



GREATER HARTFORD MOBILITY STUDY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN



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I. INTRODUCTION

Study Context

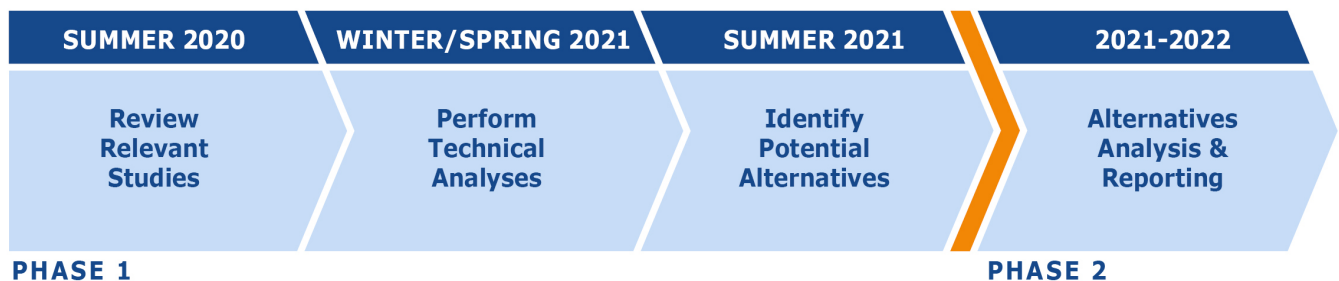
The Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS) is a comprehensive study aimed at addressing mobility challenges in the Greater Hartford region. It will ultimately recommend transportation solutions to facilitate economic growth on both sides of the Connecticut River while improving safety and expanding mobility choices to all users.

Community Engagement Plan Overview

This Community Engagement Plan (CEP) outlines how the Study Team will inform, engage, and seek input from the communities, stakeholders (e.g., neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, etc.), and the traveling public during the study process. There will be numerous opportunities for discussion and comment, as well as an agency participation planning effort. Methods of outreach include stakeholder and public workshops, stakeholder interviews, pop up events, public meetings, the CTDOT and GHMS websites, social media, fact sheets, e-bulletins, and other forms of outreach as appropriate. They are described within this CEP. Public opinion and comments will be documented and considered in the development of study recommendations.

This CEP is a living document. It will be regularly revisited and refined throughout the study as outreach needs evolve. Because of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that the public engagement process is flexible and transparent. The Study Team has tailored the outreach methods in this CEP to be specific to methods in Phase 1 (first 12 months) of the study and will tailor them as needs and opportunities evolve.

The study steps and timeline displayed below reflect Phase 1 and the start of Phase 2 of the GHMS. Phase 2 will involve a deeper analysis of the identified projects. Additional details about the Phase 2 study steps will be shared as the study progresses into 2021. The expected study duration is 2-3 years.



II. VISION AND GOALS

The draft vision statement of the Greater Hartford Mobility Study is:

The GHMS's vision is to improve mobility by planning an integrated, resilient, multi-modal transportation system in the Greater Hartford Region, thereby enhancing the quality of life, economic vitality, and opportunity in the region.

The goals of the GHMS are to:

- Improve the movement of people and goods.
- Increase the transportation options, accessibility, reliability, and safety
- Accommodate future needs and emerging technologies
- Prioritize social equity
- Minimize environmental impacts

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CTDOT seeks to implement a comprehensive and inclusive public and stakeholder outreach program with the objective of seeking solutions for the GHMS, which meet the project vision, goals, and Purpose and Need (to be developed in Phase 1) and are embraced by stakeholders. The CEP has been developed to guide public engagement in accordance with the following principles:

Accessibility - The public receives sufficient notice of public meetings, which are held at a convenient time, place or on a virtual platform, and are accessible to all. This includes complying with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and providing language assistance. The public is given time to review project-related materials in advance of meetings. Up-to-date project information is shared on the project website in an accessible format.

Inclusiveness – The public will receive equitable access to all aspects of the transportation decision-making process. The Study Team will be inclusive in its practices, distributing project information via a variety of channels and venue, and delivered in clear and simple lay language to the extent possible. The Study Team will identify and partner with select individuals and organizations from diverse communities to facilitate greater interactions and engagement with the public.

Responsiveness - Public questions and inquiries will be answered in a timely manner. In particular, the Study Team will respond appropriately to the express needs of interested individuals or groups for whom participation is challenging.

Transparency - The study planning process will be clear and understandable

to the public. The Study Team will establish an open and honest dialogue with stakeholders and share pertinent information that informs project decisions and direction. In addition, technical information and regulatory procedures will be explained clearly to help stakeholders understand the planning, regulatory and project development processes.

Communication - Project information, updates and news will be consistently communicated with the public through the project website, e-communications, newsletters, and local media outlets. Results of public engagement activities and how feedback was considered in the project will also be shared.

IV. COMPLIANCE

Public projects such as the Greater Hartford Mobility Study are subject to regulatory requirements. This project will comply with:

- Statewide and Metropolitan Planning. 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 450 and 500 and 49 CFR Part 613, February 14, 2007;
- Environmental Impact and Related Procedures and Section 4(f). 23 CFR Parts 771 and 774, October 16, 2001; 40 CFR 1506.6 and *Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552)*;
- Protection of Historic Properties. 36 CFR Part 800;
- Air Quality Conformity. 40 CFR Part 51, November 24, 1993;
- Management and Monitoring Systems. 23 CFR 500, December 1, 1993;
- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*;
- *Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898, US Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a)*;
- *Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*; and
- *FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule 23 CFR 630 subpart J.*

These federal regulations require:

- Early and continuing public involvement opportunities during all stages of the planning and programming process;
- Timely information about transportation issues and processes to the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects;
- Reasonable public access to information used in the development of the plans and projects;
- Adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points;
- A process for demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input;
- A process for seeking out and considering the needs of those

- traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households; and
- Periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process.

V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The CEP includes several methods to inform and involve the public and stakeholders in meaningful ways. Project information will be made accessible to the public. Study Team members will share information in a complete and understandable manner and record and respond to comments and concerns.

For optimal results, the GHMS team will leverage key community influencers who have built relationships and trust in the community to help advance the study message. The Study Team will ensure that local community voices are asked and allowed to help spread the message and collect feedback. This approach may require strategies to support local community programs, hire interns, and develop quid pro quo activities such as volunteer work or speaking engagements.

Key initial elements in the CEP include:

Stakeholder Interviews and Meetings

The Study Team will host stakeholder interviews and meetings to collect information and present the study process to the local communities. Participants will offer input on the technical analysis for each topic. The Study Team will hold interviews and meetings during Phase 1 to engage key stakeholders on data availability and to obtain feedback on project background, baseline conditions and improvement opportunities. The Study Team will consider hosting meetings virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a telephone call-in number will be provided for those who do not have internet access.

Public Workshops/Meetings

The Study Team will host public meetings and / or workshops at various milestones throughout the GHMS. These meetings will consist of an open-house format and a presentation. The purpose of these meetings is to obtain input from the public regarding the development of this project and its recommendations. The Study Team will consider hosting live and/or on-demand meetings and / or workshops virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual public meetings will be held in platforms that support language and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessibility.

Neighborhood NRZs

Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs) in the Greater Hartford community are coalitions of residents, businesses, and organizations that work together and share a common goal of revitalizing the neighborhoods in which they live, work, and spend leisure time. NRZs are often trusted local groups and are imperative for the

GHMS to cultivate relationships with and utilize to disseminate information. NRZs have influencers that encourage others to get involved and have their voices heard. The GHMS will collaborate with NRZs ensure that Environmental Justice (EJ) communities can provide input to the study. Collaboration methods include attending and giving updates on the study at their monthly meetings, as well as forwarding the NRZ leaders materials to distribute to their groups. The NRZs listed below are a sample of those the Study Team will contact to collaborate with. This list is not all inclusive.

- Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association
- Frog Hollow NRZ
- West End Civic Association
- Farmington Avenue Alliance
- Clay-Arsenal NRZ
- Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance
- Upper Albany Main Street Inc.
- Upper Albany Merchants Association
- Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance
- Coalition to Strengthen Sheldon/Charter Oak Neighborhood NRZ
- Parkville Neighborhood Revitalization Zone NRZ
- Southwest and Behind the Rocks NRZ
- South Downtown NRZ

Other Community Organizations

In addition to the NRZs, community-based organizations are staples in the Greater Hartford region. The Study Team has identified and will discuss the GHMS project with several community organizations that serve EJ communities. If the organizations are interested, the Study Team will collaborate with them to provide information to and educate their constituency about the study and encourage them to provide feedback about potential multi-modal improvements. The organizations can include, but are not limited to:

- Transport Hartford/Center for Latino Progress
- Hub of Hartford
- Knox, Inc.
- Parkville Business Association
- Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
- Capital Workforce Partners
- Urban League of Greater Hartford
- HARC
- Vecinos Unidos
- Hartford YMCA / YWCA
- East Hartford YMCA

Pop Up Events

The Study Team will plan and attend pop up events. The events are typically pre-planned community events such as farmers' markets and festivals. The Study Team will have a booth at events with the goal of supporting, informing, and engaging local

constituents of the study process and make sure their opinions are represented in the GHMS. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Study Team will consider hosting and attending virtual events. When COVID-19 restrictions limiting public gatherings are lifted, the Study Team will revisit the pop up event participation strategy.

Branding

The Study Team will create a design color palette, fonts, and logo for the Project to be used on various print and electronic materials.

Website

The Study Team will create an interactive website for the GHMS (<https://www.hartfordmobility.com/index>). The website provides opportunities for the public to submit comments about mobility improvements and issues on an interactive map, learn about the study, view, and download a project fact sheet, sign up for updates about the GHMS, and receive information about how to communicate with the Study Team. The website will act as an information hub throughout the study and be updated continuously. In addition, the website will largely be ADA-compliant, and text will allow users to contact a person with other language and/or ADA requests.

Social Media

Social Media offers the GHMS a platform for reaching people in target communities. The Study Team will create Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts for the GHMS. Study announcements, updates, and information are posted to these platforms. The GHMS social media accounts will keep the public apprised of current activities, important outreach events, and other relevant news.

Active conversations about transportation and its related impacts to social and environmental conditions should occur daily. Engaging in these conversations can build trust and transparency between the CTDOT and local activists and influencers. Close coordination with CTDOT's communications department is necessary for this level of communication. Original social media content will be posted in English and Spanish.

In addition, limited targeted advertising will be purchased to reach people who follow social media but may not read print material or attend meeting. Enhancing the advertising strategy to be more targeted and more frequent will result in greater visibility and awareness of the study.

Fact Sheets

The Study Team will produce fact sheets in Phase 1 of the GHMS. The first will include articles on the need for the Project and the proposed study area. It will discuss schedule and options for the public to participate in project activities. The second fact sheet will be developed at the end of Phase 1 to provide information about the draft Purpose and Need and the Universe of Alternatives. Each fact sheet will be translated into Spanish and made ADA-compliant. In addition, clicking on

specific text on the website will allow users to contact a person with other language and/or ADA requests.

Graphics Support

The Study Team will create graphics and infographics for the public. These graphics will represent diversity and be cognizant of all abilities. The team will review materials to make sure they are aligned with GHMS branding and communicate technical information in a public-friendly manner.

Contact Database, E-Bulletins, and Comment Response

The Study Team will develop and maintain a robust contact database for the GHMS. The database will include but not be limited to:

- Legislators from United State House of Representatives and Senators
- State Representatives and Senators
- Individuals or organizations that have indicated an interest in this project
- Section 106 Consulting Parties
- Identified Title VI, community, and faith-based organizations
- Stakeholders
- Media
- Property abutters
- Local officials
- Others

The team will distribute e-bulletins to the public during the launch of the website, social media accounts, and fact sheets, as well before public workshops/meetings. Additionally, the Study Team will respond to and consider all comments in all phases of the study.

Media Relations

The Study Team will provide materials to CTDOT's communications staff to assist CTDOT with advertising public meetings and / or virtual on-demand workshops through media outlets that cover the Greater Hartford region. Outreach to media outlets will occur within at least two weeks in advance of the public meetings / workshops.

There are several multimedia outlets which can assist in achieving the above goals. Each of the radio, TV, print, and online outlets serves a strategic purpose to reach EJ communities and Limited English Proficiency populations. The multimedia outlets can include but are not limited to:

Radio/Local Radio

- **WQTQ** – WQTQ is a trusted community radio station operated by Weaver High School for 50 years. The station is a broadcast service of Hartford Public Schools.
- **WNPR** – This is a news-based public radio station that reaches many across Connecticut. WNPR covers topics such as transportation, infrastructure, and

social issues. Interviews with Lucy Nalpathanchil on *Where We Live* or Chion Wolf on *Audacious* are recommended to reach their broad audiences.

- **BOMBA** – This station reaches a diverse Hispanic population in Greater Hartford.
- **WKND** – This station reaches a diverse Black community in the Hartford area.
- **Local Access Radio** – Interviews with local access radio stations in the Greater Hartford area would support a grassroots approach to engaging local communities about the GHMS.

TV

- **WTNH** – Reporter Dennis House covers transportation-related stories.
- **FOX 61** – This station is in the heart of the study core and covers local news stories relating to the study area.
- **NBC CT** – NBC CT is located along I-84 in West Hartford and covers local news stories relating to the study area.
- **WFSB** – This station airs a show called *Face the State* that covers political and local matters.
- **Univision** – This station is a leader in Spanish language news for the Greater Hartford Region. An interview with Anna Alfaro on this station is recommended.
- **Telemundo (Hartford-Springfield)** – This station covers local news stories in Spanish.
- **Local Cable Access Stations** – Interviews with local cable access stations will encourage support of the GHMS via grassroots efforts and community engagement.

Print/Online

- **AccessTV** – This station is live-streamed on social media and covers news, entertainment, and information for Connecticut's African American community.
- **Hartford Courant** – The Courant is a trusted local news source for many in the Greater Hartford Region. This outlet publishes stories regarding transportation and infrastructure in the study core.
- **Hartford Business Journal** – This outlet serves the business community in Greater Hartford.
- **La Voz** – La Voz is a statewide weekly Spanish newspaper that reaches thousands in Connecticut.
- **Northend Agents** – This outlet serves as a trusted news source for the African American community in Hartford.
- **The Hartford News** – The Hartford News is a local community paper that aligns with the GHMS's goal of taking a grassroots approach to reaching those in the Greater Hartford Region.
- **The West Indian American** – This is a trusted news source for the large population of West Indian Americans in the region.

- **Identidad Latina** – Identidad Latina is a statewide Spanish news outlet that reaches thousands in Connecticut.
- **NRZ Newsletters** – NRZ newsletters provide the opportunity for the GHMS to write op-ed pieces, advertise, and connect with different communities throughout Greater Hartford.
- **Special Events Media** – The Study Team will seek out and consider developing advertisements in special events media materials (e.g., Holiday Light Fantasia in Goodwin Park, etc.)

Other Communication Activities

Throughout the course of the project, various communication activities will occur with members of the public, especially during the periods leading up to and following public meetings / workshops. Some of the anticipated communication activities are:

- Coordination with the surrounding towns and cities to send out e-alerts in advance of upcoming meetings;
- Design and mailing of flyers to community gathering locations;
- Development and maintenance of a database of all comments;
- Coordination of responses with the Study Team to questions and inquiries from the public comments from the public;
- Participation in Podcasts and other media or broadcast opportunities; and
- Creation of reports of comments for CTDOT within the quarterly progress report.