reactive and might be something we can get DOT to become interested in.

A committee member stated that during the first Simsbury charrette there was a discussion about making Iron Horse a one way street and Hopmeadow a one way. The committee member asked whether this proposal might be considered and if it would help to make RT 10 less congested.

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 4 OF 11**

Hiram Peck stated that this same concept came up in a 1998 charette, which tended to be in favor of two way traffic. Another limit on making RT 10 a one way road is that it is a trucking route.

Concept 5A, Northern Gateway Regional Connection

Ms. Moos stated that at the last meeting we would run concept 5A in the model. This analysis determined that the new roadway section could accommodate 1500-2000 vehicles and that it does have a significant impact on reducing vehicles on RT 10. Ms. Moos also stated that there are some impacts both with reductions and additions of vehicles on surrounding local roads.

A committee member commented that someone looking down from a helicopter at RT 10 would see that the biggest bottleneck is in Granby, but the recommendations in the North Gateway don't seem to have addressed this issue. The committee member stated that during rush hour the delay can be 20 minutes, half an hour and asked if there any way we could acknowledge the biggest bottleneck is Granby, if indeed it is?

It was determined that Granby recently acknowledged that bottleneck during a CRCOG study within the past three years and that ConnDOT did a smaller study and has a plan to improve this issue. Simsbury has been in communications with Granby and has a solicitation for funding coming up which would try to seek money to look at this issue. It was suggested that CRCOG might consider referencing this in the RT 10 report, although it may not be within the project limits or scope to do so.

Ms. Moos wrapped up the conversation on traffic variations by commenting that these traffic considerations represent just one way in which to evaluation recommendations and that there are many other considerations when looking at alternatives.

A committee member asked what the margin of error is in the traffic variation your percentages.

Jennifer Carrier stated that CRCOG likes to deal with ranges when talking about traffic reductions in 2030. She stated that CRCOG has a full-time modeler and spends a great deal of time updating and the model with the latest data to insure the greatest accuracy possible. There is some small margin of error, but the exact numbers are not known at this time.

Ms. Moos moved on to discuss the Draft Recommendations Matrix. Ms Moos stated that the changes that have been made to the matrix reflect smaller changes to make this a more tangible and readable tool. No text changes have been made and there has been no reorganization of recommendations, has been made, but symbols have been added to make the matrix more visual and graphic. Another change is the increased emphasis on environmental impact by creating a new column to address this. None of the text has been pulled out of where it came

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 5 OF 11**

from in general notes on environmental impacts, but environmental impact symbols have been placed where there might be negative impacts on the environment.

Another addition to the matrix is the definitions page. We asked our consultant to come up with definitions for each of the headings on the matrix.

A committee member asked why all of the definitions are framed as questions and stated that it would be best to frame as statements.

A committee member asked whether there are there different levels associated with the symbols and whether the team tried to weight these symbols to show levels of impact (e.g. maybe make the image half a car because it has less impact on traffic reduction).

Ms. Moos stated that there was no attempt to weight the symbols, but that it is something the committee can talk about.

The committee discussed ways to weight the symbols and it was suggested that perhaps weighting would be difficult to achieve unless it is captured in the notes category.

Emil Dahlquist questioned whether the committee is generally happy with the categories across the top of the matrix. He suggested other categories such as core measures safety, purpose and need, harmony, efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability, preservation, expectations, minimal disruption and lasting value as being critical measures to consider.

Mary Glassman asked Ms. Moos to comment on these as typical categories, she asked how the team came up with this list.

Ms. Moos stated that many of these categories are things that CRCOG uses in other studies, potential for future funding, economic development, and breaking out into modes.

Mary Glassman stated that it would be best that the RT 10 study not look too different from other municipal studies. She suggested that CRCOG and the study team take a look at Emil's list to see what might be incorporated.

Ms. Moos stated that the team will go back and take a look at this list. She cautioned that the committee may not want to get too involved in a discussion of matrix structure because it is important that they get to a discussion of the alternatives within the matrix.

Ms. Moos stated that the team added a section to the matrix called "Likely for Appendix," which means that these recommendations were looked at but ultimately not endorsed.

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 6 OF 11**

A committee member asked whether there will be an explanation so people will understand why the alternative was moved. Ms. Moos stated that a description of the alternative and why it was not endorsed will be included in the appendix.

Ms. Moos asked whether there is a consensus forming over the recommendations in this likely for appendix section.

A committee member stated that he questioned whether the relocation of Nod Road recommendation should be in the appendix. The committee member stated that the traffic engineers from Fuss & O'Neill had come up with what they considered to be the best rearrangement of the road for traffic and that this is a traffic study. The committee member questioned whether placing this recommendation in the appendix would be the best decision 20 years from now and said that the committee would have to consider whether removing this recommendation from the report is the best approach in the long run when ConnDOT might require changes down the road and no plan is set in place.

Other committee members stated that weighing the costs and the benefits is important and that it would have to be determined how much traffic relief this recommendation causes. There is also a significant impact to the environment and it is plausible to weigh traffic relief vs. significant cost on environmental impact.

Another committee member stated that perhaps the recommendation that had been discussed at an earlier meeting which limited left hand turns from Nod Road and allowed right turns only onto RT 185 should be reconsidered.

Another committee member stated that from a traffic point of view, the current intersection has deficiencies and that the roundabout seems to be a great expense and a longer term recommendation, but possibly the best one for that location.

Emil Dahlquist questioned whether the committee would start to prioritize alternatives - the least costly, the most benefit, etc.

Ms. Moos stated that she hopes that through committee discussions these discussions can occur. She stated that the project team did not want to prioritize these recommendations for the committee.

Ms. Carrier stated that she would caution against it prioritizing recommendations, but they have although the committee does have the right to do this. She stated that prioritizing can limit options that the community has to seek funding as opportunity arises.

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 7 OF 11**

A committee member stated that some of the symbols on the matrix are hard to understand – like the environmental impact symbol – it looks positive, but in many cases it is negative. Is there a better way to show positive or negative impact?

Mary Glassman suggested that committee members email Emily Moos with suggestions on symbols for the matrix and that she incorporate them in another matrix iteration. Ms. Glassman also asked about next steps. She stated that at some point the committee will need to reach a conclusion on which recommendations will be endorsed and which will not.

Ms. Moos stated that the next steering committee meeting had been slated to be the meeting where CRCOG seeks an endorsement from the committee on the report, but that CRCOG will work with the committee to come up with the best plan for moving forward.

Mary Glassman suggested that the committee begin to discuss and come to consensus around which recommendations should be endorsed and which should not. She asked whether there is a way to place recommendations that are more favorable at the top of the matrix and those that are less favorable toward the bottom.

A committee member stated that a great deal of people are only going to read this report and look to this matrix and it would be nice if it was clear which projects stand out in which respects. The committee member stated that from the RT 305 study, there were priorities, there was a clear indication of which plan would work.

A committee member asked whether there is a way to place recommendations that are more favorable at the top of the matrix and those that are less favorable toward the bottom.

Ms. Moos stated that she could work on that for the next meeting.

A committee member asked about the timing of recommended phasing from concept to construction, layoffs could impact them.

Jennifer Carrier stated that 3 years is an aggressive timeframe. The consultant came up with the phasing. This comes from the consultant and CRCOG staff, in order to move something from opportunity arises to short-term.

A committee member asked about potential for future funding and whether the funding column should indicate what the likelihood is of a recommendation receiving funding.

Jennifer Carrier stated it is hard to say how funding sources will play out and it depends on many factors including what's happening at the state and federal level with regard to transportation funding. She stated that the key lately is having multiple funding sources, because

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 8 OF 11**

costs for these types of projects are increasing. She stated that when applying for funding it is important that the town has to be the champion for whichever project is seeking funds. She stated that she is not sure how potential for funding could be ranked in the matrix.

A committee member asked whether the committee would like to have a conversation about why symbols were placed in their respective locations on the matrix and that it would be useful to hear what others are thinking.

Mary Glassman stated that it would be helpful to have the consultant team walk through what criteria was used to determine where to use the symbols.

A committee member stated that some of this determination should come from the community as the community knows the issues in relation to the Plan of Conservation and Development.

A committee member asked whether the committee waits to vote on endorsing the plan until after the public comment period.

Ms. Moos stated that the committee does wait to vote until after the public comment period.

Mary Glassman suggested that the committee try reviewing through the first page of the matrix together to see whether there is consensus on the recommendations and what symbols have been associated with each of them.

The committee began reviewing the Draft Recommendations Matrix across the first row, column by column:

Compatible with POCD

A committee member disagreed with the symbol being placed on "Compatible with POCD," for the Southern Gateway, 1A recommendation stating that there was no mention of this in the POCD. The committee discussed back and forth the validity of having this column in the matrix. Some felt that documents relating to the other guiding principles should be included such as the Simsbury community survey. Some felt that the text of the plan could indicate that all alternatives are compatible with the POCD or that there could be a list of which documents are supportive of each recommendation. A weighting system was discussed to show how supportive the POCD is of each recommendation. It was determined that CROG would work with the consultant team to determine how this criteria was developed and would work toward resolving issues raised about this column.

Reduces Traffic Congestion

A committee member asked whether in the definition of traffic congestion the team could reference a baseline, (e.g. to get a car, you had to have a reduction of 50 cars or more).

MEETING NOTES

June 9, 2011

ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9

PAGE 9 OF 11

Provides or Improves System Flexibility

There were questions from several committee members regarding the meaning and validity of this category.

Ms. Moos stated that system flexibility is a measure of how well the alternative does at providing alternate routes for automobiles.

Improves Multi-Modal Travel Safety

A committee member made the comment that the North Gateway 5B recommendation has a symbol for Increases Multi-Modal Travel Safety, but not for pedestrian and bicycle mobility and was not sure why this would be the case. Ms. Moos stated that she would go back to check why this is the case.

A committee member mentioned that the roadway names in the description of the recommendation are incorrect - Lattimer Lane to Blue Ridge not Lincoln Lane.

Bicycle Mobility

There was a question as to what this symbol meant for Concept 1A. Ms. Moos stated that it was likely because the greenway is rerouted onto this roadway, but that she would need to check if the greenway covers the entire stretch of the 1A alternative.

Pedestrian Environment and Access

Several committee members questioned how recommendation 1A would increase the likelihood of pedestrian activity. The only area where this might be plausible is the fact that it is suggested to change the greenway crossing and this benefit may not justify a new road. A committee member asked whether the greenway crossing could change without building a new road.

Ms. Moos stated that what is likely meant by the pedestrian symbol in this recommendation is that the roadway connects the existing and any potential future businesses and would increase the chance that people that work there would have improved pedestrian environment. Jennifer Carrier agreed with this description.

A member of the public stated that if you don't plan the road, future developers may develop however they want to, but if you establish the concept of the road in this plan, they'll be more likely to develop in that pattern.

Another committee member asked about reductions to traffic along RT 10 stating that you have to come in and out of RT. 10 to get to this potential road and it may make travel easier once an automobile is on this road, but that automobile would still need to access it from RT 10.

Increases Transit Access

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 10 OF 11**

Her comment as to why they would have that is having connection between here and intermodal hub or bus activity. This was assuming that might be able to happen. There's a future commuter lot indicated. Next

Enhancing Character and Design

A committee member questioned the wording. Ms Moos stated that she would add language about maintaining the character of the town.

Economic Development Opportunity

A committee member asked whether there was a better symbol for this column. Ms. Moos stated that she is open for suggestions on this.

Environmental Impact

As this column had already been discussed, there were few suggestions other than one committee member asking if language could be added to the definition to indicate a positive environmental impact such as enhancing the river. Ms. Moos stated that they would add this to the definition and work on finding a better symbol for this column as was discussed previously.

Construction Cost

It had been previously discussed that the dollar signs should be replaced or annotated with the actual cost to construct in the column for easy reading.

Potential for Future Funding

Ms. Moos stated that this column was determined based on conversations between the consultants, CRCOG and DOT. F means Federal, S means State.

A committee member asked whether after reviewing one recommendation should the committee vote to endorse or not endorse this recommendation.

Ms. Moos stated that voting on endorsement will come when the entire report is put together and public comments have been heard and incorporated.

Ms. Glassman stated that CRCOG should take the comments from tonight and incorporate them, the committee can revisit the matrix once these preliminary suggestions have been incorporated.

Nancy had suggested omitting the language after the word "place," in the Enhances Character and Aesthetic Design definition.

MEETING NOTES**June 9, 2011****ROUTE 10 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #9****PAGE 11 OF 11**

A committee member suggested adding another category for “respects existing neighborhoods and character of town”

Ms. Moos stated that a related category is impacts to historic properties and districts which are noted in the text, but the committee could decide if it would need to be another box. She suggested taking another look at text and see if it addresses this appropriately and if not, changes can be made.

Another committee member suggested putting in a range of years for the phasing such as 5-10 years, etc.

Mary Glassman suggested that the committee go through the matrix individually and send comments Emily Moos. She stated that at the next meeting, the committee could bring back their questions, concerns and suggestions.

Next Steps

Will get balance of work to you by next week, not sure what day, week after next we'll come back to talk about comments the balance of the report.

Ms. Moos stated that she could collect questions during the interim and try to address them.

Ms. Glassman stated that the committee will not meet next week, but that Emily Moos will get back to everyone with the date for the following week.

A committee member asked whether Mary Glassman had received any feedback on the committee's question regarding historic buildout. Ms. Glassman stated that the town staff are still working on an answer.

The meeting adjourned at 9PM.