Department of Transportation
Project No. 92-531/622/627
Noise Wall Public Information Meeting
New Haven

January 24, 2013 – 7:30 to 9:00 pm
Conte West Hill Middle School

Minutes

Present:

- James Redeker – Commissioner of Transportation, Martin Looney - State Senator, Michael Smart – Alderman New Haven
- Lamin Williams – Federal Highway Administration
- Brian Mercure, Mark Alexander, John Dudzinski, Vlad Kaminsky, John Antonucci, Christine Tedford and Paul Dickey from ConnDOT
- David Isabelle, Dean Bagdasarian and Ryan Allard from Lochner
- Sandra Stavola, Melissa Guerrero and Ellen Cupo from Parsons Brinkerhoff

Presentation:

An introduction and discussion of project support was given by Senator Looney, Alderman Smart and Commissioner Redeker. An overview of the project was given by Ryan Allard and is summarized as follows:

> The project will include construction of a noise barrier along I-91 SB between Exit 2 and the on-ramp of Exit 3. In order to match the existing noise wall and to help facilitate construction the barrier will be timber. Construction access will be limited to the highway side. There will be limited tree removal. Traffic along I-91 SB and the Trumbull on-ramp will be maintained throughout construction.

An overview of the construction process was given by Brian Mercure and is summarized as follows:

> Some trees will need to be removed as necessary for construction. All trees anticipated to be removed will be marked for approval. General construction noises can be expected during construction such as, hammering, sawing and backup warning systems. All construction work will be during the daytime. Activities are expected to begin sometime this spring and could extend to the end of the year, but actual construction should only last three months.

Public Comments and Questions:

Q: Pros/Cons for Timber vs. Concrete?
A: Continuity in the area; cost savings (timber less expensive); no impacts to Grand Avenue bridge with timber noise wall attachment; timber allowed noise wall construction to proceed immediately.

Q: Will replacement trees be planted?
A: No, there will be limited clearing. Additionally, the slope is very steep which is not conducive to tree planting. Also, there will not be access from Bradley Street

Q: How will Department address maintenance issues associated with Timber?
A: Maintenance facility is nearby in New Haven and will address maintenance issues. Additionally, graffiti is easy to fix with the timber material. If this was a masonry wall the wall is constructed with panels. Typically, the bottom panels are the ones first damaged. This requires larger construction equipment to repair and will take longer. This is another reason timber was selected.

Q: What will be the decibel reduction level?
A: An estimated 7dB noise level reduction is expected.

Q: Should a taller wall be considered to provide larger benefit?
A: There is an additional cost associated with taller wall that was deemed unnecessary. Additionally, there is a height limitation on the timber noise wall and an increase in the height could increase the cost of the wall above the Department's cost benefit ratio of $55,000 per benefited receptor.

Q: What will be the effect of parallel noise walls on opposite sides of the highway and can the walls be tilted to improve noise reflection?
A: The distance between walls is sufficient to minimize reflection of noise. It is DOT standard practice to build vertical walls without 'tilt'. A number of studies indicate that tilting does not improve the effectiveness.

Q: Would the DOT consider adding ivy to the backside of noise wall and can the garbage within DOT right of way be cleaned more frequently?
A: There is an upcoming field walk through with DOT maintenance including Alderman Smart to discuss cleanup efforts and fix any fencing in disrepair. Goal is to start on the right foot following completion of noise wall. No additional plantings are being considered at this time.

Q: What is the density of the timber noise wall? FHWA recommends 20 kg/m^2
A: The proposed timber noise wall will have the density to meet the 7dba reduction in the traffic noise.
Q: How about use of staggered wall geometry to improve noise barrier characteristics?

A: DOT standard is to utilize non-staggered walls. Additionally, staggered wall geometry would impact a wider construction area resulting in additional tree removal and grading.

Q: Will the noise wall block sunlight?
A: The wall is positioned in the north / south direction and will not block sunlight enough to prohibit growth.

Q: Will there be pile driving necessary to install the noise wall?
A: No, posts are installed by augering a hole in the ground, inserting the posts and filling it with concrete.

Q: How will the proposed noise wall affect the nearby St. John's Street and can DOT clean up this area with the right of way?
A: Proposed noise wall extension will help provide continuity and should improve noise barrier characteristics for the St. John neighborhood. Additionally, the DOT will discuss with area with Maintenance at the upcoming site walk through to address cleanup and fences in disrepair.

Q: Do we know the species of the trees to be removed?
A: The species of tree is not known at this time. Once the final clearing limits are established and the trees are tagged, a walk through with the City will be performed and the species of trees will be determined.

Q: Can the community provide plantings behind the noise wall?
A: The DOT will discuss this idea with Maintenance at the upcoming site walk in the area. There are programs such as "Adopt a Highway" that the community can apply to that allow controlled entry within DOT rights of ways.

Q: Is there a maintenance schedule established for this site?
A: There is not a known schedule. The DOT will discuss with Maintenance at the upcoming site walk.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.