

## **Public Informational Meeting Synopsis**

*For*

**State Project Nos. 158-0211 & 158-0207  
Merritt Parkway (Route 15) Safety Improvements, Resurfacing,  
Enhancements and Bridge Improvements from  
Newtown Turnpike in Westport to Congress Street in Fairfield  
&**

**Rehabilitation of Bridge No. 00728 – Merritt Parkway Over the Saugatuck River**

**DATE:** Wednesday, January 27, 2016

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m. Presentation

**LOCATION:** Westport Town Hall Auditorium  
110 Myrtle Avenue  
Westport, CT

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### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Honorable Toni Boucher – State Senator 26<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Gail Lavielle – State Representative 143<sup>rd</sup> District  
Honorable Jonathan Steinberg – State Representative 136<sup>th</sup> District

#### **Town of Westport (Town):**

Jim Marpe – First Selectman  
Dewey Loselle – Operations Director – Selectman's Office  
Stephen Edwards – Director of Public Works  
Peter Ratkiewich – Town Engineer

#### **Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department):**

William Britnell – Principal Engineer of Highway Design  
Michael Calabrese – Project Manager, Highway Design  
Michael Cherpak – Project Engineer, Highway Design  
Hugo Rivera – Design Engineer, Highway Design  
Thomas Hallock – Design Engineer, Highway Design  
Jon Hager – Project Manager, Bridge Design  
David Gruttadauria – Project Engineer, Bridge Design  
Delois Barnes – Landscape Designer  
Mark Rylander – Landscape Designer  
Daniel Stafko – Project Manager, District 3 Construction

#### **GM2 Associates (GM2)**

Jagdeesh Gopal – Director of Bridge Engineering / Vice President

The meeting was attended by approximately 12 other individuals

**PRESENTATION:**

The Public Informational Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by First Selectman Jim Marpe. Mr. Marpe introduced the Department and provided a brief background on the project's scope and its importance to the Town of Westport. Mr. Marpe also prefaced the presentation by identifying the concerns he shared with his constituency. Those concerns are included below. Mr. Marpe turned the presentation over to Mr. Michael Cherpak who began the Department's presentation with a brief history of the Merritt Parkway, provided an overview of the entire corridor improvement plan, and shared the successes of similar projects in nearby Fairfield, Trumbull, New Canaan, Stamford, and Greenwich. Mr. Cherpak displayed slides depicting various proposed improvements, including upgrades to existing guiderail with Merritt Parkway Timber Guiderail, restoration work on historic bridges, and enhancements to the landscape. Mr. Cherpak then introduced Mr. David Gruttadauria who provided those in attendance details of the proposed bridge work. Mr. Gruttadauria discussed the different approaches the Department is using to repair and restore these historic structures. Mr. Gruttadauria also discussed some of the challenges associated with the restoration. Specifically, Bridge No. 726 carrying Newton Turnpike over the Merritt Parkway which is experiencing rapid deterioration and immediate repairs are required. These repairs may require a complete closure of the roadway and traffic detours. Ms. Delois Barnes provided a presentation on the proposed landscape enhancements associated with this project. Those improvements included removal of invasive species, preservation of existing plantings, and the addition of new plantings in accordance with the Merritt Parkway Landscape Master Plans. Ms. Barnes then handed the presentation back to Mr. Cherpak who spoke briefly about the impacts to traffic during construction, impacts to environmental resources, and current design schedule. Mr. Cherpak indicated that the design of this project is expected to be completed in July 2016 and advertised for bid in fall 2016. This project is anticipated to start construction in spring 2017 and last for approximately three (3) construction seasons at an estimated cost of \$60 million.

Mr. Cherpak introduced Mr. Jagdeeh Gopal who presented the proposed improvements to Bridge No. 728 carrying the Merritt Parkway over the Saugatuck River. The presentation outlined the work which includes repairing the historic concrete substructure, concrete deck, and steel members. The work will also include demolishing and reconstructing the original bridge parapet, installing the two-tube rail system, and appropriate guiderail attachment appurtenances. Mr. Gopal indicated that the majority of the work on this structure will not be seen from the Merritt Parkway. This work is estimated to cost \$12 million.

At the end of the presentation, the floor was opened to the public for their questions and comments which are summarized below. Of those in attendance, the proposed improvements were well received. The main issue discussed was overlapping project schedules with other State projects in the vicinity on I-95, MetroNorth, and local roads.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS:**

First Selectman Marpe expressed concern that this project conflicts with projects on I-95, MetroNorth, and local roads. His office is concerned that Westport will be burdened with significant travel delays and congestion throughout town as those wishing to find a way around construction activities may find their way onto local roads, especially those using traffic apps such as Waze.

First Selectman Marpe criticized the Department's ability to complete the North Avenue bridge project on-time and as scheduled. This project has cast doubt over the Department's ability to complete similar bridge work on-time.

First Selectman Marpe is concerned with the number of projects in the Westport and Norwalk area. His office believes the Department needs to perform an evaluation on these projects' impact on traffic. Good communication between these projects, the Department, and the Town of Westport is critical to the successful implementation of these roadway improvements.

Westport Public Works Director, Stephen Edwards, asked that the Town be involved in the review process, citing the work being completed on Bridge No. 728 over the Saugatuck River as being the main concern.

State Senator Toni Boucher, State Representative Gail Lavielle, and State Representative Jonathan Steinberg all echoed the concerns of First Selectman Marpe. Each elected official agreed that the improvements to the Merritt Parkway are needed and welcomed but suggested the Department carefully evaluate their implementation schedules and impacts on the local community, traffic, and economy.