

REPORT OF MEETING

Date and Time: Monday, August 12, 2024, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
 Location: St. Joseph’s Church Hall, 376 Main Street, Danbury
 Subject: Public Workshop

1. Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS / PHONE
Mike Wilson	WestCOG	mwilson@westcog.org
Thomas Boirath	Resident	Jkjmso@sbcglobal.net
John Gentile	Commissions for Persons with Dis Abilities	Jmgsrl550@aol.com
Stuart Pomeroy		stuapomeroy@aol.com
Tom Brown	Citizen	tlbrownone@hotmail.com
Marjorie Walker	Resident	overhiller@yahoo.com
Julie Kushner	State Senator	Julie.kushner@cga.ct.gov
Rachel Chaleski	State Representative	Rachel.chaleski@cga.ct.gov
John Lynch	Citizen	Jpbolt@comcast.net
Linda Harbuck	Resident	Linda.harbuck@att.net
Larry Harbuck	Resident	
Francis J. Snopkoski		Francis7473@aol.com
Larry Morgan	Resident	Lmorgl@aol.com
Jennifer Emminger	City of Danbury	
Richard Corzo		
Gary Michael	Michael & Michael	Gary_r.michael@sbcglobal.net
Micahl Chen		Michah.chen@gmail.com
Waleed Albakry	City of Danbury	W.albakry@danbury.ct.gov
Tom VanBenschoten	Resident	
Greg Pings	Citizen	
Veera Karukonda	City of Danbury	
T. Buzaid		buzaidt@gmail.com
Bob Godfrey	State Representative	Bob.Godfrey@cga.ct.gov
James D’Amico	Bethel resident	Damico76@gmail.com

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		
NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
Nilesh Patel	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) of	Nilesh.patel@ct.gov
Kevin Burnham	CTDOT	Kevin.burnham@ct.gov
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Bobby Martinez	CTDOT	bobby.martinez2@ct.gov
CONSULTANT TEAM		
Sharat Kalluri	CDM Smith	kallurisk@cdmsmith.com
Rebecca Hall	CDM Smith	rhall@cdmsmith.com
Scott Harley	CDM Smith	sharlev@cdmsmith.com
Fernanda Mastroluca	SLR Consulting	fmastroluca@slrconsulting.com
Marcy Miller	FHI Studio	mmiller@fhistudio.com

2. [Presentation](#)

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) hosted an in-person public workshop to discuss safety and mobility improvements to the intersection at [Main Street \(Route 53\) and Downs Street and North Street \(Route 37\) in Danbury](#) on Monday, August 12, 2024, at St. Joseph Church Hall at 376 Main Street in Danbury from 6:00–8:00 p.m. It provided an opportunity for Danbury community residents, leaders, and business owners to share their experiences at this intersection with the CTDOT project team.

Improvements to this intersection are identified as a potential early-action project in the I-84 Danbury Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) Study. The PEL Study is reviewing ways to improve mobility and reduce congestion on I-84 between the New York State line and Interchange 8 in Danbury. It is expected to conclude in fall 2024.

The study team provided a short presentation at the beginning of the workshop to introduce the potential early action project at the intersection of Main Street (Route 53) and Downs Street and North Street (Route 37).

Krishalyn Macrohon, of CTDOT, began the presentation by welcoming everyone to the workshop. She introduced the study team and reviewed Title VI information related to civil rights. She encouraged the attendees to complete a voluntary post meeting survey at <https://portal.ct.gov.ctdotsurvey>. She reviewed the agenda for the presentation. It included:

1. Meeting Purpose
2. Background
3. Key Issues
4. Meeting Format
5. Questionnaire and Comments
6. Next Steps

Sharat Kalluri, of CDM Smith next presented background information on the Main Street (Route 53) and Downs Street and North Street (Route 37) intersection. He discussed the traffic delay, geometric concerns, crashes, and inadequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The workshop presented existing conditions data—including traffic volumes, roadway conditions, and existing deficiencies—to implement intersection improvements at the intersection. He discussed the meeting format and encouraged the attendees to visit the five boards around the perimeter of the room, as well as the roll plots of the intersections at center tables, after the presentation. The boards situated around the room included information on the existing conditions, crashes, peak hour traffic volumes, crashes, photos, and how to stay involved. He said that study team would be available to answer questions and address comments at these stations from attendees.

S. Kalluri encouraged attendees to complete a short questionnaire. The questionnaire is available by paper copy and [online](#) in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Nilesh Patel, of CT DOT, discussed next steps of the project, which include collecting public comments through September 9, 2024. He said that this is considered an early action project whereby the team may initiate a project for environmental review and design that is separate from improvements to the larger I-84 corridor. If this intersection improvement moves forward, public outreach will continue during the design phase. He closed the presentation describing how the public can stay involved.

3. Discussion During the Presentation

Question: Will the larger I-84 Danbury Study recommend improvements to Interchange 5?

Answer: N. Patel replied that there are different concepts that propose improvements to Interchange 5 that is recommended in the I-84 Danbury PEL Study.

Question: Will the larger I-84 Danbury Study recommend improvements to the I-84 mainline?

Answer: N. Patel replied that there are various options that propose improvements to the I-84 mainline.

Comment: There is not enough room for a sidewalk on Main Street adjacent to the cemetery.

Comment: Downs Street should be converted to a one-way street eastbound (several voiced their support for this). One attendee noted that the houses will need to maintain roadway access.

Question: Will the number of lanes at the Exit 5 off-ramp change?

Answer: N. Patel answered that this has not been determined yet.

Question: Do people visit the cemetery (located at northwest of the intersection)?

Answer: The cemetery, being a historic property, is a constraint and cannot be developed or altered.

Comment: It is extremely difficult to travel on and around Mill Plain Road (Interchanges 3 and 4) in the afternoon. If those intersections can be improved, the congestion on the highway will improve.

Answer: The congestion on Mill Plain Road is caused by motorists diverting to and from I-84 due to congestion during peak commuter periods. If congestion on I-84 is improved, those motorists are anticipated to get back on I-84, and therefore, Mill Plain Road could see an improvement in travel conditions. The study team is considering another early-action project to assess opportunities for using the shoulders during peak times, a concept used successfully in other states.

Question: The southbound Route 7 to I-84 eastbound movement is problematic. Is this being looked at as part of the larger study?

Answer: N. Patel replied that there is an option for a flyover ramp to reduce the delay for this movement.

4. Small Groups Comments

In general, attendees agreed that this intersection experiences severe congestion and safety concerns with geometric deficiencies. They were generally in favor of converting Downs Street to one-way operation. Those who were not in favor had concerns on difficulty of exiting

driveways under a one-way operation and some suggested that perhaps Downs St can be converted one-way east of Smith Street.

- **Alignment:** There is a support on correcting the geometry on Main Street (Route 39) (North-South approach) as it approaches the intersection. Some expressed an interest in looking at the cemetery property in reviewing potential options. Similarly, the alignment of Downs St and North St (East-West approach), mainly the offset approach at the intersection, was a concern to others.
- **Truck Traffic:** As the only access to downtown Danbury for points to and from the west, many residents expressed concerns on the high volume of truck traffic using this intersection and adjacent local streets to bypass the intersection. Improving the turning radii for large vehicles (trucks and trailers) at the intersection was recommended.
- **Traffic signal:** Upgrade traffic signal to provide far-side signal heads at the intersection and install traffic signal at Main Street and Water Street intersection.
- **Improve traffic operation and roadway condition of the adjacent local streets:**
 - Main St and Franklin St intersection
 - Downs Street and Farview Avenue intersection
 - Farview Ave and Franklin Street intersection
 - Water Street
 - Smith Street
 - Extending the limits north to Exit 5 Westbound direction and south to the Danbury Police Department, and implement the complete streets policy to the corridor
- **Mobility:** A resident who lives in the neighborhood expressed concerns on walking along Main Street due to the volume and speed of traffic.
- **Converting North Street to one-way in the eastbound direction.**