



**NY – CT Sustainable Communities Consortium
Public Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
199 Water Street, 22nd Floor, Lower Manhattan
Friday, January 10th, 2014**

ATTENDANCE

Alanna Kabel (City of Bridgeport); Chris Canna (City of New Haven); Cara Longworth (LIRPC); Sarah Goldwyn (City of New York); Sean Sallie (Nassau County); Satish Sood (Nassau); Sarah Lansdale (Suffolk County); Virginia Picciotto (City of New Rochelle); Ayanna Wayner (City of New Rochelle); Chris Jones (RPA), Gerry Bogacz (NYMTC); Brian Bidolli (GBVMPO); Amanda Kennedy (RPA); Brian Dennis (RPA); Sarah Goldwyn (New York City) William Long (Mt. Vernon); Chris Rappa (SCROG)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Sarah Lansdale greeted all attendees to the eleventh public meeting of the Consortium Steering Committee and proceeded to the roll call.

ROLL CALL

According to the Consortium Memorandum of Agreement, a quorum for any steering committee meeting will be reached when two-thirds of the New York and Connecticut Steering Committee members are in attendance. The Consortium has nine Steering Committee members from New York and seven from Connecticut. Due recent political changes, the committee did not have formal designations from the City of Norwalk, Stamford and New York City. Therefore, the Steering Committee excluded those cities from the quorum count. Amanda Kennedy of RPA took roll call, and a quorum was reached with eight members from New York and four members from Connecticut.

REPORTS ON CONSORTIUM WORK PROGRAM

New Haven's Union Station Study

New Haven's Union Station is Connecticut's principle rail hub. The study area sits across the street from the Church Street South Housing Complex, which is a very old public housing project and near to an underutilized parking space. The goals for the Union Station project were to activate Union Avenue, generate more commuter and patron activity, and create additional parking. To realize the goals, the team must identify a governance structure to carry out the implementation of the project's objective. The study will position itself for the long term by building a new parking garage with an option of ground floor retail. It will also create a new Union Station Development Authority, an entity that will manage the station, develop more parking and create a re-merchandising strategy that will improve the look and comfort of Union Station for commuters while they wait for trains.

Questions, Answers & Comments

Have accessibility elements been included in the TOD Plan?

- The assumption is that the station development will be universally accessible.

Are there any opportunities for shared parking between two stations in New Haven?

- People mainly use the Union Station parking, and there is ample amount of parking elsewhere. There is no need for shared parking.

What are the fair and affordable housing implications in this study?

- Union Station is a small piece to a larger project, Hills to Downtown. Fair and affordable housing issues will be addressed as part of the larger study.

What would be anyone's reason to travel to New Haven?

- Union Station becomes the second busiest in the region on the weekends. The area has two major employers, Yale and the hospital downtown. A part of the study looks to make the Hill welcoming to travelers.

Can you speak to the context of what will happen on other side of street (Church Street South Housing Complex)?

- This area has been the subject of many planning studies. Working on the station will lead to more walkable and livable neighborhood. The project team and New Haven sees the station area as an opportunity to be a focal point of the neighborhood.

Smart Growth Initiative in New Rochelle

The main transit center New Rochelle is within proximity to the I-95 corridor, Amtrak and Metro North tracks. The purpose of the smart growth project in New Rochelle is to create an active mix use district that will enhance the downtown area and improve the streetscape. Public outreach was conducted during the summer and fall of 2012. The project team targeted hard to reach populations with the help of Housing Action Council. Findings from the outreach process revealed that existing zoning regulations and current height restrictions do not work with TOD projects principles.

The project proposed new development in six areas. Most of the recommended developments were proposed around the corridor near transit. There were other places highlighted in the downtown area, but would only be achieved by assembling parcels of land together.

The conceptual development illustrated in this report included a mix of retail, housing, office, R&D, and hotels, as well as an expanded Transit Center. However, parking remained an issue with the new development scenarios. The new development only needs 1,159 spaces, but the CPA parking regulations requires projects, similar in size, to include 14,000 parking spaces. The team is looking at revising the CPA parking requirements. They are also looking to make recommendations to the zoning that will allow for the extending of the central parking zone to the entire TOD district.

The next steps for the project will be to issue master plan design concepts that support an entrance to the city, adopt a zoning regulation to support desired development, and work with property owners to consolidate parcels.

Questions, Answers & Comments

Does the New Rochelle Study account for fair housing considerations?

- The report does not outline needed levels of affordable housing to be mixed into the master plan design concepts, but it does set aside a substantial amount of square footage that can be used for affordable housing. New Rochelle will continue to work at implementing affordable housing around the station.

Does the study outline improvements to the public streetscape?

- The study does explore ways to merge smart street designs and bike lanes with access to the train station.

What was the involvement like with the local community?

- The project was directed by a steering committee composed of local council members and local business owners, and they have been deeply involved with the larger outreach process that included the general public.

How does the study address transit for people with disabilities?

- The gateway study looks to create a trolley system loop downtown and up to the New Rochelle transit. The report explores ways to allow people with physical impairment to move around.

What about considerations for ferry service?

- Focus was mainly placed on the development of New Rochelle's downtown area. In the future, the report will look at development along the Sound in areas that are publicly owned.

What are the parking issues for the study?

- In the CPA district, there is a reduction in residential parking, but there is a need to reduce office parking rules as well.

REPORTS TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Sustainable Communities Fall Public Workshops

The comments from the public workshops have been written up and posted to the Sustainable Communities website. Eight public forums were held across the bi-state region in Westchester County, Long Island, New York City and Southwestern Connecticut. The public was made aware of these meetings on the Sustainable Communities website and through advisory and steering committee members. The turnout amounted to 160 people ranging from local residents to the public and private sector.

The public was asked to respond to issues concerning the state of affordable housing, and we heard concerns relating to zoning restrictions, quality of design, rebranding of low income housing, preservation, job opportunities and transportation access.

The workshops were also an opportunity to discuss the work the consortium has done on regional planning enhancement. We heard from the public how difficult it is to learn of planning initiatives in their community.

Broken down by subregion, we heard, in Westchester, how challenging it is to increase the supply of affordable housing. In Long Island, we heard that income limits stymie access to affordable housing. In New York, we heard how bad credit can be a factor preventing many from economic opportunity. Lastly, we heard that access to supportive services is an important decision residents consider when finding a new place to live.

Public Participation

There were no comments from the public.

ACTION ITEMS

The approval of the November 8th, 2013 Steering Committee meeting minutes were motioned by Alanna Kabel representing the City of Bridgeport, and seconded by Satish Sood of Nassau County. The minutes were adopted unanimously by the Steering Committee. The comments to the public meeting were acknowledged and incorporated into the final version.

The adoption of Steering Committee Resolution SC16 -2013 – Advance Transit-Oriented Development around New Haven’s Union Station was motioned by Alanna Kabel representing the City of Bridgeport, and seconded by Satish Sood of Nassau County. Acceptance was contingent on inclusion on comments heard during the meeting on the incorporation of information related to human-centered design; fair and affordable housing; and access to opportunity.in the final product to be forwarded to HUD. The resolution was adopted unanimously by the steering committee.

The adoption of Steering Committee Resolution SC17 -2013 – Transit-Oriented Smart Growth Initiative in New Rochelle was motioned by Gerry Bogacz representing New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, and seconded by Chris Canna of the City of New Haven. Steering Committee agreed that the resolution should be contingent on the inclusion of the information on human-centered design; fair and affordable housing; and access to opportunity in the final version of the deliverable. The resolution was adopted unanimously by the steering committee.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Execution Plan for Regional Sustainable Development

Status report - HUD has approved our request for an extension on our grant. Our performance period will end on April 30.

Regional Fair Housing and Equity Analysis

The advisory committee developed a list of recommendations and met January 22nd, 2014 to refine each of them before submitting the list to the Steering Committee. The Consortium has also been reassessing implementation barriers to place based projects. Phone conferences have been held with project managers in the consortium, in which implementation barriers identified at the beginning of the grant were revisited. There will be a section on outcomes and stakeholder engagement, and a last section detailing plans for the consortium and initiatives after the grant. The consortium will publically release the draft on February 24th for comment from the public.

What public outreach remains for the Initiative?

- The consortium completed the round of public workshop, is which the formal requirement of the work plan. There will be a 30-day review period of the FHEA and execution plan.

NEXT MEETING AND AGENDA

The next public Steering Committee meeting will be March 14, 2014 in Bridgeport Connecticut.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:33am.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Kennedy
Secretary