

## **Report of Meeting**

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 4 PM

**Location:** Microsoft Teams Online Meeting Platform

**Subject:** GHMS Live Online Discussion #2

### Attendance

GHMS Live Online Discussion #2 was attended by 13 participants from the public and 11 members of the GHMS Study Team.

### GHMS Study Team

#### *Connecticut Department of Transportation*

- Mike Calabrese
- Andy Fesenmeyer
- Kevin Burnham

#### *Consultant Team*

- Casey Hardin, TranSystems Corporation
- Nick Mandler, TranSystems Corporation
- Mayuresh Khare, AECOM
- Stephen Gazillo, AECOM
- John Hapkiewicz, AECOM
- Rich Ravit, AECOM
- Mike Morehouse, FHI Studio
- Marcy Miller, FHI Studio
- Laura Parete, FHI Studio

### Public Participants

- Shari Cantor, Town of West Hartford Mayor
- Chris D'Antonio
- Britt Foulds, Senator Chris Murphy's office
- Toni Gold, West End Civic Association
- Roger Krahn, Capitol Region Council of Governments
- Carlo Leone
- Joseph Linhart
- Jackie Mandyck, iQuilt
- Gladys Mercado, Congressman John Larson's office
- Cara Radzins, Capitol Region Council of Governments
- Phil Shattuck, iQuilt
- Unidentified phone callers (2)

## Summary

Mr. Mike Morehouse, of FHI Studio, and Mr. Kevin Burnham, of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), welcomed attendees to the second 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, and gave a brief introductory presentation about the GHMS.

Following the presentation, Mr. Morehouse and Mr. Casey Hardin, of TranSystems Corporation, facilitated a discussion and encouraged members of the public to provide comments and ask questions about the study.

Mr. Morehouse concluded the meeting by thanking everyone who attended and saying that the study team wants people to be a 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 happened to the I-84 Hartford Project? Is it on hold?*

*A – The I-84 Hartford Project has been incorporated into the GHMS. CTDOT is not discarding the work already completed on the I-84 Hartford Project. The study team is taking a broader look at a multitude of potential mobility improvements in the Greater Hartford Region, including the I-84 / I-91 interchange, rail relocation in Downtown Hartford, expanding CT**fastrak** across the Connecticut River, and completing many of the gaps in the East Coast Greenway along with several others.*

*Q – How will this study address and incorporate the Hartford 400 work, which is sponsored by the City of Hartford, as well as the iQuilt/Congressman Larson’s initiative and the North Atlantic Rail Project?*

*A – There are many similarities in these efforts and the GHMS. These efforts all value mobility. Because the GHMS is in the pre-NEPA phase, the study team will consider all reasonable alternative to address identified needs and meet the study vision. For example, the study team will review several ideas presented, particularly those in Hartford 400, to help identify potential and viable projects to progress.*

*The study is focused on mobility within the Greater Hartford Region. The study team will collaborate with both CTDOT and FRA to ensure that recommendations are consistent with broader passenger rail planning efforts and freshly identified concepts that have merit. The FRA recently completed the [NEC Future](#) plan for rail throughout the Northeast Corridor. CTDOT is currently updating the State Rail Plan, which will be released in 2021.*

*Q –With regards to social equity, is the study team considering converting the highway to a boulevard, following the path of other cities across the country?*

*A – Reallocating space to a more context sensitive boulevard is challenging, but the team is collecting and vetting these ideas as part of the GHMS. The study team expects to develop and present a universe of alternatives by Fall of 2021.*

*The I-84 Viaduct Study (Hub Study) team considered the option of converting the highway to an urban boulevard. It was dismissed because of the high travel demand into and out of Downtown Hartford. The required width of the boulevard is beyond what the team and*

*boulevard proponents envisioned. The study team is also looking at potential increases to rail service, bus transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as part of the GHMS to help managed demand on the roadway network. Two of the study's goal include:*

- *Prioritize social equity*
- *Minimize environmental impacts*

*Q – How will transportation change because of the pandemic and how this will be incorporated into the GHMS? Please include this type of information on the website.*

*A – Preliminary studies have shown that use of public transit does not appear to be a significant factor in the spread of COVID-19, initially assumed. 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 future conditions. The study team believes this tool will be advantageous in accounting for recent travel changes time and opportunity.*

*Q – The workplace environment is changing, and the transportation system has not kept pace. There is greater interest in a broad range of mobility options. Please support non-single-occupant vehicular transportation to/from several of the companies in Windsor and other large employment centers.*

*A – Land uses and patterns influence transportation. The GHMS study is looking beyond the core of the region. The team is looking at the Bradley International Airport area as well as employment areas north of Hartford. The transit elements of the study will evaluate how well-connected employment centers are to population centers via transit.*

*Q – What is the timeframe for next steps and study completion?*

*A – The study team will update the Collaboration Portal with new information as it becomes available. The team will develop a study purpose and need and identify potential alternatives to meet regional needs. GHMS is expected to be completed in 2022, thus it is important to provide feedback early in the study process. Mr. Morehouse asked that participants share the Collaboration Portal with others. The study team will host additional engagement activities, including more listening sessions if there is interest.*

*Q - Hartford 400 includes broad ideas for improving the region but does not include formal plans or projects. It is a vision on how to best leverage projects that are underway.*

*A – The study team has witnessed several potential ideas that will be investigated as part of the GHMS. It plans to be comprehensive in thinking about what the city and region needs (e.g., equity, environment, economic development, etc.). All interested groups need to support that the improvements benefits many people in the region. There are several projects that can be implemented as part of this study that can transform Hartford. This is a once-in-a-century opportunity for the city to take some risks and make dramatic changes.*