



# *Route 7/15* NORWALK



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358



## **Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation**

**Public Hearing**

**August 16, 2023**





# Agenda



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- Hearing Process
- Title VI – Civil Rights
- Overview of Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE)
- Project Overview
- Project Alternatives
- Environmental Review
- EA/EIE Conclusions
- Public Comment





# Tonight's Speakers



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- **Amy Stula**, Moderator, CTDOT
- **John Eberle**, Project Manager, Stantec
- **Gary Sorge**, Vice President, Stantec







# Hearing Process







# Hearing Protocols



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- Comments will be received formally at the end of the presentation
- Those not signed up will be allowed to comment after those that signed up at the beginning of the meeting
- Comments will not be responded to at this meeting
- Comments will be addressed within the EA/EIE





# Public Hearing Purpose



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- Overview of the proposed project
- Overview of the environmental documentation process
- Present EA/EIE findings summary
- Receive comments on the proposed project and EA/EIE findings







# Title VI – Civil Rights





# Title VI – Your Civil Rights



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- No Person shall, on the basis of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation or subject to discrimination in the development of this project.
- Voluntary Post-Meeting Survey:
  - <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/8f49e1ad5d3946d083f71825ee49f67f>
- Civil Rights Information:
  - <https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Business/Office-of-Equity/Title-VI-Page>



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# Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Title VI Notice to the Public



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- ◇ The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the CTDOT.
- ◇ For more information on the CTDOT's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact the CTDOT Title VI Coordinator at (860) 594-2169, TRS 711; Debra.Goss@ct.gov; or visit our administrative office at 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131. For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/dot](http://www.ct.gov/dot)
- ◇ A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration by filing a complaint with the FTA Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590
- ◇ A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Highway Administration by filing a complaint with the FHWA Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, 8th Floor E81-105, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590

如需更多信息或免费语言协助，请致电 (860) 594-2109

Para información adicional, o asistencia lingüística gratuita, por favor llame al (860) 594-2109

Per informazioni aggiuntive o assistenza linguistica gratuita, chiamare il numero (860) 594-2109

Para obter mais informações, ou para auxílio gratuito em outro idioma, ligue para (860) 594-2109

Aby uzyskać dodatkowe informacje lub bezpłatną pomoc tłumacza, proszę dzwonić pod numer (860) 594-2109

Для получения подробной информации или бесплатных услуг перевода звоните по телефону (860) 594-2109

Pou jwenn plis enfòmasyon, oswa asistans ak lang gratis, ranpri rele (860) 594-2109

لمزيد من المعلومات أو للحصول على مساعدة لغوية مجانية، يرجى الاتصال بالرقم (860) 594-2109

Si vous souhaitez en savoir plus ou bénéficier d'une assistance linguistique gratuite, merci de composer le numéro suivant (860) 594-2109

अधिक जानकारी या निःशुल्क भाषा संबंधी सहायता के लिए कृपया (860) 594-2109 पर कॉल करें।

추가 정보가 필요하거나 무료 언어 지원이 필요하시면 (860) 594-2109로 전화하십시오

Để có thêm thông tin hoặc hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí, vui lòng gọi (860) 594-2109



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# Título VI Aviso al Público



- ◇ El Departamento de Transporte de Connecticut (CTDOT) se compromete a asegurar que ninguna persona sea excluida de participar en, o le sean negados los beneficios de, sus servicios de transporte basándose en la raza, color o país de origen de la persona protegida por el Título VI de la Ley de los Derechos Civiles. Si a usted le parece que ha sido objeto de discriminación en lo que corresponde al Título VI, puede presentar una queja al CTDOT.
- ◇ Para más información sobre el programa de derechos civiles del CTDOT y el proceso de presentar una queja, comuníquese con el Coordinadora del Título VI del CTDOT al teléfono (860) 594-2169, TRS 711; Debra.Goss@ct.gov. También puede visitar nuestra oficina administrativa en 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131. Para más información, visite [www.ct.gov/dot](http://www.ct.gov/dot).
- ◇ Un denunciante puede presentar una queja directamente ante la Federal Transit Administration si lo hace ante la FTA Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.
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- ◇ Para recibir más información o ayuda gratuita en otros idiomas, llame al (860) 594-2109.



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## Overview of Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE) and Draft Section 4(f)





# Environmental Process



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- For projects requiring federal action
- Environmental Assessment (EA)

## Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA)

- For state projects
- Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE)





# What is an Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE)?



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- Defined Purpose and Need
- Description of affected area
- Existing and proposed conditions
- Analysis of alternatives
- Preferred alternative
- Assessment of impacts on environmental resources
- Proposed mitigation measures
- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966



# Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
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- Applies to use of Public Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife Refuges, and Historic Properties
- Allowed only if no feasible and prudent alternative exists and the use includes all possible means to minimize impacts (mitigation); or the use will have a de minimis impact on the Section 4(f) resource
- Identifies Section 4(f) Resource Impacts
- Impact minimization and mitigation identified

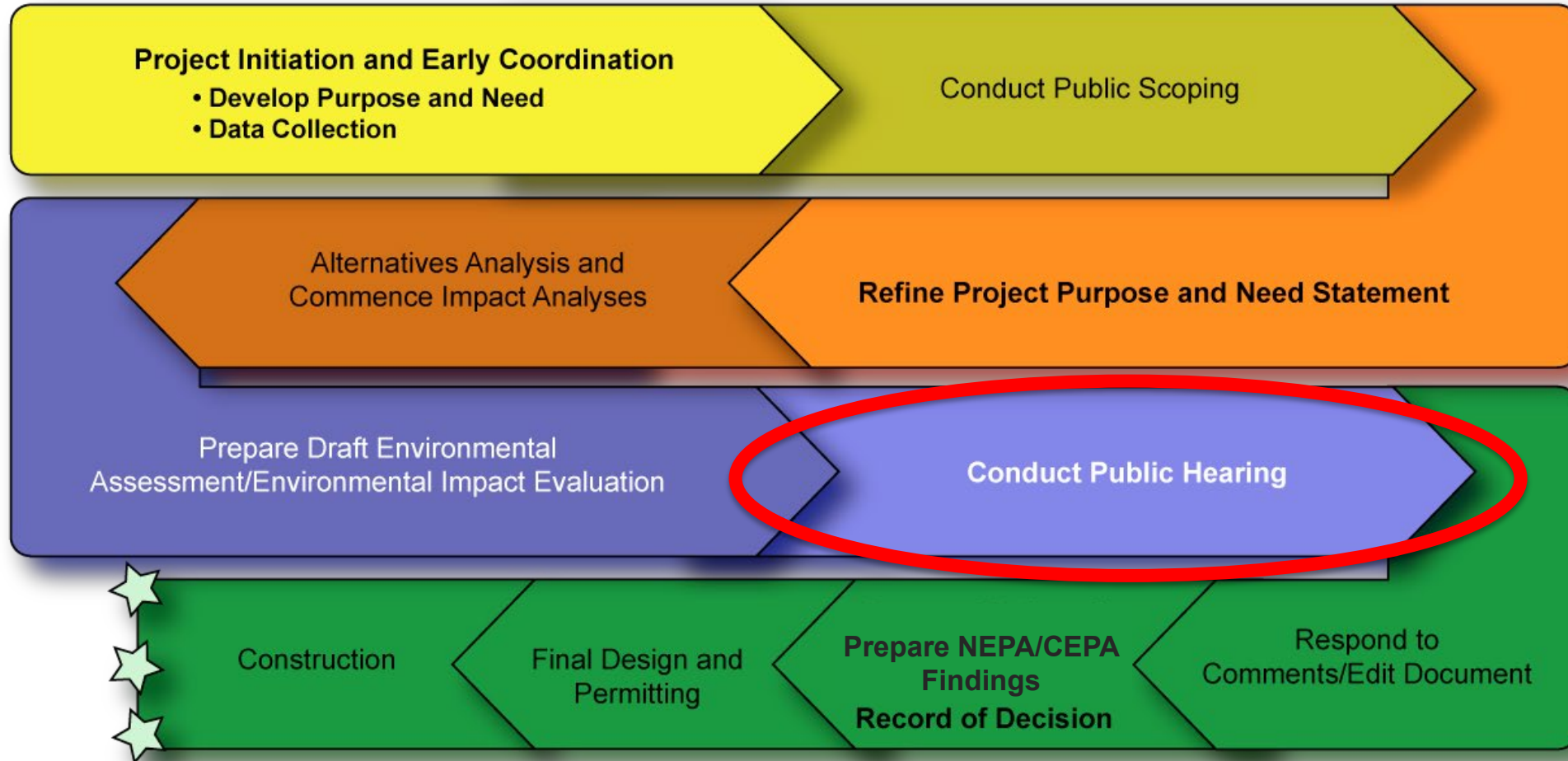




# NEPA / CEPA Process



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358



Scoping Phase

Data Collection and Documentation Process

Review Phase

Finalization Phase





# Project Overview







# Project Purpose



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- Improve roadway system linkage between Route 7 and Route 15 at Interchange 39
- Improve the mobility for vehicles at both the Route 15 interchanges at Route 7 and at Main Avenue (No. 39 & No. 40)
- Improve the mobility for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists along the immediate adjacent local roadway network (Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock Drive)
- Improve safety in the vicinity of these interchanges





# Project Need



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
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## Roadway System Linkages

- Construct missing connections between Route 7 and 15

## Safety

- Address substandard acceleration/deceleration lanes, steep changes in grades, sharp curves, and limited sight distances

## Mobility

- Provide local road network improvements to Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock Drive
- Provide improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities
- Address ADA compliance issues in the project area vicinity







# Missing Connections



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Note: **Green** arrows indicate existing connections along Route 15 at the interchanges, whereas **red** arrows indicate connections not currently provided at the existing Route 15 and Route 7 interchange.



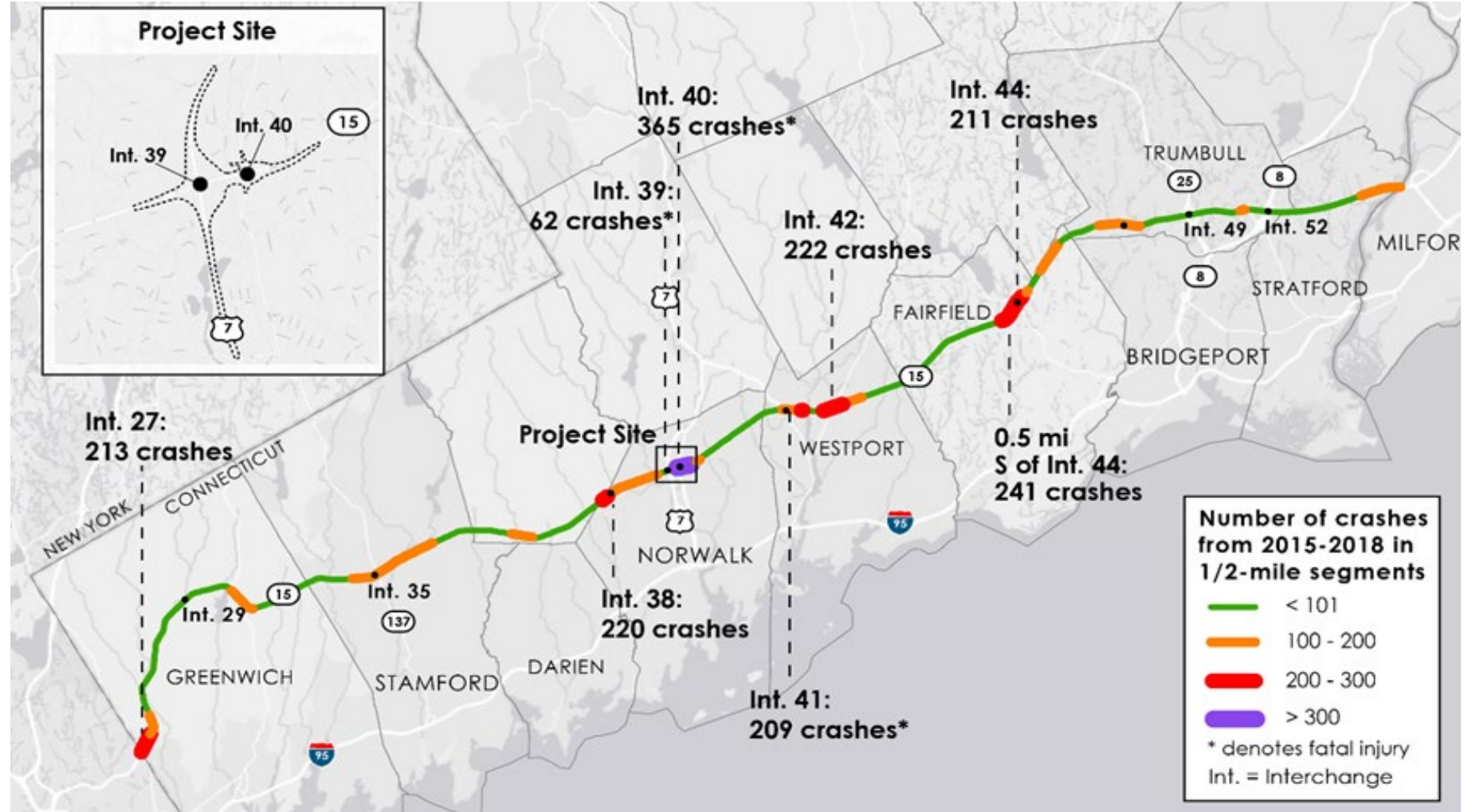


# Crash History



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## Merritt Parkway Crashes (2015-2018)







# Project Alternatives



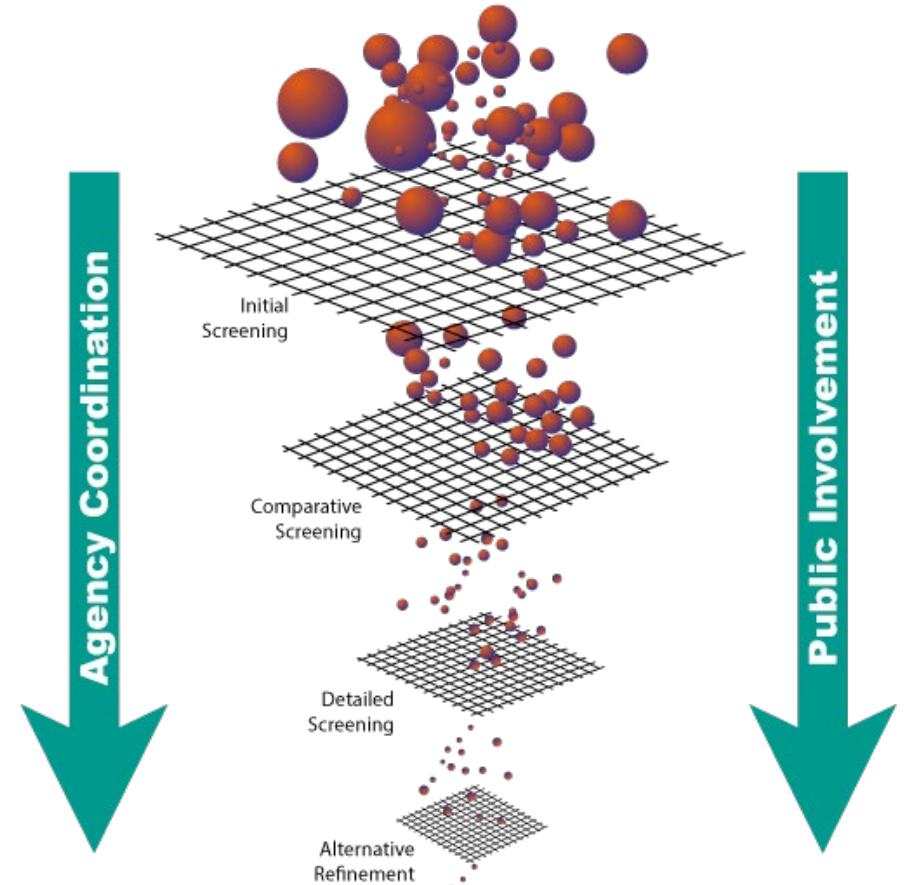


# Alternative Identification Process



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## FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES



## FINAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EVALUATION





# Alternative Analysis within NEPA/CEPA Includes...



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Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
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- **Review of 20+ initial concepts**
- **Evaluation of Alternative 21D and 26**
- **No-Action/No-Build Alternative**
  - The No-Action/No-Build Alternative is used as a benchmark to measure the environmental impacts of build alternatives

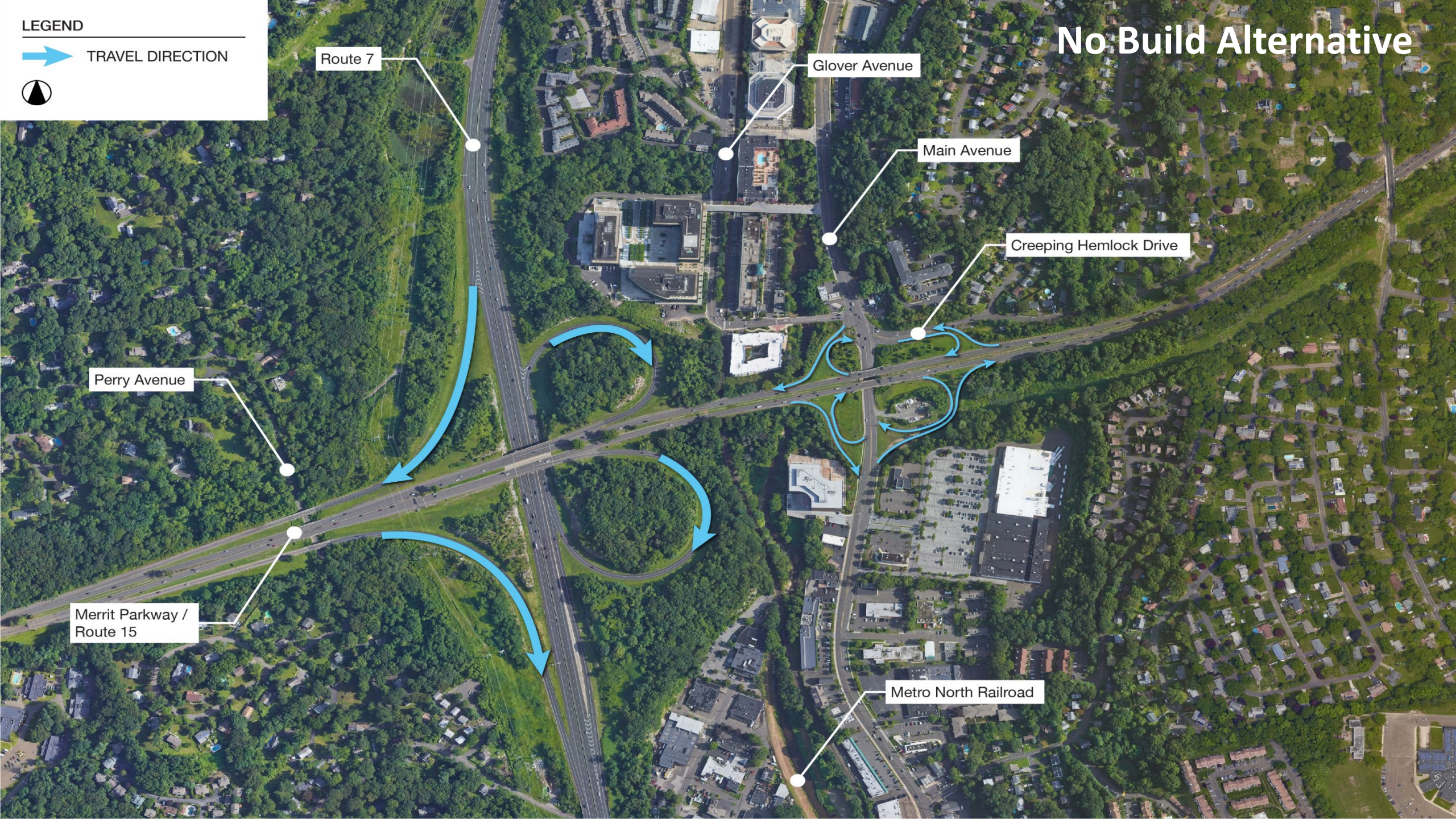


LEGEND

➔ TRAVEL DIRECTION



# No Build Alternative



Route 7

Glover Avenue

Main Avenue

Creeping Hemlock Drive

Perry Avenue


Merrit Parkway /  
Route 15

Metro North Railroad

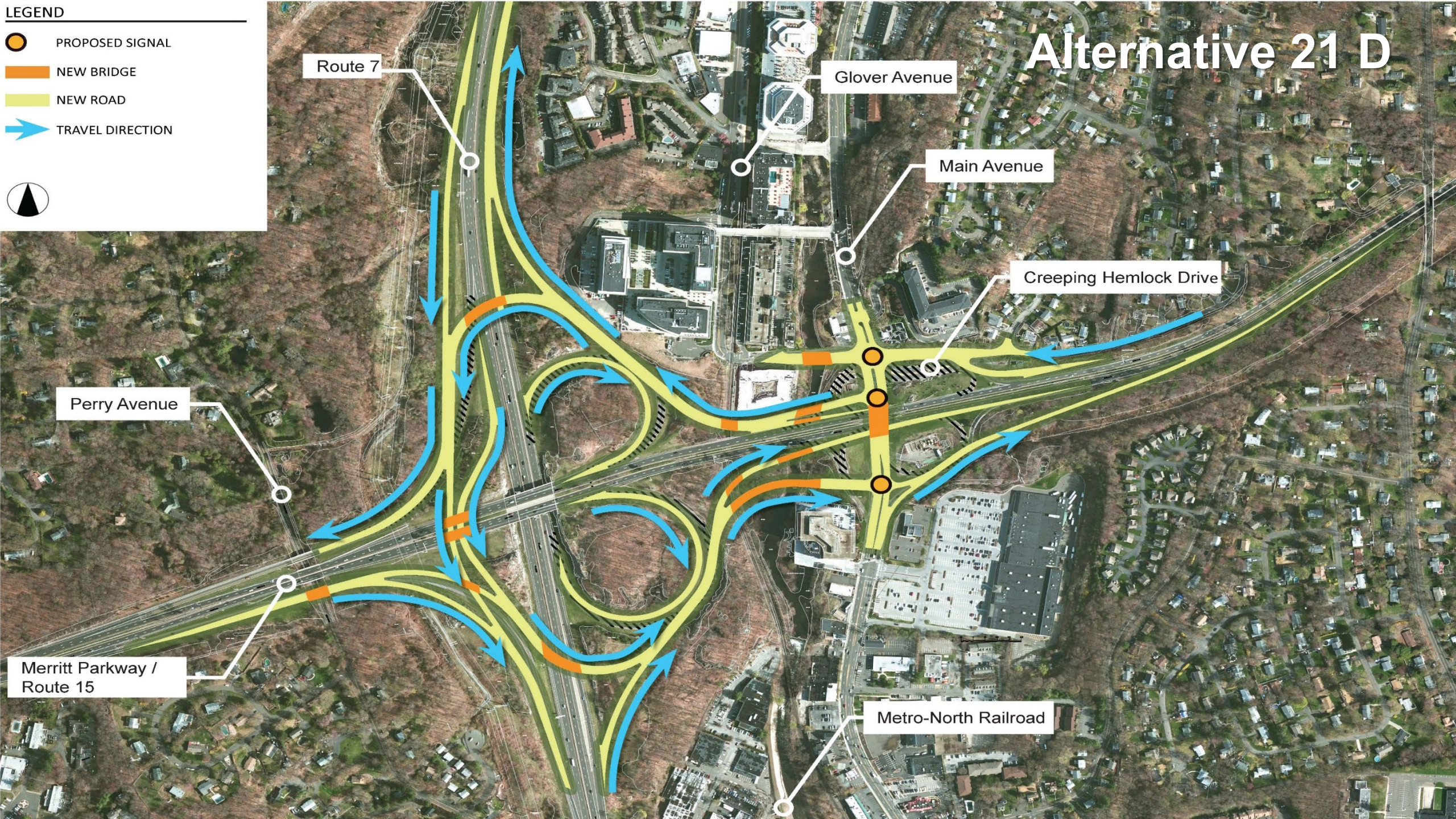


**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED SIGNAL
- NEW BRIDGE
- NEW ROAD
- TRAVEL DIRECTION



# Alternative 21 D






# Alternative 26

**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED SIGNAL
- NEW BRIDGE
- NEW ROAD
- TRAVEL DIRECTION
- RE-CHARACTERIZE ROADWAY APPROACH



Route 7

Glover Avenue

Main Avenue

Creeping Hemlock Drive

Perry Avenue

Re-characterize Roadway Approach (Roadside Plantings, Signage, Pavements)

Merritt Parkway / Route 15

Re-characterize Roadway Approach (Roadside Plantings, Signage, Pavements)

Metro-North Railroad





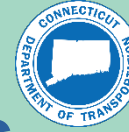
# Environmental Review







# EA/EIE Resource Analysis Sections



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- **Traffic**
- **Bicycles and Pedestrians**
- Air Quality
- **Noise**
- Rare/Threatened/Endangered Species
- Wetlands
- Groundwater
- Surface water
- Floodplains
- **Historic & Archaeological Resources**
- **Visual Impact Assessment**
- **Merritt Parkway Landscape (Scenic Byway)**
- Hazardous Materials
- **Cost Analysis**
- Climate Change & Resiliency
- Environmental Justice
- **Section 4(f) Resources**





# Traffic







# Traffic Analysis Summary



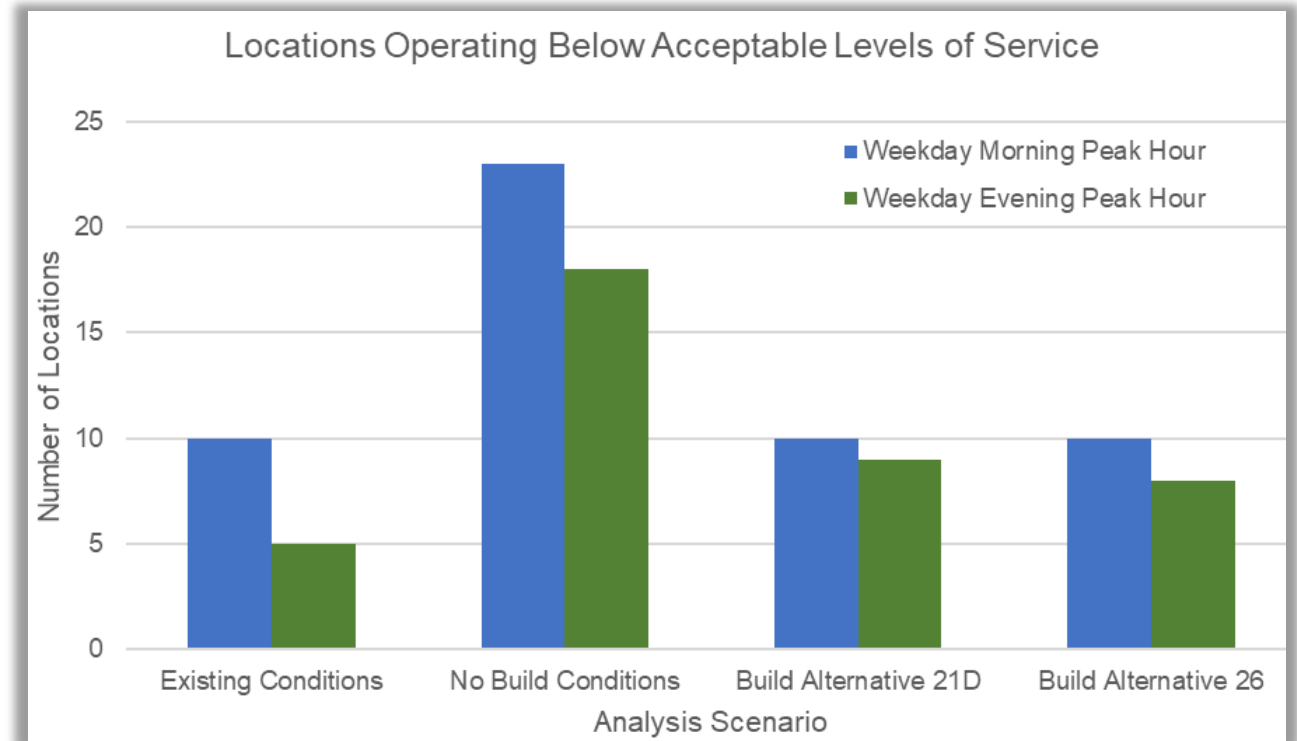
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## No Build Alternative

- Traffic operations worsen
- Safety not addressed
- Connections/Mobility not addressed

## Both Build Alternatives

- Improve traffic operations
- Address safety issues at the Route 15 / Main Avenue Interchange







# Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment







# Bicycle and Pedestrian Assessment



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**Both alternatives have the same benefits to bicycling and pedestrian conditions**

## Improvements to Main Avenue and Glover Avenue

- Signal Improvements for pedestrians at intersections
- Enhanced ADA sidewalks
- Bicycle amenities
  - Bicycle lanes
  - Bicycle treatments at intersections







# Noise Assessment







# Highway Traffic Noise Assessment



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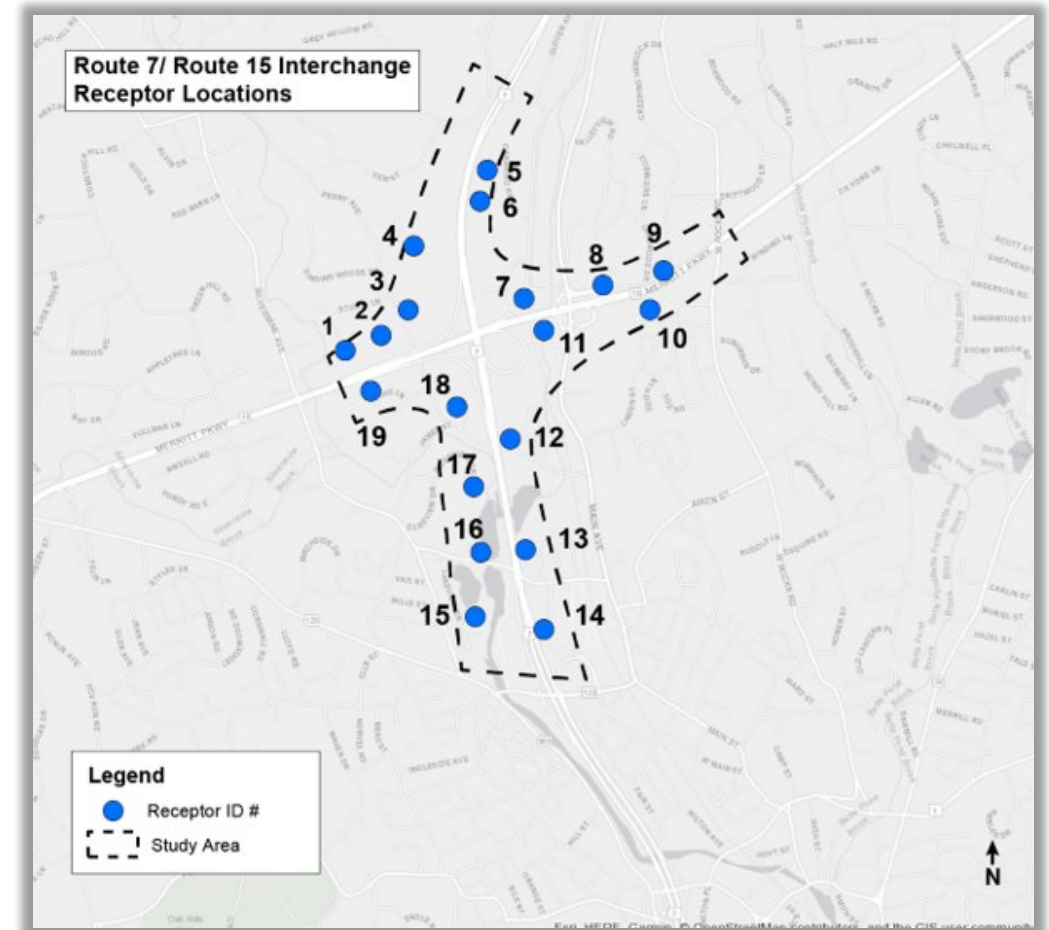
## Evaluated Land Uses

- Residences (single and multi-family)
- Place of worship
- Office building

## Both Build Alternatives will either

- Decrease 1 to 2 dB(A)
- Remain the same
- Increase no more than 1 dB(A)\*

*\*Less than a 3dB(A) increase in noise level is not detectable (Per CTDOT Noise Program Guidelines)*







# Historic and Cultural Assessment





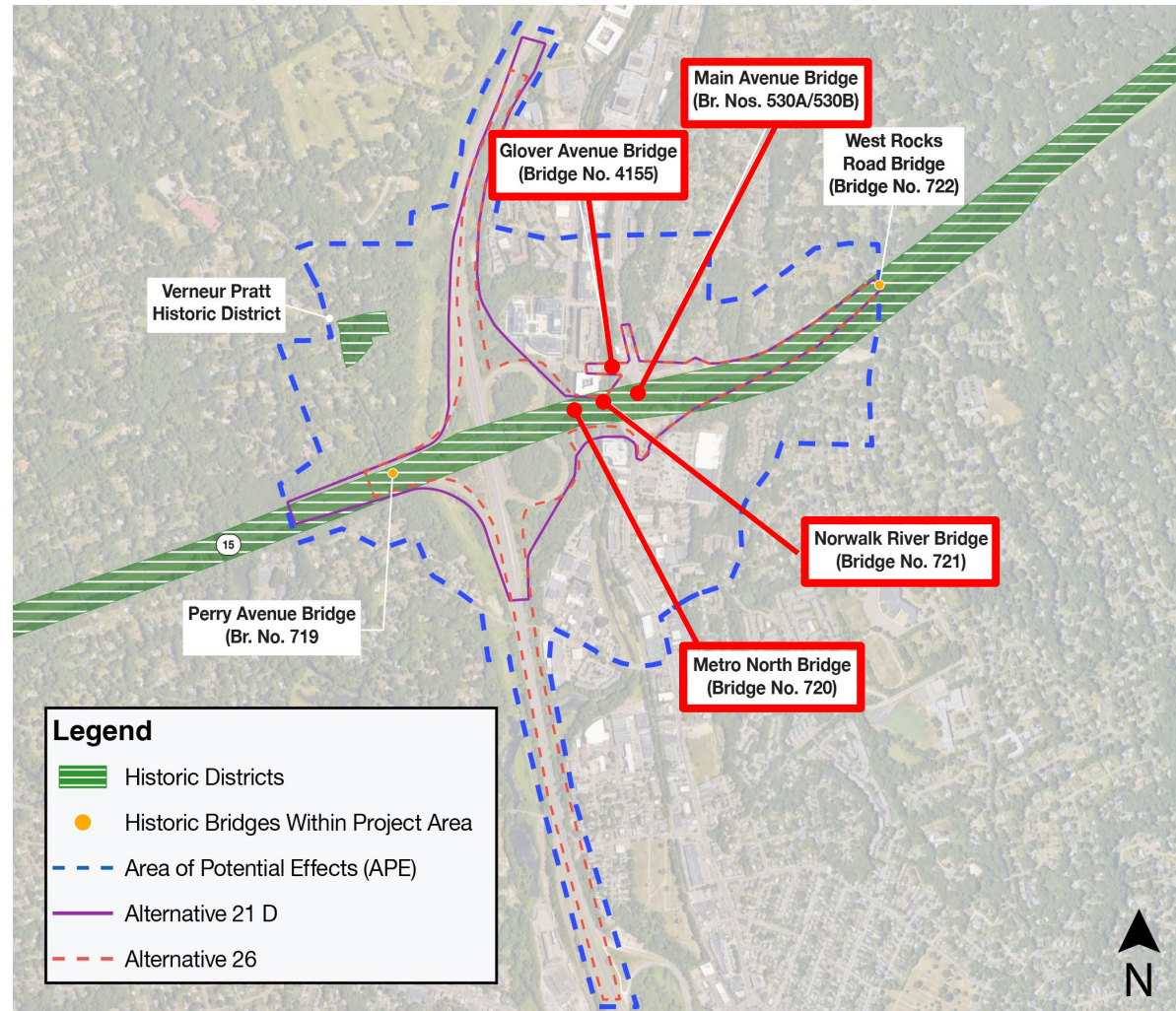


# Area of Potential Effect with Historic Properties



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Affected Properties  
Noted in Red







# Anticipated Effects on Above Ground Cultural and Historic Resources



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Historic Property	Alternative 21D	Alternative 26	No Build
Merritt Parkway Historic District (Designed Landscape)	Adverse Effect	Adverse Effect	No effect
Metro-North Bridge			
Norwalk River Bridge			
Main Avenue Bridge			
Glover Avenue Bridge			





# Anticipated Impacts/Effects to NRHP Eligible Archaeological Sites



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**Alternative 26:** Impacts to two sites

**Alternative 21D:** No impacts to sites

**No Build:** No impacts to sites







# Merritt Parkway Landscape Assessment







# Merritt Parkway Landscape



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## Significant Designed Landscape

- Geometry of the roadway - cuts and fills designed to accentuate viewsheds for drivers
- Trees and plantings maintained or added to blend into and enhance natural surroundings
- Landscape used to “heal” man-made intrusions
- Associated elements - guardrails, signage







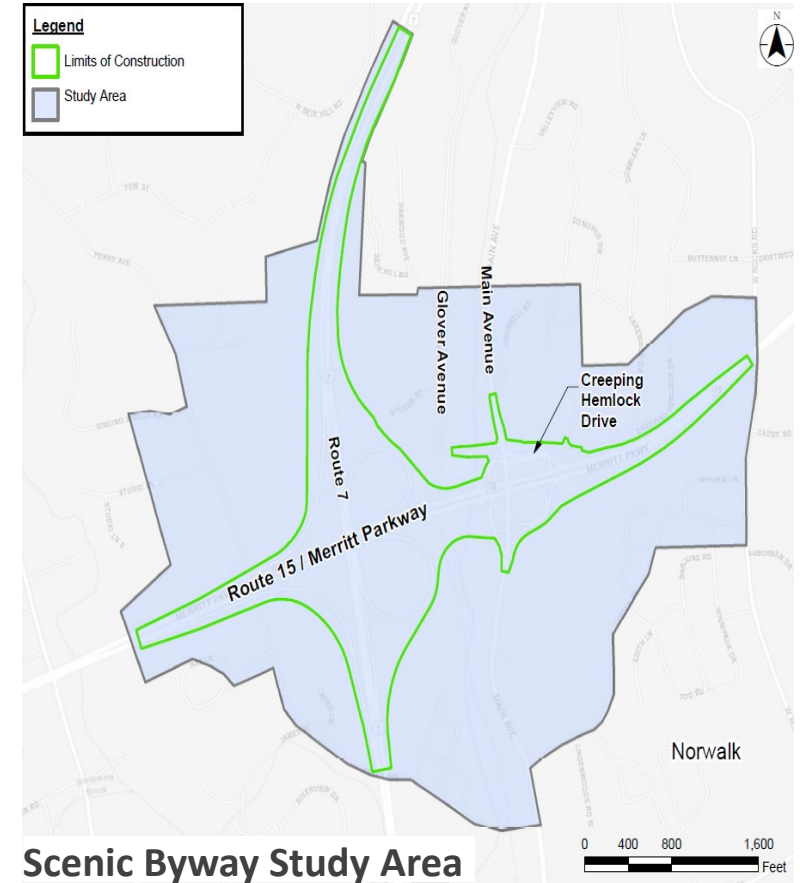
# Landscape Assessment - Drivers & Purpose



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## Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

- Assessed the effects of project undertakings on properties listed, and eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), such as the Merritt Parkway.
- Defining and providing mitigation for indirect effects arising from project activities that could impact the integrity of the setting.







# Mitigation Through Landscape Design



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- Mitigation of impacts to scenic landscape are being addressed in a DRAFT Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between CTDOT, FHWA and CT State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- In consultation with concurring parties
- Consider enhancement to view corridors and landscape surrounds in both potentially disturbed and undisturbed areas of right-of-way





# Character Defining Considerations for the Merritt Parkway | Alternative's Assessment (Abbreviated)



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## Alternative 26 is More Advantageous

- Compact footprint
- Enhanced natural features
- Park-like setting
- Reduced maintenance
- Fewer structures







# Visual Differences Between Alternatives



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## Alternative 21D



## Alternative 26







# Cost Analysis







# Cost Analysis



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
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Alternative	Road Miles	Bridge Length	Bridges	Total Ramps Length	Norwalk River Crossings	Preliminary Capital Construction Cost Estimate (2022)
21D	5.6	1,700	14	17,300	5	\$240-260 million
26	4.5	800	7	8,800	3	\$140-160 million

*Note: Costs are estimated based on preliminary concepts to provide an order of magnitude comparison.*





# EA/EIE Conclusions







# EA/EIE Conclusions



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## Recommend **Alternative 26** be moved forward for design based on:

- Less impacts to natural/cultural resources
- Less visual impacts
- Lower capital and ongoing maintenance costs
- Ease of construction



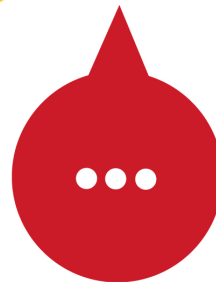




**Public**



**Comment**



**Period**





# How to Comment



EA/EIE and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation  
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CTDOT State Project #102-358

Your input is important to decisions about the Route 7/15 project

## Written Comments may be made by:



Comment Form (available at desk)



Online at [7-15Norwalk.com](https://7-15Norwalk.com)



By email to [comments@7-15Norwalk.com](mailto:comments@7-15Norwalk.com)



By mail to: **Kevin Carifa, Transportation Planning Director**  
**2800 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06131**

**Comment Period Ends:  
August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023**



# How to Comment Tonight



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Public Hearing: August 16, 2023  
CTDOT State Project #102-358

- Testimony will be limited to three (3) minutes
- We will be calling on people in the order they have signed up
- Those not signed up will be given the opportunity to speak after those that signed up at the beginning of the meeting
- We will not be responding to comments at this hearing, all comments will be addressed at the end of the comment period (August 31<sup>st</sup>)





**Thank You!**



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