

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106

Route 195 Advisory Committee / Workshop 1

Tolland Town Hall, Community Room

August 22, 2007

7:00 PM

Committee Members

Kevin Bouley
Steve Werbner
Kathy Bach
Marilee Beebe-Kostrun
Fred Daniels
Barbara Cook

Organization

Chairman
Tolland Town Manager
Tolland Town Council
Tolland Planning & Zoning
Tolland Town Council
Tolland Historic District Commission

Others

Sean Cox
Linda Farmer
David Smith
Grayson Wright
Tom Maziarz

CT State Police
Tolland Town Planner
Tolland DPW / Town Engineer
CRCOG
CRCOG

Project Team

Jennifer Carrier
Emily Moos
Ken Schwartz
Ryan Malloy
Steve O'Neill

CRCOG
CRCOG
VHB
VHB
VHB

Meeting Purpose: Route 195 Corridor Study – First workshop with the consultant to gain an understanding of the corridor's existing conditions and to shape next steps for the study.

- 1. Project Overview:** Jennifer Carrier led introductions and asked the committee to appoint a Chairperson. Kevin Bouley was nominated and accepted the position of Chairman for the Route 195 Corridor Advisory Committee. CRCOG will run agendas before the Chairman and look for his direction throughout the study process.
- 2. Adoption of Minutes:** Kevin Bouley, acting as Chairman, called for adoption of May 17, 2007 meeting minutes by the committee. A motion was made by Fred Daniels, seconded by Marilee Beebe-Kostrun, to accept the minutes as written. This motion was passed unanimously.
- 3. Public Comments:** No members of the public were present for comments.
- 4. Introduction to Project Zones:** Steve O'Neill gave a presentation of the existing conditions along the corridor and asked for comments / concerns / focus points. The following summarizes each of the areas discussed and the comments heard:

Neighborhood Commercial Area (Between Anthony Rd / Baxter St and Goose Lane / Rhodes Road)

- Possibility to create a high tech corridor with a campus-type layout (maybe 6-8 buildings / pockets of development in the 11,000 to 30,000 sf range)
- Develop a synergy with UCONN and build upon the proximity of Interstate 84; potentially tap into UCONN's research and development arm

- Potential for a UCONN Husky Way Gateway
- A preliminary roadway concept has been prepared for commercial area and the study team will review related to access management, safety and future traffic impacts.
- Tolland Planning and Zoning is currently examining the codes for this area to try to encourage this type of commercial – campus development which could mean a higher density area as well as a higher and better use for the area overall to make it a job generator.
- Operations at Anthony Road / Baxter Street intersection are a concern. The number of accidents, the volume of traffic and impacts during UCONN events were all raised. Currently police control the traffic signals and flow along Rt 195 during UCONN events. Younger drivers use Anthony / Baxter to access two schools in the neighborhood areas surrounding this intersection, therefore a safer street configuration or signalization pattern is critical.
- The project team should have a follow up meeting to discuss economic development opportunities along this stretch of road. Dave Smith also commented that he can provide the consultant team with a copy of the sewer extension issues / plans.

Interchange Commercial (Between Goose Lane / Rhodes Road and Commuter Parking Lot)

- There is concern related to the Goose Lane and Rhodes Road intersection. ConnDOT is in the process of revising the intersection to incorporate 2 lanes southbound (towards UCONN). Kathy Bach requested that the consultant evaluate split side street phasing for Goose Lane and Rhodes Road.
- ConnDOT's design plans for Route 195 will need to be reviewed.
- There is a health club proposed to be located in the existing shopping center plaza just north of the Goose Lane / Rhodes Road intersection. An evaluation other complimentary uses such as physical medical offices or physical therapy should be made.

Transition Area (Between Commuter Parking Lot and Cider Mill Connector)

- The Planning & Zoning Commission may be acting on the Transition Area Visioning Plan shortly.
- The commuter lot north of the I-84 ramps may not be the most feasible use for this site and development potential must be assessed by RKG in a market analysis.
- Overall this area already has a strong set of building design guidelines set in place which is evidenced by the design and landscaping of Dunkin Donuts. There are several parcel owners in this area that are waiting on this study to determine the future of these parcels.
- The study team should also consider safety improvements in the area between Cider Mill Connector and the commuter lot where there have been a pattern of accidents.
- Future plans should take into consideration the numerous curb cuts immediately north of the I-84 ramps and evaluate access control.
- Based on an analysis done by ConnDOT, it appears that the Cider Mill Connector intersection does not warrant a traffic signal. Safety improvements should be explored within this study specifically addressing the steep approach. CROCOG will follow up with ConnDOT to obtain traffic volume and warrant data. State Police Officer Sean Cox will run additional accident data in this area to ensure data is not missing.

5. ***Town Green Workshop - Town Green Area (Between Cider Mill Connector and Route 74):*** Committee members expressed their opinions related to Town Green issues and existing conditions (intersection operations, traffic accident data) information in the area of the Town Green was presented to the group. The following summarizes this information.

- Committee members reinforced the role of the Town Green within the present community. The Green serves as a symbol of Tolland's history and heritage as well as a community gathering space not only for holiday and

community events, but also for permanent memorials and dedications. The schools in Town also use the green and there are three museums that are located on the green. Within the past few years the town has made a commitment toward formalizing the stewardship of the green; a landscape review has been completed as well as an analysis of the steps toward providing citizens with safe and efficient access to the green through better parking and pedestrian opportunities.

- Committee members worry that the historic homes and residences around the green are losing property value due to inefficiencies in the current road network surrounding it and travel speeds.
 - Historically the green was used as a horse racing track and the pathway surrounding it was more round and less wide. Over the years, the path around the green has widened and straightened causing the vehicular speeds to increase as well.
 - One key problem intersection for committee members is the intersection of Route 195 and Route 74. They feel that there is nothing at this intersection to alert drivers approaching the green that this is the entrance to an important historical district with a high frequency of pedestrians, a number of residences and small scale businesses. Visual, tactile transitions with signs marking this important area through traffic calming were discussed.
 - The committee noted that a portion of Rt. 74 at the junction of 195 has widened considerably with time and residents would like to gain back a buffer to their homes from the street.
 - Committee members expressed the town's desire to hide the utility lines from the green behind the municipal complex as an alternative to burying them. The possibility of cutting a new road parallel to the green behind the municipal building to add network and house the utilities was discussed.
 - Although an alternatives assessment, looking at multiple options, will be conducted for the Town Green, CRCOG staff met unofficially with ConnDOT to discuss roundabout applications on state roads. In general, a roundabout to resolve the confusing geometry of Route 195 and Route 74 may work however the concept of a 'T' type intersection may also be a consideration. Options that extend the green a bit northerly should be considered. Committee members stressed that the green, particularly the northern end, is used by walkers daily and while this end is clearly a gathering space with benches, they would like to see a resolution related to the disconnect between the two ends of the green. There may be a possibility to incorporate a roundabout further north in the Old Stafford Road area.
 - Future alternatives in all cases should address the needs of fire and emergency responders.
6. **Critical Town Green Needs:** Due to a lengthy, thorough discussion of town green challenges and opportunities no specific critical needs were defined.
7. **Next Steps:** The committee suggested future workshops to identify development zones and land uses to come up with a guiding plan for the area. The study team suggested a questionnaire to town members on land use and development options.

Jennifer Carrier informed the Committee that as a requirement of the federal government and in keeping with CRCOG's Policy on Reducing Language Barriers, non-english speaking populations within the study area were reviewed. Findings reveal that there are 140 polish speaking individuals within the study area and 159 spanish, 144 french and 73 german speaking individuals within Town. Per our policies there is no automatic requirement to provide translation or printer material in other languages however Ms. Carrier asked the Committee if special efforts should be made to other communities. The Committee felt that no special efforts should be made to any specific non-english speaking communities.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 3, 2007 at 7:00 PM.

8. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.