

MEETING MEETINGS
PAC Meeting #5
Route 32 Corridor Study – New London, CT
Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 1:00 -2:00 PM via Teams

ATTENDEES: Jim Butler (SCCOG); Amanda Kennedy (SCCOG); Kate Rattan (SCCOG); Anna Bergeron (CTDOT); Frederick Kulakowski (CTDOT); Claudel Meronnis (CTDOT); Andrew Correia (CTDOT); Will Champagne (CTDOT); Jen Pacacha (CTDOT); Mayor Michael Passero (Mayor of New London); Victor Arcelus (Connecticut College Dean of Students); Sam Quigley (Director of Lyman Allyn Museum); Brian Wright (City of New London Police Chief); Mike Carroll (SEAT); Matthew Skelly (F&O); Katherine O'Shea (F&O); Rosie Jaswal (Toole)

This final PAC meeting was held to close out the project and discuss next steps to advance the recommended improvements to the design phase.

Rosie Jaswal of Toole Design provided a brief summary of the feedback about the preferred concept received through the online survey. She noted that the survey received approximately 200 responses, and 76 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the recommendations met the vision and guiding principles established throughout the public outreach process. Some respondents thought that the project did not go far enough to implement traffic calming techniques and were unsure if the proposed improvements would effectively reduce vehicle speeds. Generally, respondents were in strong support of the improvements, specifically the addition of bicycle facilities and proposed pedestrian improvements.

Katherine O'Shea of Fuss & O'Neill presented the executive summary of the final report, which included a review of existing safety deficiencies and a high-level explanation of how the proposed improvements address the existing deficiencies. She also presented three renderings that were prepared to show a perspective view of what the proposed improvements might look like at the Connecticut College Main entrance, heading south approaching the pedestrian bridge, and on the Coast Guard Academy Ramp.

Matt Skelly emphasized that the intention of the recommended improvements is to implement them in the near- to medium- term because many typical short- term improvements, such as re-stripped crosswalks and signal re-timing have already been implemented as a result of prior studies.

He reviewed a list of potential state and federal funding sources outlined in the report, including the Surface Transportation Program, the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program, the Community Connectivity Grant Program, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program, the RAISE Discretionary Grant Program, and Congressionally Directed Spending.

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He also noted the anticipated project cost of \$14 million to \$17 million. The cost is anticipated to increase upon incorporating CTDOT comments on the itemized cost estimate.

Amanda Kennedy, Executive Director of SCCOG summarized conversations that she has had with CTDOT about possible funding sources for this project. She noted that an application for the Reconnecting Communities Program could be more competitive if it includes other work related to reconstructing or downgrading the I-95 interchange. Recommendations of this nature could be a final product of the ongoing I-95 PEL study.

She also noted that SCCOG is applying for Safe Streets and Roads for All planning funding to update the existing regional action plan. If SCCOG is awarded this funding, the project may be well-positioned to receive implementation funding, since it will be included as a future project in a qualifying action plan.

The City of New London is pursuing RAISE funding for other infrastructure projects during this round of funding, and Amanda noted that the next round of RAISE funding will probably open for applications in approximately one year.

Victor Arcelus, Connecticut College Dean of Students, asked how CTDOT, SCCOG, the City, and other stakeholders can continually pursue these funding opportunities to ensure that the recommendations of the study are eventually implemented.

Amanda stated that typically SCCOG will meet with CTDOT at a “pitch meeting” to present a formal request for project funding. She noted that the City of New London can also advocate for the advancement of the project and could be an applicant for funds in the future. Connecticut College and the USCGA can continue to advocate for the project too, which could be particularly useful to obtain congressional discretionary funds. It was noted that these congressionally directed funding requests are very competitive but very flexible.

Victor noted that Connecticut College wants to be involved in advancing the project in any way they can and suggested quarterly meetings with key parties to continually check-in on funding opportunities. Amanda indicated she would be happy to participate in meetings of that nature and noted that the grant landscape is very different now than it was in the past, with many more state and federal funding sources to consider.

Anna Bergeron of CTDOT indicated that CTDOT is trying to create a standard process to move corridor studies into design. She stated that the possible next step would be for SCCOG and the consultant project team to present the project to the management team at CTDOT over the next couple of months. She noted that this type of meeting has been well received previously.

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Project next steps:

- Finish the final report based on CTDOT comments and incorporate a section summarizing the final PAC Meeting.
- Determine appropriate action to be taken by SCCOG and/or CTDOT to advance the recommendations to the design phase.
- Coordinate with key stakeholders to establish recurring check-ins on project development/funding.