

Seymour-Beacon Falls Area Transportation Study

Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: July 23, 2009
DATE OF MEETING: July 9, 2008
LOCATION OF MEETING: Seymour Town Hall
ATTENDED BY:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Robert Koskelowski	Seymour First Selectmen
James Galligan	Seymour & Beacon Falls Town Engineer
Rick Dunne	Valley Council of Governments
David Elder	Valley Council of Governments
Matthew Fulda	Valley Council of Governments
Samuel Gold	Council of Governments Central Naugatuck Valley
Robert Looker	Seymour Town Planner
Tony Sanangelo	Beacon Falls EDC
Theresa Conroy	State Representative 105 th District
Tom Haynes	Haynes Development Company
Rich Minnick	Beacon Falls
Rich Brauer	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Scott Medeiros	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Gene McCarthy	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Michael Moorehouse	Fitzgerald & Halliday
Don Smith	Consulting Engineer
Mike Horbal	Mike Horbal Suveryors
Fred Carstensen	Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis
Peter Gunther	Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis
Robert Slattery	Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis

MEETING MINUTES:

The Agenda for the meeting is attached. These minutes are formatted to follow the Agenda Items.

1. Introduction

All present introduced themselves and mentioned the group they represent. David Elder of VCOG gave a brief background of the project. He mentioned that the project stems from a federal earmark to study a connector road between Routes 67 & 42.

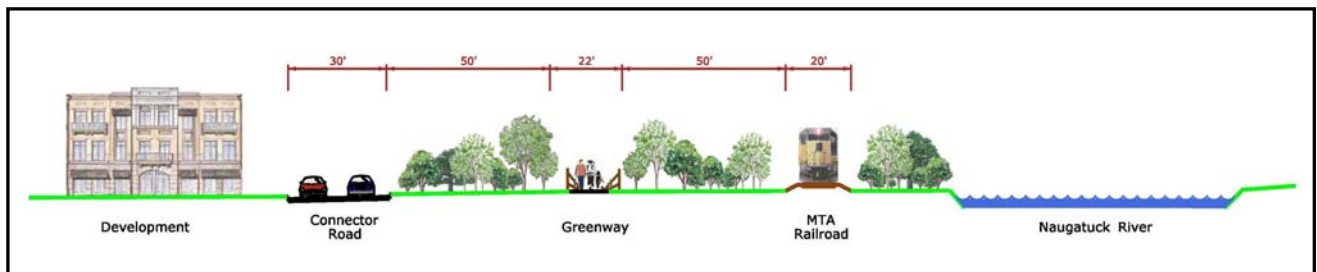
Gene McCarthy from McFarland Johnson (MJ) outlined the agenda for the meeting. He mentioned the goal of the meeting is to update the Advisory Committee on progress, present some of the study findings, and to get feedback from those present.

2. Project Vision

Gene began by presenting the Project Vision developed based on input from the Advisory Committee and the public. He emphasized that the vision has five categories that the project hopes to address, these are:

- Transit
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Trails
- Mobility
- Economic Vitality

The objective of the project is to develop a solution that balances each of these. Gene presented a conceptual plan developed to address each of the vision categories. He emphasized that this is a general concept developed with an understanding of the constraints that exist in the project area. He noted that the property between Route 67 & 42 has many constraints. The graphic below was presented.



Gene mentioned that the alignment and configuration of the Greenway dictated the relationship between each of the corridors. While it would have been preferable to have the greenway run along the river, making the connections on the north and south would require crossing the railroad. A comment was made that the area near pond on the north end of the property was being turned over to the Town of Beacon Falls for recreational purposes. A Beacon Falls representative felt the configuration shown was reasonable.

The possibility of developing the parcel of land at the south end of the project that lies between the river and railroad was discussed. The railroad must be crossed to access the parcel and it is entirely within the floodplain of the river.

The protection of the railroad was discussed. The graphic shows a landscaped buffer on both sides of the railroad. It was mentioned that the railroad would likely require fencing as well.

Robert Koskelowski asked whether the project could be developed in phases. Gene explained that it was possible and would likely be based on the market demand.

3. Traffic Model Update

Mike Moorehouse of Fitzgerald & Halliday presented an update of the traffic modeling. He first discussed the methodology use, which includes the following items:

- Regional “build-out” analysis
- Trip distribution
- Add connector road to network
- Assume a site development program
- Generate and distribute trips from site

The “build-out” involved evaluating potential developments in the area that go beyond those approved. This goes against ConnDOT practices but was allowed because of the nature of this project. The project team assessed potential development and their likelihood. Next, the trips associated with the new developments were distributed based upon current distribution, which was determined from the statewide model.

The first model run with the connector road was then run with no development along the connector road assumed. This was done to determine whether the connector road would divert trips away from other corridors. Mike explained that the potential trips that could use the connector road are a small number compared to the total number of trips. Trips currently using Rimmon Hill Road and Old Turnpike Road are the most likely candidates. Also, only a portion of these would be attracted to the connector road. The analysis indicates that about 422 daily trips in 2008 and about 500 daily trips in 2030 would divert to the connector road. This is a very small number compared to the total trips using Routes 8, 67 & 42.

The next scenario included development along the connector road. The project team used the development potential outlined in the Seymour Beacons Falls, LLC overview from 2003. The overview included 1,000,000 square feet of potential mixed-use development. For the model, it was assumed $\frac{1}{2}$ was office space, $\frac{1}{4}$ was retail, and $\frac{1}{4}$ was industrial. 400 housing units were also assumed. This development added over 20,000 daily trips on the connector road.

Using the same trip distribution factors, the trips associated with the connector road development were distributed and evaluated to see what issues may arise. The additional trips do create congestion on surrounding corridors and intersections. Several of the ramps at Exit 22, Route 67 (Bank Street) from Franklin Street to West Street, Route 67 at Route 42, and Old Turnpike Road at Route 42 see lower levels of service as a result of the additional trips.

Several questions and issues were raised, these include the following.

- Could trips that use Exit 22 and Route 42 benefit from the connector road? Only those trips destined for the collector road or downtown Seymour would benefit. Exit 22 would remain the best way to access Route 8.
- Did the project team look at the 2000 Route 8 Corridor Study? Gene stated yes. Was the new connection from Route 8 considered for this project? ConnDOT did not support this new connection from Route 8 because of cost.

- Tom Haynes mentioned he felt this project should consider the entire vision that includes transit, transit oriented development (TOD), bus, etc. ConnDOT and FHWA need to accept the use of this earmark funding for a project that includes non-transportation items.

4. Economic Climate

Prof. Fred Carstensen of the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at the University of Connecticut presented their economic findings. Fred made some basic comments about the Connecticut economy stating that Connecticut is terrible at economic development and it is over-retailed. He stated that retail should never be considered economic development.

Fred presented results of surveys conducted for the project. The results are based on recent surveys conducted by Fred and his team, as well as previous surveys in the area. Highlights include the increased importance of education, health services and financial/insurance/real estate and the decreased importance of manufacturing in the area economy. The survey also indicated that residents are eager to have employment, retail, and service opportunities closer to home to reduce the amount of time spent driving.

Fred mentioned the trend and interest in 'quality of life' development. People are interested in restaurants with views, recreation opportunities, senior housing, light industrial, office space, etc. in Seymour and Beacon Falls. Fred mentioned that this area is well positioned for a vision development that provides this 'quality of life'.

Fred continued by explaining the model that they will use to evaluate the project. They will evaluate two scenarios, the first with 1,000,000 square feet of development. He believes this is un-attainable for this location. However, the second scenario will look at a reduced development of 250,000 square feet. This second scenario is based on what Fred and his colleagues believe is more realistic

Fred concluded by stating there are several potential sources of growth for the area, these include the following:

- N.I.H. oncology research center in New Haven magnet for bio-sciences
- Bayer research campus major draw for new bio-science research firms
- Resumed growth in financial services in Fairfield County
- Stafford Point Studios: 13,000 new jobs in region
- Expanded commuter services

Several comments were made as to the importance of this project and the economic development potential. The need to enhance transit use was mentioned. The need to evaluate TOD was mentioned. Rick Dunne stated that the intent of the earmark needs to be clarified to determine whether a TOD Analysis is acceptable.

5. Resource Identification

The meeting was running late so Gene simply mentioned the team has collected much of the existing resource data for the area.

6. Next Steps

It was mentioned that this study will result in several reports. A traffic report and an economic report will be developed. A Study Findings Report is the final product of the study.

It was mentioned that all stakeholders need to voice their support for the project.

7. Adjourn

Submitted by,
Gene McCarthy, P.E.
McFarland-Johnson, Inc.

Seymour-Beacon Falls Area Transportation Study
State Project No 124-0163
McFarland-Johnson, Inc.

AGENDA

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 9, 2009

10:00 a.m.

Norma Drummer Room of Seymour Town Hall

Meeting Purpose: Progress meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC), VCOG and McFarland-Johnson, Inc Team

Discussion:

- Introduction
- Project Vision
- Traffic Modeling Update
- Economic Climate
- Resource Identification
- Next Steps
- Adjourn