



REPORT OF MEETING

Agency Project No(s): [pending]
Project Title(s): Farmington Avenue Corridor Project
URS Project No. 36935530
Route No.: Farmington Avenue
Town(s): City of Hartford
Date & Time of Meeting: August 18, 2004, 6:00 pm
Location of Meeting: 94 Woodland Street, Conference Room
Meeting Minutes Date: Revised 8/31/04
Subject of Meeting: Project Kickoff

Attendance:

Jill Barrett	Farmington Avenue Alliance
Sally Taylor	Farmington Avenue Alliance
Phil Will	Farmington Avenue Alliance
Mary Sherwin	Farmington Avenue Alliance
Mary Pelletier	Farmington Avenue Alliance
Raphie Podolsky	WECA/NRZ
Stephanie Woodlock	WECA/NRZ
Bruce Bidwell	AH/NRZ
Mike McGarry	Farmington Avenue Business District
Clarence Corbin	City of Hartford, City Engineer
Kevin Burnham	City of Hartford DPW
Bradford Stewart	City of Hartford, Assistant to the Mayor
Paul Schmidt	URS Corporation
Kevin Mentz	URS Corporation
Toni Gold	Project for Public Spaces
Other neighborhood organizations and consultants	

Introduction

The meeting was convened at 6:00 PM by Mr. Bhupen Patel, Director of the Hartford Department of Public Works, who asked for everyone present to introduce himself/herself, and then introduced Mayor Eddie Perez. Mayor Perez welcomed everyone and spoke briefly about the importance of the projects to the revitalization of the commercial arteries and to Hartford's neighborhoods, citing the example of Park Street, now under construction.

Director Patel briefed the entire group on the constraints and parameters of the present five projects. He indicated that 100% of the designated areas would be designed, and approximately 2500-3000 linear feet of each would be implemented in the first phase, the section to be selected by each neighborhood in conjunction with its consultant team. The target construction start date is June of 2005. Additional funds could be available from other sources in the future, but for the present the budget was very tight.

For now, the city's funds will be focused on the public right of way; any property acquisitions or easements necessitated by the design must be investigated on behalf of the City by the neighborhood associations. The City will not fund the design or construction of roundabouts at this time, due to concerns over pedestrian safety and operational issues. However, nothing built in the first phase should preclude future construction of a roundabout at select locations, nor require removal of first-phase improvements. City standard lampposts and fixtures, benches,

pavers, and other amenities must be specified. No major signalization changes would be funded in this phase. He reminded the neighborhood people that consultants bill by the hour, so their time should be used efficiently.

Farmington Avenue

Paul Schmidt opened the meeting and gave some background on his firm, and the consultant team selected for the Farmington Avenue project. He handed out an agenda for the Farmington Avenue meeting, and indicated that the meeting's purpose was to acquaint the parties with one another, and begin to identify issues of concern to the neighborhoods. He indicated that the consultants had studied the Farmington Avenue plan and hoped to work closely with the neighborhood, possibly through a series of workshops, and to honor the concept of the plan.

Design Issues

A lengthy discussion ensued about issues of concern to the neighborhood. The group expressed general consensus on the following issues and needs:

- Improving the safety and comfort of the pedestrian environment
- The need to address congested intersections, particularly those at Sisson Avenue and Woodland Street
- Poorly-located and unmanaged parking throughout the length of the Avenue, especially on sidewalks in front of stores
- Parking enforcement
- Providing adequate truck loading and access for businesses
- Poorly-located bus stops
- Shopper access to retail businesses
- Speeding
- General improvement of the appearance of the Avenue, including a tree canopy over the street
- Improving the biking environment and making it safer
- Providing adequate emergency vehicle access throughout the corridor
- Provision of new, additional, and properly marked crosswalks throughout the corridor
- Possible demarcation or treatment of the Park River, or it's historical relevance to the corridor
- Problems created by private charter bus operations

There were several issues that were discussed at length but on which there was no consensus. Most of these centered on proposed features of the concept plan completed in 2001. These included:

- Roundabouts as a solution to the intersection problems (specifically, concerns about emergency vehicle access, capacity, pedestrian safety, and truck movements)
- Reduction in the number of travel lanes for automobiles
- The use of a median, especially if it precludes left turns into businesses
- Safe and appropriate design features for the elderly and handicapped, especially with roundabouts
- Possible lane shift conflicts, especially with bicycles and buses

- The effectiveness of acquiring private property, leases, or easements for consolidating parking and providing more pedestrian space
- How to address the corridor's role as a relief route for intermittent congestion on I-84

On behalf of the FADB, Mike McGarry advised that the FADB objects to the implementation of any aspects of the Concept Plan that involve roundabouts; that would curtail, hinder, impede, or otherwise limit business functions; and/or that may adversely affect emergency vehicle access to the corridor. Phil Will, also a member of the FADB, expressed his belief that the concept was developed with the majority support of the FADB.

Project Approach and Strategy

There were several issues of approach and strategy that were discussed:

- **Schedule**: Kevin Mentz handed out a timeline showing what the schedule of decisions and work would have to be in order to meet a June 1 construction start. This required approximately 4 workshops in the first month, with some major decisions required at the end of that time, and all others by the end of the 30% design phase, probably some time before Christmas. There seemed to be general agreement that this was too short a time, and the deadline should be extended; however no specific decision was reached, or workshops scheduled.
- **Phase One boundaries**: There was general agreement that it was better to use a section that bridged the two neighborhoods. There also seemed to be agreement that it would be preferable to construct a smaller segment that was well designed and executed, rather than a longer segment that offered less effective solutions. Specific boundaries, however, were not determined.
- **Roundabout workshop and/or feasibility study**: There was discussion as to whether or not the team should further consider the use of roundabouts as a solution to problems at certain intersections. There was a difference of opinion on this matter; it was not resolved.

Next Steps

Two walking tours of the corridor were scheduled:

- Asylum Hill, Wednesday September 8, 3:00-6:00
- West End, Thursday September 9, 3:00-6:00

Action Items

- Conduct walking tours, s scheduled.
- URS to pursue contract with City of Hartford.

We believe these minutes accurately reflect what transpired at this meeting. Unless notified in writing to the contrary within seven (7) days of receipt of this report, we will assume all in attendance concur with the accuracy of this account of meeting. Unless superseded by revised minutes, these minutes will become final following expiration of the 7-day acceptance period.