

Report of Meeting

Date and Time: Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 12 PM

Location: Microsoft Teams Online Meeting Platform

Subject: GHMS Live Online Discussion #4

Attendance

GHMS Live Online Discussion #4 was attended by 14 public participants and 10 GHMS Study Team members.

GHMS Study Team

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)

- Mike Calabrese
- Kevin Burnham
- Andy Fesenmeyer

Consultant Team

- Casey Hardin, TranSystems Corporation
- Dave Stahnke, TranSystems Corporation
- Mayuresh Khare, AECOM
- Mike Morehouse, FHI Studio
- Marcy Miller, FHI Studio
- Laura Parete, FHI Studio
- Jim Redeker, FHI Studio

Public Participants

- Thomas Aparo
- Nan Chen
- Jackie Mandyck, iQuilt
- Toni Gold, West End Civic Association
- Greg Plage
- Peter Hughes
- Mark Freker
- David MacDonald
- Marian Leist, HARC Inc.
- Joseph Linhart, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Cara Radzins, CRCOG
- Mary Pelletier, Park River Watershed
- Christopher Fagan
- 1 caller

Summary

Mr. Mike Morehouse of FHI Studio welcomed attendees to the fourth GHMS Live Online Discussion. Mr. Morehouse provided an overview of how to participate in the Live Online Discussion, introduced key members of the project team, shared a brief video, and gave an introductory presentation about the GHMS. The presentation explained what the GHMS is evaluating and how the study will identify alternatives for the Greater Hartford Region.

Following the presentation, Mr. Morehouse facilitated a discussion and encouraged members of the public to provide comments and ask questions about the study. This discussion is summarized below.

Mr. Morehouse concluded the meeting by thanking everyone who attended and saying that the study team wants the public to be part of the process to help identify potential improvements. Mr. Morehouse encouraged participants to attend future Live Online Discussions and to continue providing feedback to CTDOT to inform the study.

Discussion

Q - What is the Greater Hartford Mobility Study?

A- The GHMS is a comprehensive study aimed at addressing mobility challenges in the Greater Hartford Region. It will ultimately recommend transportation solutions to facilitate economic growth on both sides of the Connecticut River while improving public safety and expanding mobility choices to all users.

Q – How does the Greater Hartford Mobility Study align with the Hartford 400 Plan?

A – The GHMS has a similar vision to that of Hartford 400. The recommendations included in the Hartford 400 plan will be reviewed to identify their specific transportation benefits for potential inclusion as alternatives in the GHMS.

Q – Are recent articles that mention the GHMS and Hartford 400 informed by the study team?

A – The recent articles published by the CT Mirror and the Hartford Courant mention the GHMS. The study team was not interviewed for these articles.

Q – Is the GHMS considering the changing environment and climate?

A – The study team is developing and will utilize a scenario planning tool to allow the testing of future scenarios, such as how people choose to travel when they make trips and employment trends such as working-from-home that many employers are embracing. The scenario planning tool will account for future travel projections and test potential infrastructure improvements against multiple expected conditions. The study team believes this tool will be advantageous in accounting for recent travel changes, environmental and climate changes, time, and opportunity.

Q- When will the GHMS hire scientists to analyze and prioritize environmental impacts and climate change?

A – The GHMS is a two-year Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study. During the PEL study, the Project Team is coordinating with Federal agencies and evaluating factors such as the environment, community needs, and the economy using a scenario planning tool. This tool will forecast various potential circumstances and gauge travel needs based on

performance indicators. The study findings will recommend potential projects to advance to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) environmental phases. During the NEPA / CEPA phase, CTDOT will utilize technical experts to evaluate potential environmental impacts.

Q – The I-84 Hartford Project did not clarify what will happen to the buried conduit, through which the drainage of the Park River Watershed flows.

A – The Project Team is aware of this and would like to minimize disruption to the conduit because of environmental and permitting impacts.

Q – Please explain the Hartford 400 Plan’s idea of moving the I-84 and I-91 Interchange and eliminating the mix master in East Hartford.

A – The GHMS Project Team has seen the Hartford 400 Plan’s renderings and ideas in the local news. The GHMS does not have the data at this time to provide an informed opinion on its contents. The GHMS will look at what is recommended in the Hartford 400 Plan. Several of the Hartford 400 Plan’s recommendations could potentially be incorporated into the GHMS. The study team will consider several ways to address the needs of the Greater Hartford Region and evaluate the potential of the Hartford 400 initiatives along with other potential improvement opportunities to meet those needs.

Q- What are your thoughts on the Hartford 400 Vision? (asked by M. Morehouse to attendees)

A – I hope the GHMS team plans to review the Hartford 400 Plan. I am interested preserving historic buildings in Hartford and potentially relocating the Mixmaster. This could create acres of new land for development.

A- I am unsure about how to travel over the Charter Oak Bridge according to the plan.

Q – Will the GHMS Project pursue short-term measures such as extending the cap of I-84 downtown?

A – The plan of the GHMS is to have a series of short- and long-term initiatives and potential projects. Most of the projects will require funding. The GHMS Project Team is hearing feedback from the communities that they want projects that will improve their lives now. Examples of this include enhanced riverfront access, bicycle lanes, and walking trails. These are initiatives that can be considered now as CTDOT plans for long-term projects. In addition, initiatives will come from a variety of sources including CTDOT, Federal Highway Administration, and Capitol Region Council of Governments. Partnerships will be key to the success of the study and construction of potential improvements.

Q – Is the GHMS team considering a recommendation to develop the land underneath the highway on Capitol Avenue into a park?

A – The Project Team is unaware of this concept but will include this comment in the community feedback that is used to inform the study.

Q – Congressman Larson’s observation that “turn-key” improvements will expand highway access across the Connecticut River and are a worthwhile goal. The Ted Williams Tunnel in Boston which was a “turn-key” project has transformed access to Logan Airport.

A – The GHMS Project Team is familiar with this model and will evaluate it as it relates to Hartford.

Q – Is light rail being considered as part of the GHMS?

A – The GHMS Project Team is considering a variety of rail improvement options. At this point in the study, mode options are largely focused on connecting different areas of the region, rather than specific transit modes.

Q – Will the GHMS help to determine which streets within Hartford can be closed or limited to commuter traffic to expand bicycle passages?

A – The Project Team does not have answers about specific streets but is evaluating this as part of the study.

Q – Please consider using Hartford Police Department pedestrian and bicycle counts. Many in Hartford, including high school students, do not have data plans. Strava and StreetLight data may not accurately capture their trips.

A – Thank you. The GHMS Project Team will look into obtaining this data.

Q – Please consider adding the ideas generated during the Live Online Discussions to the project website.

A- This is an excellent idea and can help the team capitalize on the energy from the Discussions. In addition, any person can hover on the dots on the interactive map and see others' comments.