

**PUBLIC HEARING DOCUMENTATION
JULY 13, 2006**

Sign-In Sheets, Transcript



City of Stamford
OFFICE OF OPERATIONS
ENGINEERING BUREAU

Public Hearing on Draft Environmental Assessment, SUT Phase II

The Rogers Magnet School Auditorium, 82 Lockwood Ave Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902
Thursday, July 13 at 7:00 pm

Sign-In Sheet

	PRINT NAME	AGENCY / MAILING ADDRESS	CONTACT No.
1	JIM SCREWSE	Colony Grill - MYRTLE AVE	
2	GAYNOR BLENMAN	125-117 Myrtle Ave	
3	Patty Arnone	Colony - Myrtle Ave	
4	Cosby Wang	Eltrim Co.	
5	Cynthia McRAE	86 MYRTLE AVE	
6	Pedro ZAPATA	72 MYRTLE AVE	
7	DANIEL WINSOR	1122 Cedar Rd	
8	Gracen Winsor	" "	
9	E. English	70 MYRTLE AVE	
10	D. Reid	" " "	
11	Mariane de C. Baines	149 MYRTLE AVE	
12	Mariane de C. Baines	189 MYRTLE AVE	
13	Loretta Carous	112 Matthews St	
14	Ed Bellows "	1505 Shippen Ave	
15	Lazaro PENNA	149 Myrtle Ave	



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	PRINT NAME	AGENCY / MAILING ADDRESS	CONTACT No.
1	Olivia Embre	92 West St. Stamford CT 06901	
2	ANDRE DUQUENE	406 ELM ST Stamford	203/667-9379
3	SONIA DUQUENE	406 ELM ST Stamford	203/325-9599
4	AL Smith	934 E. Main St Stamford	348-5975
5	AL GRITTA SN	934 E MAINST STAMFORD	.. .
6	Tim Roth	20 Harbor View Ave Norwalk CT	838-9769
7	Ezmer Boicourt	410. E/M Street-Stet	3588008
8	PATRICK Pierre	178 Myrtle Ave	7089931
9	Scott Smith	100 MIDDLE AVE, STAMFORD CT	203-358-0899
10	Alex Ferrana	136 Myrtle Ave	203 667-1792
11	no message	20 MYRLE	203-524-3408
12	Tim Cullin	City of Stamford	977-4141
13	Mark Berlingo	129 Myrtle Ave	325-2247
14	Jean Olivia	TRC Environmental Corp	860-298-6232
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	PRINT NAME	AGENCY / MAILING ADDRESS	CONTACT No.
1	Sandra Johnson	126 Myrtle Ave, #5	203-554-6049
2	Monica Hughes	" #7	
3	Fra Condell	" #6	
4	Fran & Joe Alessa	59 Myrtle Ave	662-9660
5	Louis Galasso	133 MYRTLE AVE	203.984.4628
6	Rob Alban	26 myrtle	274 6790
7	Anthony Irving	126 myrtle ave	
8	Hector Silvio	930 East Main	
9	Iscent Amador	126 myrtle ave	
10	Dem		
11	PETER NANO	402 E. Main St.	912 9695
12	R.C. P	129 W. Elm	
13	Annmaria Amador Davis	88 Myrtle Ave	
14	Nicholas Fortner	167 Myrtle Ave	(203) 820-3633
15	CURTIS RILEY	107 Myrtle Ave	203-354-2632



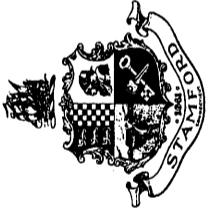
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	PRINT NAME	AGENCY / MAILING ADDRESS	CONTACT No.
1	SUNNY YETHIRAJAN	136 MORTHE TUE	203-359-0272
2	DEBRA	131 LAWA AVE	355-0524
3	Chen Bellman	115 Eden RD	329-0752
4	DWZ	602. Edin St	627-8004
5	Andrew Pramberger	City of Stamford Engineering Bureau	977-4003
6	LAURA LABOSKY	COS / ENGINEERING	977-5501
7	Rachel Goldberg	URC	327 9180
8	Lester G. Finkle II	FHWA/FTA 628-2 Hebron Ave, Suite # 303 Glastonbury, CT 06033	(860)659-6703 X303
9	Louis Casolo	COS / ENGINEERING	977-5794
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Speaker Sign-In Sheet

	PRINT NAME	AGENCY / MAILING ADDRESS	CONTACT No.
1	FRAN SESSA		
2	Dyanne Ferreres		
3	FRAN SESSA		
4	Alex Ferreras		
5	Antho		
6	Sandra Johnson		
7	Robert J...		
8			
9	Mary Ferrera		
10	Don Donohue		
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

TRANSCRIPT

VERBATIM PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF STAMFORD
IN RE: STAMFORD URBAN TRANSITWAY - PHASE II
PROJECT SCOPING AND PUBLIC INPUT

JULY 13, 2006

THE ROGERS MAGNET SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
LOCKWOOD AVENUE
STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT 06901

POST REPORTING SERVICE
HAMDEN, CT (800) 262-4102

HEARING RE: STAMFORD URBAN TRANSITWAY - PHASE II
JULY 13, 2006

1 . . .Verbatim proceedings of a hearing Re:
2 City of Stamford, Stamford Urban Transitway - Phase II,
3 Project Scoping and Public Input, held at The Rogers
4 Magnet School Auditorium, Lockwood Avenue, Stamford,
5 Connecticut, on July 13, 2006 at 7:27 P.M.

6
7
8
9

10 MODERATOR LOUIS CASOLO: Can everybody hear
11 me in the back row? If not I would suggest you move
12 forward please. We're going to start the hearing at this
13 time.

14 This is a public hearing for the
15 environmental assessment document for the Stamford Urban
16 Transitway -- Phase II, which runs along the Myrtle
17 Avenue/East Main Street corridor. The notice of this
18 hearing was sent to all property owners by mail and copies
19 of the documentation was left at the storefronts, posted
20 on the internet on our website and published in several
21 local newspapers, both in English and in Spanish.

22 The notice of the meeting was put into the
23 Advocate on the 20th and the 25th, two times. And from
24 those publications I can see that we had a pretty good

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1 turnout. Similar to the scoping meeting that we had on
2 January 24th, we're going to observe the following rules
3 in this meeting and I ask you to respect those rules for
4 the courtesy of everybody that came here tonight to make
5 an effort to listen and observe and make a public comment.
6 We did include a sign-in sheet in the back, that's good
7 information to have for future meetings, so please take
8 the time to sign it if you haven't.

9 And I'll repeat myself a couple of times
10 but once we finish going over the project summarizing the
11 project, I encourage you to make a public comment. That's
12 really the whole purpose of the meeting, is to solicit
13 public comments. And to do so in an orderly way, I'd like
14 to have you sign the speaker sheet so I can call people up
15 one by one and let people talk, okay. If you don't want
16 to make a verbal comment you can do so in writing by
17 completing the manual form which is available here
18 tonight.

19 We're also going to post it or it may be
20 posted on our website already. Just print it out, send it
21 in, email it in, fax it, whatever, prior to the deadline
22 which is 4:00 p.m. on July 21st. If you're making a
23 verbal comment tonight, we have a stenographer here
24 present. Just state your name and spell it for him so

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1 that he can get the best accurate information possible.
2 And I'm going to ask that we have a three-minute time
3 period. I've had multiple meetings like this in the past
4 and generally people can hold to the three minutes. If
5 you can't I'll have to ask you to stop and then let
6 everybody else go and then come back at the end type of
7 thing.

8 So without any further adieu, I'd just like
9 to start the public meeting and just go over quickly the
10 agenda for tonight. I'm going to give a basic overview of
11 the project. I'm joined here tonight by a couple of
12 colleagues of mine and some other guests that are familiar
13 with the project and will go over things in a little more
14 detail.

15 As many of you know from the documentation
16 of prior meetings the City, in cooperation with the
17 Federal Transit Agency, is proposing to expand the limits
18 of the Stamford Urban Transitway - Phase I, and the use of
19 rails, bus, non-motorized modes of transportation to
20 improve the mobility and extend transportation benefits
21 within this area.

22 This all will help reduce travel times,
23 encourage redevelopment opportunities and a lot of this is
24 a follow-up to previous documents that are on file with

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1 the City and that have been accepted by the City's
2 different agencies. And I'm talking about the master plan
3 and the East Side Neighborhood Corridor Plans. Many of
4 the ideas and efforts that went into building those
5 documents are carried out in this project. That's how a
6 lot of the plans get implemented, through capital projects
7 and this is one of those.

8 The objectives of this project are really
9 to relieve I-95 congestion and on the City networks,
10 especially in this area. It's a pretty urban area and
11 there's a lot of traffic through these intersections and
12 constrained arterials, to increase rail and local
13 ridership, to encourage the use of non-motorized modes of
14 transportation, to provide transit-oriented redevelopment
15 opportunities, increase vehicle occupancy by reducing the
16 use of single occupant vehicles, improve transportation
17 mobility for transit population developments, provide
18 better access to the Connecticut Transit and the Stamford
19 Internodal Transportation Center.

20 Other things, benefits, improving air
21 quality, quality of life, streetscape, all these things
22 are implemented through this project. The master plan
23 that I was referring to was adopted in 2002 by the City's
24 Planning Board and includes information supporting a

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1 neighborhood plan, that's the Cove/East Side Shippan
2 Neighborhoods, and those objectives are to identify Myrtle
3 Avenue as a major arterial to include bike lanes, promote
4 upgrades along Myrtle Avenue, calling for streetscape
5 traffic improvements, create a network of bike routes
6 connecting residential areas to neighborhood parks,
7 schools, businesses.

8 Those are all ideas. There's many, many
9 more in that document. I can't possibly summarize
10 everything right now but we do have that document
11 referenced in the EA that's on file. Anybody that wants
12 to take a look at that, I encourage you to do so. These
13 are ideas that were generated not through my office but
14 through neighborhoods.

15 Information supporting the City-wide policy
16 objectives in the master plan include making transit
17 service more realistic as an alternative to driving, more
18 transit stops and more attractive places for bus stops and
19 shelters, adopting roadside policies to put much more
20 emphasis on pedestrian and bike routes, to provide bike
21 paths through the City especially like the SUT. These are
22 all ideas that are part of this document.

23 And then the east side, East Main Street
24 Corridor Neighborhood Plan talks about having streetscape

1 grass strips to reduce the sense of roadway width,
2 crosswalks, enhancing walks to promote pedestrian-friendly
3 environments and increase safety for pedestrians. These
4 aren't my ideas, these are ideas of the community and
5 these are ideas that are all being folded into a capital
6 project. This document, the EA document, presents several
7 alternatives.

8 It talks about the no-build, the TSM, the
9 five-lane alternative, the four-lane alternative and a
10 couple of versions of each alternative that were reviewed.
11 And I'm only going to summarize this because there's a lot
12 of text about all this in the document but based on the
13 study that was done the preferred alternative is the four-
14 lane alternative, which matches a lot of the objectives in
15 the plans that I talked about earlier.

16 The no-build really allows for the
17 declining service levels in the corridor to be maintained,
18 to be continued. It doesn't do anything to enhance the
19 corridor. It exacerbates the traffic safety deficiencies,
20 discourages redevelopment, fails to increase the use of
21 public transit -- you know, and associated noise levels,
22 things like this, and is inconsistent with the objectives
23 of the master plan.

24 The TSM results in limited improvement of

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1 the level of service, fails to improve air quality, it
2 doesn't really meet those project objectives either. The
3 five-lane alternative is an ambitious alternative. It
4 takes the most right-of-way. It meets many of the project
5 objectives. That's the alternative that has the
6 continuous left turn lanes, turn lanes through the median.

7 We've looked at it very closely and we
8 think we've been able to provide an alternative with the
9 four-lane that provides left turn because I think that's
10 one thing that drives a lot of people not only mad but
11 just really decreases the performance of a lot of the
12 roadways through Stamford, not having a designated left
13 turn.

14 The four-lane features a direct access to
15 the Connecticut Transit Depot. We're riding a lot of
16 buses on these roads. Having Connecticut access to the
17 Depot really will mitigate a bus doing circuitous moves on
18 city streets, provides four travel lanes, dedicated bus
19 HLV lanes, turning lanes, upgrades to the signals,
20 bikeways, pedestrian sidewalks, bus shelters, bus
21 turnouts.

22 A big part of the problem we have in the
23 city and people experience is the frustration of waiting
24 behind a bus to pick up riders. This facility as well as

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1 Transitway I, has turnouts that will accommodate buses
2 with designated shelters so it all helps to encourage the
3 use of mass transit along the corridor. The proposed four
4 lane alternative, we analyzed it many different ways.

5 We looked at the impacts doing widening to
6 the south, to the north, kind of splitting the difference.
7 The way the corridor of Myrtle Avenue was really
8 developed, many of the buildings are a little closer to
9 the road than on the north side so from a real estate
10 point of view it's a little less impactful to widen more
11 to the north than to the south. There are less full
12 takings.

13 The estimated project cost of this segment
14 is around \$40 million. I'd like to talk a little bit
15 about the project schedule. This is an EA, a draft EA we
16 have on display here for review and comment. This is the
17 early stages of the project. The project hasn't been
18 final designed. Rights-of-way haven't been finalized. We
19 have -- through our alignments and our work we think we
20 have a solution that identifies all the impacts at this
21 point in time.

22 Of course over time, things will be
23 modified in some degree to be finalized and so I just want
24 to put that out there, that this is an early stage of the

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1 project. As far as my office is concerned we're committed
2 to meeting with each and every property owner in more
3 public meetings, individually, whatever it takes so that
4 we can understand what your concerns are and what our
5 needs are. The project schedule, as it relates to the
6 environmental assessment document that we're talking about
7 tonight, the process requires a 30-day public comment
8 period.

9 And this has been on the street since June
10 20th, so we're talking about wrapping things up on the
11 21st of July. We're going to respond to those comments
12 and basically incorporate those ideas into a final
13 document, a final EA. That final document will be out on
14 the street, meaning it will be published on our web page
15 and circulated and so forth in the libraries, public
16 spaces in my office, for 45 days.

17 So there will be another opportunity to
18 comb through it, look at it, understand it, see what it
19 means to you. In September we're going to probably
20 respond to all those comments, try to finalize the EA and
21 submit it to our -- the Federal Transit Administration to
22 make a determination. And then once that determination is
23 made then we're going to progress into our preliminary
24 design, which leads into final design.

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1 Concurrent with all that work is the right-
2 of-way process. I'm not going to talk a lot about the
3 right-of-way process right now. I'm going to turn that
4 over to somebody else that's going to explain how that all
5 comes together for those of you that might not be familiar
6 with that. And up here, I'm just going to talk about a
7 couple of things on display. It's hard to see in the
8 back, it's probably hard to see even in the front row.

9 But right here we have -- we tried to blow
10 up some of the documents that are pertinent to this in the
11 master plan, the 2002 master plan, which really sort of
12 shows the different networks of bikeways and things that
13 were planned some time ago for this area. This document
14 -- this graphic just shows the overall schedule, which
15 pretty much commences with the approval of the EA this
16 fall and it goes out to the end of 2011.

17 These are significant projects requiring
18 quite a bit of time. Obviously the construction and the
19 right-of-way are the most time consuming aspects of the
20 project. There are some other diagrams here which really
21 show the alignment in a horizontal plan and that's really
22 what we have developed to date. We haven't finalized it
23 much more than that.

24 This map here, this plan here tries to

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1 indicate approximately what kind of right-of-way impact
2 will be to the properties along the corridor. It shows a
3 -- to help you better understand it you have to get close.
4 And for anybody that wants a blowup of this for your
5 specific property, I can definitely make that available.
6 I don't have those copies tonight but it shows pretty much
7 a measurement from the existing curb line to the taking
8 line. So it will help you better understand how far into
9 the property your property -- this project is impacting
10 your property.

11 And I think it's a pretty good piece of
12 information. We didn't have this kind of document the
13 last time we were here in January, but it will definitely
14 help you understand for those of you that might not be
15 surveyors or engineers exactly -- take a tape measurer or
16 whatever, go out paint a line, you'll have an
17 understanding of what this means to you. And if your
18 property is basically at this level proposed as a full
19 taking, the whole property is cross-hatched.

20 That does affect eight people, eight
21 properties along the corridor at the current time.

22 AUDIENCE: That's what is --

23 MODERATOR CASOLO: Excuse me? Oh, they're
24 identified in two ways. The literature that you got

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1 either in the mail -- if you haven't got one, they show up
2 in red. And then here they show up as cross-hatching
3 areas. The larger ones that have cross-hatching are the
4 ones that indicate the full taking.

5 What I'd like to do now -- that's just an
6 overview, an introduction to the project and what's in the
7 document to sort of precipitate some thoughts in your
8 minds and get some comments out of the audience. I want
9 to talk about the whole EA and NEPA process.

10 And I want to turn it over to Jean Olivia
11 of TRC Consultants, who assisted the City in developing
12 the NEPA document. And she's going to basically give us
13 an overview of that. So Jean, if you could comment on
14 that please?

15 MS. JEAN OLIVIA: The EA that was prepared
16 for this project was prepared in accordance with something
17 called the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. And
18 NEPA was established in 1969 and it establishes a basic
19 framework for integrating environmental considerations
20 into governmental decision-making processes.

21 NEPA also established something called the
22 Council on Environmental Quality and they subsequently
23 develop the regulations and guidance that guides the NEPA
24 process. Because there are so many different laws and

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1 regulations that govern the environmental review of
2 federally funded projects, NEPA establishes a process that
3 coordinates compliance with this array of regulations
4 through single analytical and review process.

5 This process evaluates the potential for
6 significant impacts on things like wetlands, floodplains,
7 groundwater, air quality, a whole host of environmental
8 considerations. For federal transportation projects,
9 Section 4F of the Department of Transportation Act
10 protects historic sites, publically-owned parks,
11 recreation areas and wildlife and waterfowl refuges.

12 And this is also considered in the NEPA
13 process as are potential social and economic impacts which
14 are required under other federal regulations. And public
15 involvement is also a very essential part of the NEPA
16 process. Under NEPA there are three different classes of
17 actions that are defined. The first type of action is for
18 projects that definitely will have no impact and these are
19 called categorical exclusions. For projects that it's
20 pretty clear will have some sort of impact, an
21 environmental impact statement is prepared.

22 For the third class of action where it's
23 not clear whether the action will have an impact or not,
24 an environmental assessment is required. And if based on

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1 that environmental assessment it's determined that no
2 significant impact is going to occur then something called
3 a FONSI, a finding of no significant impact, is issued.
4 However, if the environmental assessment does identify a
5 potential impact then an environmental impact statement is
6 required.

7 As Lou mentioned, this project required the
8 development of an environmental assessment. An
9 environmental assessment typically includes a description
10 of the project, a description of the need for the project,
11 a summary of the other alternatives that were considered,
12 an evaluation of the impacts of the project, a summary of
13 public comments and also a description of actions that
14 have been taken to coordinate with other agencies.

15 Again as Lou mentioned, the environmental
16 assessment for this project was issued on June 20th.
17 There's also a detailed reference document that was
18 prepared for this project and also became available on
19 that date. And I just want to mention one of the things
20 that was evaluated by my company under that more detailed
21 evaluation, we looked at the potential for environmental
22 contamination to be present at properties along the
23 corridor.

24 And this was just a preliminary look and it

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1 was based on a search of available environmental
2 databases. And these would include things like listings
3 of underground storage tanks, documentation of leaking
4 underground storage tanks, spill reports, facilities that
5 might generate hazardous waste, those types of things.
6 Based on that preliminary review we identified 11
7 properties along the corridor that are simply listed in
8 those databases.

9 That doesn't mean that there's a problem
10 but it warrants further consideration in the process. Of
11 those 11 properties, there are four where the database
12 results indicate that there have been historic releases.
13 Typically, these are associated with underground storage
14 tanks. When the tanks were pulled either contamination
15 was found in the ground or material was spilled when they
16 removed the tanks.

17 So following this initial review as the
18 project moves along, Stamford will do a more detailed,
19 it's called a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, where
20 they'll look at those database results in more detail, do
21 file searches, do site walkovers and try and determine
22 whether or not there's a reason for concern. And if it's
23 determined there is a potential reason for concern, then
24 additional investigations in the form of actual soil

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1 sampling or groundwater sampling, that type of thing will
2 be conducted.

3 And based on those results, if there's any
4 need for a cleanup during construction of this project of
5 those materials, that would be determined at that time.
6 So that's just a brief summary of the NEPA process and
7 also the evaluation of contaminated properties. I'll turn
8 it back to Lou.

9 MODERATOR CASOLO: Thank you Jean. At this
10 time I just want to do an overview of the rights-of-way
11 process. This is a process that includes both acquisition
12 and relocation and it's a process that's probably, based
13 on my experience with the first phase, I mean it's --
14 everything is important. This is probably the most --
15 it's closest to home because it affects people the most.

16 And for that overview I'd like to introduce
17 Lester Finkle. Lester is with the Federal Highway
18 Administration and Lester brings a tremendous
19 understanding of the rights-of-way processes that applies
20 to federally aided projects. He was with us on Phase I
21 and we're fortunate to have him here this evening.
22 Lester.

23 MR. LESTER FINKLE: Thank you Lou. Good
24 evening.

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1 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

2 MR. FINKLE: Thanks for coming out. You're
3 hearing a lot -- what you're experiencing tonight is part
4 of this governmental process. There are federal funds
5 that are going to be used in this project as there have
6 been in Phase I. There are also municipal dollars -- your
7 local taxpayer dollars go towards improvements as well.
8 To try to give you a sense of what you're doing, you are
9 involved in the environmental process right now.

10 AUDIENCE: Are we really?

11 MR. FINKLE: Yes you are, yes you are. And
12 you'll have a chance to make your comments both orally and
13 in writing and those comments are addressed by the City as
14 they receive them. From the Federal Highway
15 Administration, it of course funds highways. But the
16 Transit Administration funds the railway improvement plus
17 improvement -- railroad improvement. In this case it's a
18 bus way.

19 Congress, in 1970, passed a law called the
20 Uniform Act and it was an attempt to make uniform having
21 minimum standard whereby when a public agency such as the
22 City, such as the Connecticut Department of Transportation
23 -- when an agency decides through public input to make an
24 improvement that there is a minimum level of treatment

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1 that it provides to the people who are impacted by the
2 project.

3 Right now you're going through the
4 environmental phase. You're going to be giving input
5 towards this project. The comments are then taken into
6 account, any changes may or may not be made to the graph
7 design that you see before you tonight and at some point
8 there will be a final design put forward. And at that
9 point the rights that are required, that are needed to
10 build this improvement, the City will begin the process to
11 acquire those rights.

12 This can come across as a very impersonal
13 way of doing things. If you are in the impacted area and
14 it is decided that there are certain rights, whether a
15 partial of your property or the entire part, it may seem
16 very impersonal. But this is the beginning process to
17 bring you into that process. Again, this is a draft.
18 This is to give you an opportunity to comment on that.
19 Once it gets to a point where it's approved, then the
20 rights that are needed for it will be acquired.

21 And how that begins to happen is the City
22 will send out to you a general -- what's called a general
23 notice, a letter to say that you are within the area of
24 the project. They will have a plan, a map showing the

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1 impact to your property and they will have a brochure that
2 helps to begin again to explain how the process works.
3 Once the general notice is sent out the City is at the
4 same time doing a title search. They are looking to see
5 who owns the property.

6 The law that Congress passed required that
7 only to the owner of record can the offer for whatever
8 rights are needed, only to the owner of record can that
9 offer be made. So the City has to go through and have
10 title searches performed to ensure who owns the property.
11 Once that is made record then you will be contacted by an
12 appraiser. The City retains the services of an appraiser
13 to contact you. You will be given an opportunity to walk
14 the property with the appraiser.

15 You will be given an opportunity to talk to
16 the appraiser and bring to the appraiser's attention any
17 issues that are unique to your property. The appraiser
18 will then go into the market and look for comparable -- if
19 it's a residence they'll look for comparable residences.
20 If it's a two bedroom, a three bedroom, if it's a two-
21 family or a three-family residence, if it's a business
22 they will look for similar businesses and those businesses
23 that have sold so they can take a look at it and compare
24 it to your property.

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1 They come up with what's called a fair
2 market value estimate. They take into account such things
3 as Jean mentioned, contamination. If there is any
4 contamination the appraiser will take that into account by
5 looking at the market and looking at the impact of
6 contamination to the sales in the market. They will take
7 into account any unique characteristics of your property
8 and compare it to comparable sales that have occurred.

9 They will make adjustments as necessary if
10 the sales occurred a year ago, six months ago. They will
11 take that into account and look at how the market has
12 risen or fallen. They will take into account if you have
13 one fireplace and there are two fireplaces or a one car
14 garage, two car garage, any unique characteristics. If
15 you have a business they will look at those
16 characteristics. And at the end they come up with a fair
17 market value estimate. They City then takes a look at
18 that and says yes, it was done appropriately and this is
19 the offer that we will make to you.

20 At that point you will be contacted by the
21 City so that the City may make an offer to you. The
22 offer, the dollar value that the appraiser came up with
23 and that the City reviewed and said yes, that is our offer
24 of just compensation to you, the City will contact you and

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1 arrange to provide you with that offer. You will have an
2 offer letter, you will have, again, a map showing the
3 impact and you will have the basis for the City's offer.
4 And at that point it's time to start talking to the City
5 and start saying okay, let's see --

6 AUDIENCE: (Indiscernible).

7 MODERATOR CASOLO: We're going to hold the
8 comments to the end sir. You can make a public comment
9 after --

10 AUDIENCE: (Indiscernible).

11 MODERATOR CASOLO: If I open it up to you
12 sir that's going to set a precedent for everybody.
13 Continue please.

14 MR. FINKLE: Okay thank you, I appreciate
15 it. So when the City begins to talk to you that's your
16 opportunity to -- if you want to have an appraisal done of
17 your property, that is your opportunity. You have an
18 ability to look at what the City has offered you and to
19 have someone, an appraiser, take a look at your property
20 and give a counteroffer.

21 Anything that you want to bring up to the
22 City to take into consideration, again, the appraiser
23 hopefully has done that. When you get into negotiations,
24 that's the time to say okay, let's start talking. Here's

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1 what you're offering me, here's what I think it's worth
2 and you will have an opportunity to negotiate with the
3 City. If it's a full acquisition, if it's something where
4 the City says -- we need your entire property, then
5 there's something in addition to the acquisition side,
6 which I talked about through negotiations, which is called
7 relocation.

8 If you -- if you're a tenant and you have
9 been in occupancy of your leased property there for at
10 least 90 days before the offer is made to the property
11 owner, if you are a homeowner who has been at least 90
12 days but under 180 days, that falls within the 90-day
13 tenant category. There's a certain dollar number that's
14 associated with it, \$5250 in addition to the acquisition.
15 If you are a renter or if you're the 90 to 179-day
16 homeowner, if you're a homeowner who has been there 180
17 days prior to the offer, then it goes up to \$22,500.

18 What relocation is, it's an attempt to take
19 a look at your situation. Say you're a homeowner, you
20 bought the home 15 years ago for \$100,000, 15 years later
21 the market has done its ups and downs and over the last
22 couple of years it's been up, whatever -- say for example
23 in today's market it costs \$130,000 to buy the similar
24 home that you bought 15 years ago for \$100,000 and you

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1 satisfy the occupancy eligibility requirement, that's the
2 major requirement that you need to satisfy. Then you will
3 be given an opportunity, you will be paid -- if you agree
4 with the \$100,000 you will be paid that.

5 Even if you don't agree, there's an
6 opportunity to appeal that but you will be paid at least
7 what you have been offered. So you will be paid the
8 \$100,000 and if you purchase -- the City will look for
9 comparable homes out there to give you an opportunity to
10 pick from at least hopefully two or three homes out there
11 that are comparable to yours. And then if you purchase
12 one of those homes, in addition to the \$100,000 that
13 you've been paid you will be given an opportunity to incur
14 the cost up to the \$130,000 that the City felt -- the
15 \$100,000 and the additional \$30,000 that gives you the
16 ability to purchase a comparable home.

17 So relocation is not -- acquisition gives
18 you what the value of your property is whether it's a
19 partial acquisition or whether it's an entire. Relocation
20 attempts to make you whole from the standpoint of
21 recognizing that the values in the market have gone up and
22 down over the years. A major consideration Congress in
23 1997 passed a law that said that for relocation benefit,
24 since it is a benefit in addition to acquisition, Congress

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1 decided to limit it to people who are lawfully present in
2 the United States.

3 That applies to the relocation piece not
4 the acquisition piece, so please keep that in mind. So
5 for example when we're looking at -- I understand that
6 there's a Volvo dealership that may be impacted by this
7 project. There are lifts in the service bay that are part
8 of the business. An appraiser taking a look at it has two
9 avenues to take with -- we're going to use the lifts for
10 the cars in the service bays. The appraiser can either
11 say that it's part of the real property, it's part of the
12 property that you see, the land, the building and so I'm
13 going to value that in the overall value for the property
14 itself.

15 Or, the appraiser can take a look at it and
16 say it's something that the business owner can take with
17 the business owner when the business owner relocates. So
18 I will leave it out of the valuation of the overall
19 property and we will pay for that under relocation when
20 the business is packed up, moved, moved to another site
21 and then reestablished and put back into operation again.
22 That's one of the differences from residences and from
23 businesses. The businesses don't have the same relocation
24 housing payments or rental supplements available but they

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1 do have something called moving expenses and
2 reestablishment expenses.

3 So the moving expenses or the
4 disassembling, the packaging up, the moving to the other
5 site and then the reestablishment allows for those pieces
6 of machinery, anything that needs to be hooked back up to
7 be done on the new site. So we've talked about titles,
8 searching, valuing the property, making the offer to you,
9 giving you a chance to present a counteroffer. If you are
10 being impacted where the entire property is being acquired
11 then the relocation benefits kick in.

12 And again, if you decide that from the
13 valuation standpoint that you do not agree with it and
14 that through negotiations you can come to an amicable
15 settlement, then you do have the right to appeal that and
16 a trial referee will eventually be able to hear the City's
17 case, hear your case and make a final decision on the
18 valuation.

19 So that's -- Congress recognized that up
20 until 1970, that the states and municipalities, there
21 wasn't a uniform way of treating people and this was their
22 way to try to put at least a minimum standard out there
23 and say we recognize that there are impacts, we're going
24 to do our best to make sure that when there are public

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1 improvements, transportation improvements, that you are
2 treated at least with a minimum standard.

3 And that allows the City to do its best, to
4 be able to take into accounts, your considerations and to
5 be able to do whatever it can for that. Thank you.

6 MODERATOR CASOLO: Thank you Lester. As
7 you can see it's quite a complex process but it's a fair
8 and equitable process and usually in the end agreements
9 are made.

10 Just speaking from experience on the first
11 phase of the project where there was 70 parcels, we were
12 successfully able to acquire and relocate all the
13 residences, tenants, businesses in that project with the
14 exception of one, who decided to go out of business. So I
15 know we can do it and I know we can do it equitably and
16 fairly.

17 Yes, there were some appeals based on value
18 but that's part of the process and we're working through
19 that right now. Well basically in closing, like I said we
20 have a lot of information that's available to look at. It
21 will be available throughout the life of the project.
22 It's in my office, it's online. Just for anybody that
23 uses the computer, go to the City of Stamford website and
24 the Stamford Urban Transitway - Phase I and II

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1 documentations are all there, it's quite comprehensive.

2 And my office is always available to take
3 the call to address any concerns you may have. I'm
4 committed to meeting with each and every owner. I've
5 started that already with the full takings. It's very
6 helpful. I can get to understand the intimate concerns of
7 each person's situation, understand how your business or
8 residence operates and once we get to the right-of-way
9 process under way we hit the road running. And that's
10 very helpful to be efficient.

11 So what I'd like to do now is open up the
12 floor to anyone who wants to make a verbal oral comment
13 and right now I have five on the list. I encourage
14 anybody that wants to make that comment to sign the list
15 or just approach me and we'll have you come to the podium,
16 again, state your name and your comment.

17 And for anyone that's bashful or just
18 doesn't want to make a public oral comment, please fill
19 out the written comment forms. The more comments the
20 better for us. It gets us more familiar with what your
21 concerns are. So at this time I'd like to call up Ms.
22 Fran Sessa please.

23 MS. FRAN SESSA: Good evening. Well, I've
24 been writing away like a nut. First of all, one of the

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1 last sentences that I found very interesting was through
2 public input these are how these projects are created.
3 How many of you asked to have this Transitway through
4 Myrtle Avenue? Put up your hands, I want to see them.
5 Well wait a minute, wait a minute, public input, public
6 input. Congress, they said -- you know it's through
7 public input these things are done. Wasn't that
8 interesting?

9 No significant impact, so loosing a
10 business not a significant impact. Loosing property
11 values, it's not significant. Loosing your livelihood,
12 not significant. Loosing our neighborhood, not
13 significant. We are going to relieve I-95 traffic, that's
14 interesting. How are we doing that? We're going to
15 improve air quality. You know yourself, the more cars the
16 better the air gets.

17 You're going to improve your neighborhood.
18 You're going to have high impact lanes, that's going to be
19 a doozie. Indy-95, is that it -- you know, where they
20 have those race cars? You can -- let's see, you can get
21 statistics to prove anything. Grass strips, hey, that's
22 going to relieve the sense of the roadway. How is that
23 going to relieve it, you know? How is it going to relieve
24 it?

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1 First of all Main Street has two lanes up,
2 two lanes down. So does the Post Road going by all those
3 box stores. Now also, Myrtle Avenue. Now the Advocate --
4 I've got a little article here. I was trying to look at
5 the date but it's just a couple of weeks ago. Many judges
6 are saying not Stamford. Why? You've got a \$93 million
7 courthouse but there's too much traffic.

8 Judges aren't coming down here. The judges
9 that are here are the judges that are over 75 years old
10 who now have gotten to know lawyers, like lawyers. If you
11 have the lawyer that the judge likes, that's good. If
12 you've got the lawyer that the judge ain't too crazy
13 about, kiss your case goodbye.

14 So here they are worried about improving
15 air quality, traffic flow when you've got judges not
16 coming into Stamford, where you've got traffic in other
17 parts of Stamford that need roadways and they're worried
18 about this. What happened to State Street? State Street,
19 you go up Canal Street and you can get onto the thruway
20 there.

21 If you don't want to get on that one, you
22 can go along State Street and you can get onto the next
23 entrance. What's the matter with that? And then it thins
24 out so that when it gets onto Main Street you've got one

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1 traffic lane going onto Main Street going right up the
2 road to I-95. Folks, this is the food for thought.

3 Oh, and by the way, is this in the input
4 stage? Tell me, is it? Are we in the input stage? And
5 don't forget there are regulations that take into account
6 wildlife, wetlands, spotted Owls -- businesses, people,
7 taxpayers, forget it. I rest my case, thank you.

8 MODERATOR CASOLO: The next speaker, excuse
9 me if I mispronounce it, it's hard for me to read it,
10 Deyanyz Ferreras, D-E-Y-A-N-Y-Z, Ferraras.

11 Okay, Fran Sessa -- oh, you already -- you
12 signed up twice, that's why I'm calling your name. Alex
13 Ferrara.

14 AUDIENCE: Don't be gentle Alex.

15 MR. ALEX FERRARA: Well, hello ladies and
16 gentlemen, Alex Ferrara, 136 Myrtle Avenue. I'm the
17 Sunoco Station right on Myrtle Avenue there. The last
18 meeting that was here, they were not taking my station. I
19 find out yesterday that they're taking my station. I had
20 told the people here I was selling it.

21 I have a buyer right over here in the
22 audience who just offered me and has signed contracts for
23 \$1,125,000. Do you think that this town and the people
24 who work here are going to give me that money for my

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1 station? I doubt it very much and I'm telling you people,
2 you better stick together. Don't believe a word they tell
3 you. The information that you give them, they're going to
4 use it against you. That's just what they did to me.

5 Stick together, pool your money, get a
6 lawyer and let's fight this thing. Let's put this road on
7 State Street where it belongs. That runs right along I-
8 95. Let's put it on State Street and let's fight this
9 thing to no end. Stick together. If you don't stick
10 together you got nothing. Power is the people. The town
11 is nothing.

12 We put these people in office. We can
13 throw them out of office just as fast as we put them in.
14 The power is in the people, remember that. If you all
15 want to discuss this thing after this meeting, let's pool
16 together. Let's do something about this and get this road
17 moved over to State Street. It won't impact anybody in
18 this room on State Street, will it? Let's widen State
19 Street, no impact.

20 Who gets impacted? The State, the State
21 owns State Street. Let's widen State Street. And I think
22 that should be done. Remember, the people are the power.

23 AUDIENCE: The people have the power, the
24 people have the power, the people have the power.

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1 MS. SANDRA JOHNSON: Can I ask a question?

2 MODERATOR CASOLO: Would you like to come
3 up to make a comment please?

4 MS. JOHNSON: My question was to you why
5 Myrtle Avenue? Why was Myrtle Avenue chosen?

6 AUDIENCE: We can't hear you.

7 MS. JOHNSON: I wanted to find out why they
8 chose Myrtle Avenue.

9 MODERATOR CASOLO: Do we have any other
10 speakers?

11 AUDIENCE: Do you have an answer to that?

12 MODERATOR CASOLO: Okay, I can answer that.
13 Myrtle Avenue is an extension of Stamford Urban Transitway
14 - Phase I. I went into some general detail about the
15 scope of this project and the objectives of this project
16 and it basically ties back to the master plans that were
17 developed by the City, meaning the community and the
18 people in the government.

19 And those plans call for additional use of
20 public transit through the area. The extension of Phase I
21 is Myrtle Avenue out to East Main Street and that's why
22 Myrtle Avenue.

23 AUDIENCE DISCUSSION

24 MODERATOR CASOLO: Sir, sir, sir, if you

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1 want to go on the record with a comment I encourage you to
2 come to the podium and make a comment so that it can be
3 recorded, it can be evaluated, we could speak to you more
4 about it in the future. Without that formal process we
5 don't have anything to go on. I can't record your
6 comments from your seat. Just sign in here sir, thank
7 you.

8 MALE SPEAKER: Yes ladies and gentlemen. I
9 live on Myrtle Avenue for the past 16 years or so and a
10 couple of weeks ago my sister come to me about a letter
11 about them going to take our place or something like that
12 for them to want to build a super highway or something or
13 biker path.

14 Why not find another place to put the bike
15 path? We don't need no bike path on Myrtle Avenue. If
16 they need to build a highway, why not put another highway
17 up on top of the next one if it seems that traffic is so
18 slow. But there's no need to come on Myrtle Avenue and
19 kick us out. And then I would want to answer that man's
20 question about the relocate and give them what they feel
21 for the land. That not right. That's not right.

22 They are using us. If we not stick
23 together these politicians and these guys will not put you
24 one side. And they're going to build condominium on Main

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1 Street for then they will let Glenbrook come right down
2 and then put condominium there. Why not put the highway
3 up on that street on that corner there? No, they don't
4 want to put it there but that's where the multimillion
5 dollar building gonna be where you got to pay a \$5000 fee
6 apartment.

7 So we gotta do something about it. We
8 cannot sit down and let these guys push you like this.
9 We're being taxed. I'm not going to vote for them
10 anymore, I promise.

11 MODERATOR CASOLO: Okay, is there anyone
12 else that would like to make a public comment? Anyone
13 else?

14 MS. MARY FERRARA: Yes, me.

15 MODERATOR CASOLO: Thank you.

16 MS. FERRARA: Power to the people. Mary
17 Ferrara, are you taking names?

18 MODERATOR CASOLO: Write it right here.
19 Just state your name.

20 MS. FERRARA: My name is Mary Ferrara. My
21 husband bought this piece of property about 45 years ago.
22 We took every penny we got to pay for this piece of
23 property. Now, we had it sold and two weeks before it
24 sold it's taken away from us.

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1 Is this public domain? Are we going to
2 stand for this, they're taking our property and you're all
3 sitting here looking at me? Come on, get up. This is
4 America. Well just don't sit there, do something.

5 AUDIENCE: What are we going to do?

6 MS. FERRARA: What are we going to do? If
7 we sit there we ain't gonna do anything. That a girl,
8 we're going to march. And you want Mr. Malloy in for
9 Governor?

10 AUDIENCE: No, we get rid of him. He do
11 nothing for the City of Stamford. We push him out.

12 MS. FERRARA: And I love Mr. Malloy, but
13 I'm not going to vote him in.

14 MODERATOR CASOLO: Okay, so I don't think
15 we have any more speakers tonight.

16 MR. DON DONAHUE: Yes you do.

17 MODERATOR CASOLO: That's fine. No, this
18 is the way the January meeting went. There weren't very
19 many people and then we got people to come up to the mike.

20 MR. DONAHUE: Good evening, my name is Don
21 Donahue. I'm a former Commissioner of Public Works and
22 member of the Board of Representatives for 10 years. When
23 we first voted for the Dock Street improvements we never
24 envisioned what this was going to become.

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1 I am certainly sure that we can reach a
2 compromise in this situation and I'm certainly sure that
3 we certainly don't need 10 feet of roadway taken away for
4 bike lanes. And we shouldn't be taking away parking
5 spaces off the east side of Myrtle Avenue. And then we
6 have houses there that have pretty much been there since I
7 was a little kid in Stamford and before. We shouldn't be
8 taking that away. Now why it's happening, I don't know.

9 I haven't been involved with it too long
10 but I know that we never envisioned these kind of
11 improvements on Myrtle Avenue. And I know we have a
12 problem also with businesses and property owners on East
13 Main Street. What we have to do is reach some kind of a
14 compromise. And I'll tell you, I'll be the first one to
15 say, I don't know who devised this plan.

16 I don't know who devised this plan but they
17 certainly don't know Stamford. And they certainly don't
18 know what the people of this City need and want. What we
19 have to do is reach some kind of compromise and we cannot
20 take the parking off the street because there are property
21 owners that simply have no property where they can park
22 cars on their own property.

23 And those properties date back -- they're
24 almost historic probably, okay. So what we need to do is

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1 we have to sit down and work out some kind of compromise
2 and these plans cannot be the final plans.

3 AUDIENCE: No. No, it cannot.

4 MR. DONAHUE: These cannot be the final
5 plans and we have to work something out together to
6 minimize the impact on the people who are involved in
7 property ownership. There are residents there and we have
8 to do that. And that's basically the bottom line.

O-3

9 MODERATOR CASOLO: Is there anyone else
10 that would like to speak?

11 MS. SESSA: Yeah, I just wanted to -- can I
12 just say something. I had quoted from the -- can I just
13 say it from here? I had quoted from the Advocate and I
14 didn't give anybody the date and I don't want you to think
15 this was like 10 years old.

16 This is Tuesday, July 27, 2006, regarding
17 why judges don't want to come to Stamford because of the
18 traffic, okay. So I just wanted everybody to know that.
19 And I was a Myrtle Avenue business owner for 25 years,
20 never had a traffic problem on Myrtle Avenue, never. N-E-
21 V-E-R, never.

22 MODERATOR CASOLO: Okay. Like I said
23 earlier in the presentation, regarding property impacts
24 it's always a very sensitive issue. I'm committed and I

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1 have been reaching out to people that are along the
2 corridor to talk to them one-on-one to understand their
3 needs, to explain the impacts, to talk about what the
4 project holds in the future.

5 And I will continue to do that because I
6 think that's a vital part as it was in Phase I, for Phase
7 II. So I'm going to leave you with that and pretty much
8 call a close to the public meeting at this time. Thank
9 you for your participation and I look forward to meeting
10 you again.

11 (Whereupon, the hearing on the City of
12 Stamford, Stamford Urban Transitway - Phase II, was
13 concluded at 8:25 p.m.)

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