

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106

Route 195 Advisory Committee Meeting

Arts of Tolland

January 24, 2008

7:00 PM

Committee Members

Kevin Bouley
Steve Werbner
Kathy Bach
Fred Daniels
Barbara Cook
Harvey Gilbert
Stephen Beeching

Organization

Chairman
Tolland Town Manager
Former Town Council Member
Tolland Town Council
Tolland Historic District Commission
Tolland Town Council
Resident (Town Green) & Business Owner

Others

Linda Farmer
David Smith
Grayson Wright
Jeffrey Hunter
Tom Maziarz

Tolland Town Planner
Tolland DPW / Town Engineer
ConnDOT
ConnDOT
CRCOG

Project Team

Jennifer Carrier
Emily Moos
Steve O'Neill

CRCOG
CRCOG
VHB

Public Attendees

Heather Rickard-Gilbert
Anji Seth

Resident
Resident

Meeting Purpose: Route 195 Corridor Study – Regular Meeting of the Advisory Committee to confirm existing conditions and discuss preliminary conceptual alternatives for the Town Green.

- 1. Project Overview:** Jennifer Carrier led introductions and mentioned the agenda items that were going to be discussed.
- 2. Adoption of Minutes:** Kevin Bouley, Committee Chairman, proposed a change to the October 3rd minutes under item number three, Neighborhood Commercial Area section, second bullet, the word “exiting” in the first sentence be change to “existing.” Hearing no other changes, Mr. Bouley called for adoption of the October 3rd, 2007 meeting minutes by the committee. A motion was made by Fred Daniels, seconded by Steve Werbner, to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3. Existing Conditions Presentation:** Steve O'Neill of VHB gave an overview of existing conditions for the Gateway Design District and the Neighborhood Commercial Zone. The following summarizes comments heard for each of the areas discussed:

Gateway Design District (Between Goose Lane / Rhodes Road and Cider Mill Connector)

- The Committee questioned whether the park and ride lot would be relocated if it were determined not to be the highest and best use. The project team confirmed that an evaluation would be conducted if it were determined that it was the appropriate course of action. The South Green Vision Plan also mentions the commuter lot relocation.
- The Committee asked for clarification on how a good level of service at the Goose Lane and Rhodes Road intersection was possible if the experience at this location is unfavorable. They highlighted the negative affect that this intersection has on businesses to the south along Route 195, particularly the Twin Ponds business. The study team explained that although the overall intersection operates well, a detailed review of the analysis indicates the Goose Lane approach to the intersection operates poorly.
- The Committee asked that the traffic signal phasing for the Route 195 / Goose Lane / Rhodes Road be modified to allow split side street phasing. CROG will work with ConnDOT to see if they can incorporate that change into their current state design project (142-146).
- The Committee inquired as to whether level of service analyses are ever conducted for commercial driveways. The study team explained that this is not a typical practice but that state maintained accident data is a good indicator of service problems at particular driveways. As the Committee's concern is specifically about the area north of the I-84 interchange, certain access management strategies might be employed here to make level of service better and accident rates lower. Strategies might include relocating and combining driveways to warrant a signalized driveway entrance to services in this area.
- The Committee asked the project team to look into striping improvements at the Route 195 / Rhodes Road / Goose Lane intersection. They suggested that perhaps striping the side streets, to more clearing direct left turning motorists onto Route 195, would make the road more navigable. This will also be brought up with ConnDOT.

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

- No comments were provided for this section of the existing conditions presentation.

4. **Public Comments:** Anji Seth asked for clarification from project team related to existing and future conditions. Heather Rickard-Gilbert asked for clarification on the boundaries of the Gateway Design District. Clarification was offered by the study team and the Advisory Committee.

Ms. Gilbert also stressed the need to provide pedestrian access in between the Town Green and the commercial area just north of I-84 Interchange 68. She also asked about short-term improvements to the green which the project team and committee provided insight on.

5. **Brainstorming Future Alternatives:** The consultant presented conceptual future roadway network alternatives for the Village Center District / Town Green area. Committee members discussed benefits and drawbacks of each option. Tom Maziarz reiterated to committee members that mixing and matching options from all three alternatives is a good way to proceed.

Concept 1:

- The Committee expressed a desire to advance the concept of a bypass road east of Route 195. The road, as conceptually illustrated, would run between Route 195 south of Cider Mill Road in a northeasterly manner to Route 74. Old Post Road could be reconfigured to intersect this new roadway.
- Tom Maziarz suggested that a Town long-range plan showing a street plan for the Town Green will help public investment wed to private investment.
- The Committee stated that the wetlands near the western bypass road should not present a problem if this option were selected.

- A member of the public voiced a concern that any new roads introduced in this area should not hinder the goal of maintaining the rural character of this Town Green area.
- If a new bypass roadway, west of Route 195, was proposed there may be an opportunity to address the overhead utilities that are currently on Route 195.
- The Committee suggested that perhaps Old Stafford could become a bypass road to the north side of the Green.
- The dead end concept for Route 195, just north of existing Cider Mill Road, was not supported by the Committee.

Concept 2:

- The Committee expressed the town's desire to knit together the north and south sides of the Green for pedestrians.
- The Committee wants visitors to enjoy the experience of the Town Green and feel that a roundabout may hinder that goal. They would like to explore examples of functioning roundabouts and understand pedestrian movement, emergency response, vehicular start/stop considerations within roundabouts.
- A Committee member questioned whether a roundabout above Old Stafford Road would give people enough incentive to go slowly through the Green area. The study team explained that a roundabout in that location would not likely act as a traffic calming tool for the Green area.
- The Committee pointed out that Route 195 in the Green area becomes an alternate route for I 84 when a detour is in place. The Committee expressed a need to find a solution that solves the problem of fast traveling vehicles on the Green without causing the problem of slowing a high volume of traffic.

Concept 3:

- Concepts that "dead end" the carriage roads were not supported by the Committee. It was noted that one-way circulation, right-in / right-out maneuvers or keeping the roadways open to all traffic are all options that can be discussed further.
- The Committee stated that snow may present a good reason not to dead end both service roads on the east side of the Green.
- Currently there is no illumination for pedestrians at the Route 74 / carriage road crossing.
- The Committee expressed that the Mutual Aid building next to the jail museum is a concern when proposing cul-de-sacs on the service roads.
- Currently, queues on Old Post Road block access to the carriage road.
- If the creation of a new "T" intersection was proposed, it may visually work if the Route 74 leg was aligned opposite the Courthouse.

6. ***Confirmation of Key Points:*** Based upon all comments heard during discussion of the preliminary concepts, the key points are to:
 - Calm traffic with a possible treatment at the north end of the Green that would also serve to correct the difficult Route 74 / Route 195 intersection.
 - Preserve the character of the green and consider bypass alternatives that complement the existing green.
 - Ensure existing circulation is not negatively impacted by future alternative concepts (i.e. carriage roads).
 - Project Team to provide AC with more information related to roundabouts, including examples of existing roundabouts on state roads, and other treatments such as in-pavement pedestrian crosswalks that do not result in increased noise.
7. ***Public Open House:*** Jennifer Carrier stated that the time has come to hold the first Public Open House of the study. The Open House will be interactive with maps for the public to mark up, a traffic simulation at a key

intersection in the corridor and a formal presentation at 6:30 PM which will focus on the overall study and existing conditions.

The committee determined that March 12th would be the best date with another Advisory Committee Meeting just prior to that date. The Committee agreed that the Fire Training Center would be an appropriate location to hold the Public Open House. The Committee wanted the Study Team to make certain that the Public Open House highlights the difference between the ConnDOT State Design Project (142-146). They also suggested that the Open House highlight the South Green Project. (SUBSEQUENT TO THE MEETING, AND BASED ON THE AVAILABILITY OF THE FIRE TRAINING FACILITY, THE PUBLIC MEETING WAS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 5TH).

8. **Next Steps:** The Project Team will be prepared to brief the committee in more detail on conceptual roadway options pertaining to the town green. The team will also prepare for the March Public Open House and send out the Corridor Study Newsletter to area residents and business owners at least three weeks in advance of the Open House.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 2008 at 7:00 PM. (SUBSEQUENT TO THE MEETING THE NEXT AC MEETING WAS RESECHEDULED TO ALLOW FOR THE PUBLIC MEETING TO BE HELD ON MARCH 5).

9. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.