

## State bond panel OKs funds for Route 34 project

*On March 25th Connecticut's State Bond Commission approved \$7.9 million for Phase I of the Downtown Crossing Project to convert Route 34 from a limited access highway to an urban boulevard between Union Avenue and College Street.*

Supported by Governor Dannel P. Malloy, State Senators Toni N. Harp and Martin Looney, these funds are the second largest grant the City of New Haven has received in the last six months. In October 2010, the City was awarded \$16 million in US Department of Transportation Tiger II grant funds.

made up with private and City of New Haven funds.

The new bond funds will be used to provide design and construction for infrastructure improvements which will allow a parcel of land (now highway) near the Air Rights Garage and College Street to be developed and the reconstruction of a section of Route 34.

Roadway work will include replacement of the College Street Bridge, eliminating Route 34 Exits 2 and 3, converting the North Frontage Road into a boulevard, a new on ramp on the South Frontage Road and new directional signs.

The project will result in more jobs for New Haven - 2,000 during construction and 960 permanent jobs at all skill levels after completion.

Downtown Crossing is a once in a generation opportunity to reconnect neighborhoods, stimulate the tax base, and create significant economic growth opportunities in the heart of New Haven.

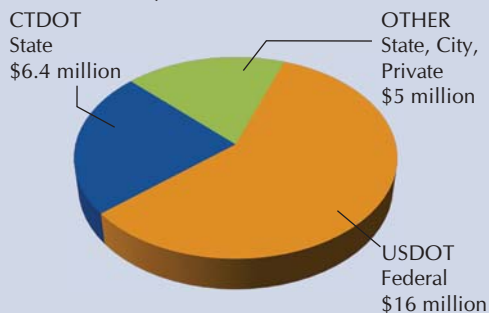
## Workshop attendees zero in on fixing problems, creating opportunities



Safety and better access for pedestrian and bicyclists were noted as key areas to improve among attendees of a community workshop held by the City of New Haven in late winter. Fast moving vehicles, streets that are too wide to cross, narrow sidewalks and traffic signals timed to favor motorized vehicle traffic rather than pedestrians were cited as safety concerns. Some said current conditions are hostile to bicyclists. They thought dedicated bike lanes, separated from traffic and connected through a network, were needed.

Attendees believed more people would walk in the city if streets had wider sidewalks and were designed to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians by using pedestrian refuge islands, bump outs. More clearly marked routes with wayfinding signs to the train station, shuttles, medical facilities, and central campus activities would help. They also wanted better urban design in New Haven. Long blocks should be broken up for more pedestrian interest. Integrating activities, such as outdoor cafes and interesting public places, would get more feet on New Haven's streets.

### Project funding



*The Route 34 project has attracted 96% of funding for Phase I from state and federal agencies. Besides the USDOT, Connecticut's Departments of Economic and Community Development and Transportation are funding over a third of the project's first phase.*

The cost of Phase 1 is estimated to be \$27.4 million. So far the City has received a commitment of 96% of the project's cost from outside sources – state and federal funds. The remaining balance of will be

## New commuting patterns take root at Yale-New Haven Hospital

It's been about five years since Yale-New Haven Hospital adopted a goal of getting 10% of its employees to work by using transit, carpools, bicycles and shuttles. This year the hospital expects to reach that goal. They predict 850 of its 8,500 workers will no longer be driving alone in their own car to work.

Nick Proto, Director of the TDM (Travel Demand Management) program at Yale-New Haven Hospital cited rising gas prices and the hospital's planned expansion of shuttle operations as the reason for his optimism.



**Nick Proto**  
**Director of TDM**  
**Yale-New Haven Hospital**

In 2006 when Nick was asked to find ways to get people out of their own cars, he thought it would be a struggle. He began by doing research on how others developed successful programs and by identifying local partners. Jean Stimolo of the New Haven-based Rideworks program was eager to help. So were CT Transit and CT DOT who support Shoreline East and Metro North. Bus and shuttle routes were evaluated, carpooling and van pooling explored, and bike rack areas identified.

The City of New Haven played a role too. When a new project that requires

planning and zoning approval is built in the city, an applicant must develop a parking plan as well as a site plan. The TDM program at Yale-New Haven hospital grew out of planning for the Smilow Cancer Center. Adding this facility would increase parking demand in the hospital neighborhood, so the City asked the hospital to find ways to reduce parking need by encouraging their employees to use other ways of getting to work.

Karyn Gilvarg, Executive Director of New Haven's City Plan Department is pleased with Yale-New Haven Hospital's efforts. "The hospital has totally embraced TDM," Karyn said. She added, "TDM is good for the hospital, good for the neighborhood. The hospital doesn't have to buy big lots for parking; the impact on the neighborhood is less. TDM programs reduce household transportation costs."

There is a lot to gain by signing up for the TDM program. Each month the hospital will pay 60% of the bus or train fare up to \$50 for employees using transit. People arriving in New Haven's Union Station can use a free shuttle from the train station to the hospital. People who use carpools or vanpools get preferential parking in the Air Rights Garage. If three or more people ride together, parking in the garage is free.

Convenient and safe parking is also offered for bicycles. Special parking spaces are available in the garages for the smallest motorized vehicles –



motorcycles. Free shuttles from three park and ride lots located on the interstate highways – I-95 north and south and I-91 north have reduced the number of cars driving into the city every day.

TDM Director Nick Proto said that he's "...very proud of the program. At first, I was not optimistic that it would work but as I learned more through research and found partners to work with I could see how we might capture interest."

While the hospital aggressively promotes the program with brochures, flyers and a website, Nick believes the employees who participate in the program are his "neon sign." He thinks "the best advertisement is word of mouth."

The TDM at Yale-New Haven Hospital has been so successful, a full-time person will be hired to help manage it as part of the hospital's parking program.

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## City and State’s commitment to “complete streets” and traffic analysis will shape road design

The plan to re-make the Route 34 area is a bold one.

It’s hard for most of us to picture, but that’s what traffic planners and engineers are asked to do. They have many tools to work with, such as counts of today’s traffic and models to project growth in the future. Yet cities like New Haven are always changing and adapting to societal trends. Traffic analysis tries to take into account what we know and what we cannot fully predict.

For the last several months the consultant team, led by Parsons

Brinkerhoff, has been analyzing traffic patterns. They have looked at the immediate Route 34 area and beyond. Some 26 intersections were studied because New Haven streets, particularly George Street and those in the medical district, are all part of an interrelated urban street grid that could be impacted by changes to Route 34.

The traffic analysis began with an inventory of the city network of streets. Posted speeds, the number of travel lanes per street, pedestrian and bicycle use, bus stops and routes, and parking were noted.

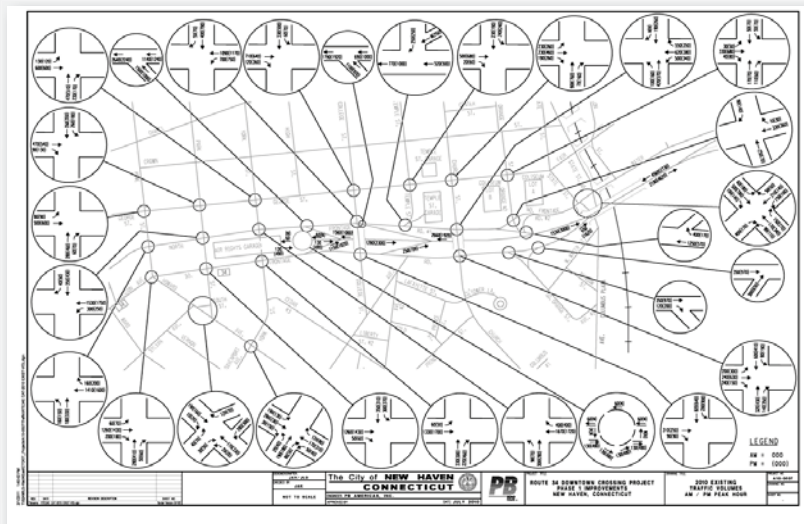
The information gathered in the inventory was then supplemented by observing traffic and by talking with people who regularly use city streets as well as city, regional and state officials.

Then more data on existing conditions in the Route 34 corridor was collected. Numerous traffic counts, including pedestrian and bicycle, were obtained. Accident data and traffic volumes on the highway ramps were also tallied.

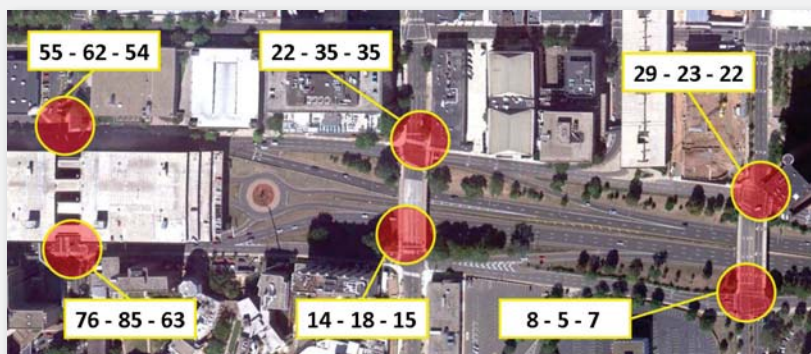
Studying the travel corridor for all users – bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists – is important to the City. New Haven was recently recognized by the National Complete Street Coalition in a 2010 report as having among the top 15 rated complete streets policies nationwide. This report cited New Haven’s Complete Street Design Manual as an example of written policies aimed to ensure that future transportation infrastructure investments provide safe options for everyone using the roadways.

Taking the next steps – predicting traffic growth and then developing a street design to accommodate that growth – has not yet occurred. Building the model – the tool to project traffic growth to the year 2035 – is still in progress. The Connecticut Department of Transportation is developing this model. It’s a complicated task that, once completed, will provide information needed for the City, community and State to discuss what kind of road network will work best for all users. The next community meeting will not occur until the modeling is done.

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2010 Traffic Volumes



Accidents 2007 - 2008 - 2009

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Many factors are considered when building a model to predict future traffic growth. Existing traffic volumes (permitted and expected new projects) that would increase travel, mass transit options and other transportation routes into and out of the city will be taken into account.

More than transportation and economic elements may be considered in the model. Societal trends, such as the rise of telecommuting, have the potential to radically change commuting patterns. A substantial increase in the number of people who work from home may shift the upward curve of decades-old traffic growth in a new direction.

The results of traffic modeling will provide the information traffic engineers need to design the road to accommodate

all modes of travel. How many travel lanes – three or four – will be needed on the new urban boulevards (former frontage roads) to handle traffic will be better understood.

Traffic modeling will also give traffic engineers the information they need to determine where left turn lanes are needed and how long they should be. But, beyond the specifics of road design, the traffic analysis will provide insight on how traffic will move, where it will go in the future. City planners believe people may come into and navigate within city differently than they do today.

The consultant team expects to have the results of the traffic modeling in late spring and will rapidly work towards drafting the preliminary design for the new Route 34 by June.

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The hospital's success with its TDM program is a model for other New Haven employers who seek alternative ways to respond to their employees' need for parking.



## Contact Us!

For more information about the project, please contact:

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## Out & About...

City of New Haven staff has been meeting with community groups and organization as they plan for changes to the Route 34 corridor. Some of the groups involved in meetings in recent months are:

- Downtown Community Management Team
- Hill North Community Management Team
- Hill South Community Management Team
- St. Raphael's Hospital
- Hospital Parking Advisory Committee
- Town Green Special Services District
- Elm City Cycling
- New Haven Development Commission
- Architecture for Humanity
- Gateway Community College
- Whalley/West Hills Management Team
- Rotary Club

If you would like to invite City staff to meet with your group, please contact Donna Hall, [dhall@newhavenct.net](mailto:dhall@newhavenct.net), (203)946-7842.