



Route 7/15 NORWALK



PAC MEETING #9

June 2023



Agenda



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CTDOT State Project #102-358

- Introductions
- Where We Started
- What We Have Found
- EA/EIE Recommendation
- Next Steps
- Discussion





Updates



- **EA/EIE Status**
 - To be released for public review July 18th
 - Public hearing to be scheduled August 16th
 - Comment period closes August 31st
- **Section 106**
 - Developed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with consulting parties
 - Guides treatment and mitigation of impacted cultural resources
- **4(f) Evaluation**
 - 45-day DOI review concurrent with EA/EIE comment period
 - Signed by FHWA prior to issuing FONSI



WHERE WE STARTED

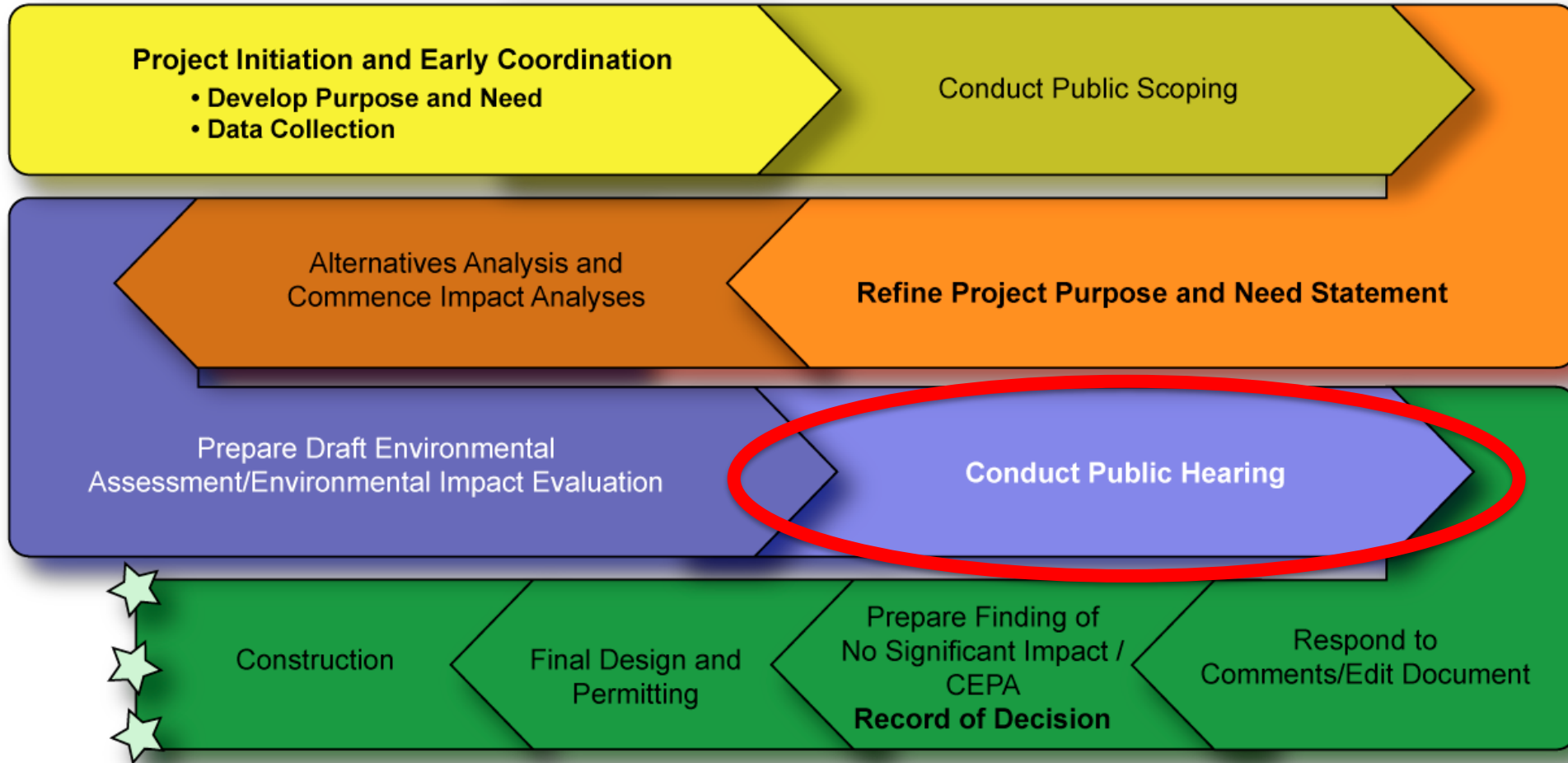




NEPA / CEPA Process



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Scoping Phase

Data Collection and Documentation Process

Review Phase

Finalization Phase



Project Purpose



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The purpose of the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project is to complete and improve connections, safety, and traffic flow between Route 7, Route 15 (Merritt Parkway), and Main Avenue in Norwalk.





Project Need



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- **Roadway System Linkages**
 - Complete all connections between Route 7 and 15
- **Safety**
 - Improve safety for Route 15 traffic and connections to Main Avenue
- **Mobility**
 - Provide local road network improvements to Main Avenue, Glover Avenue, and Creeping Hemlock Drive





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.





Alternative Analysis within NEPA/CEPA Includes ...



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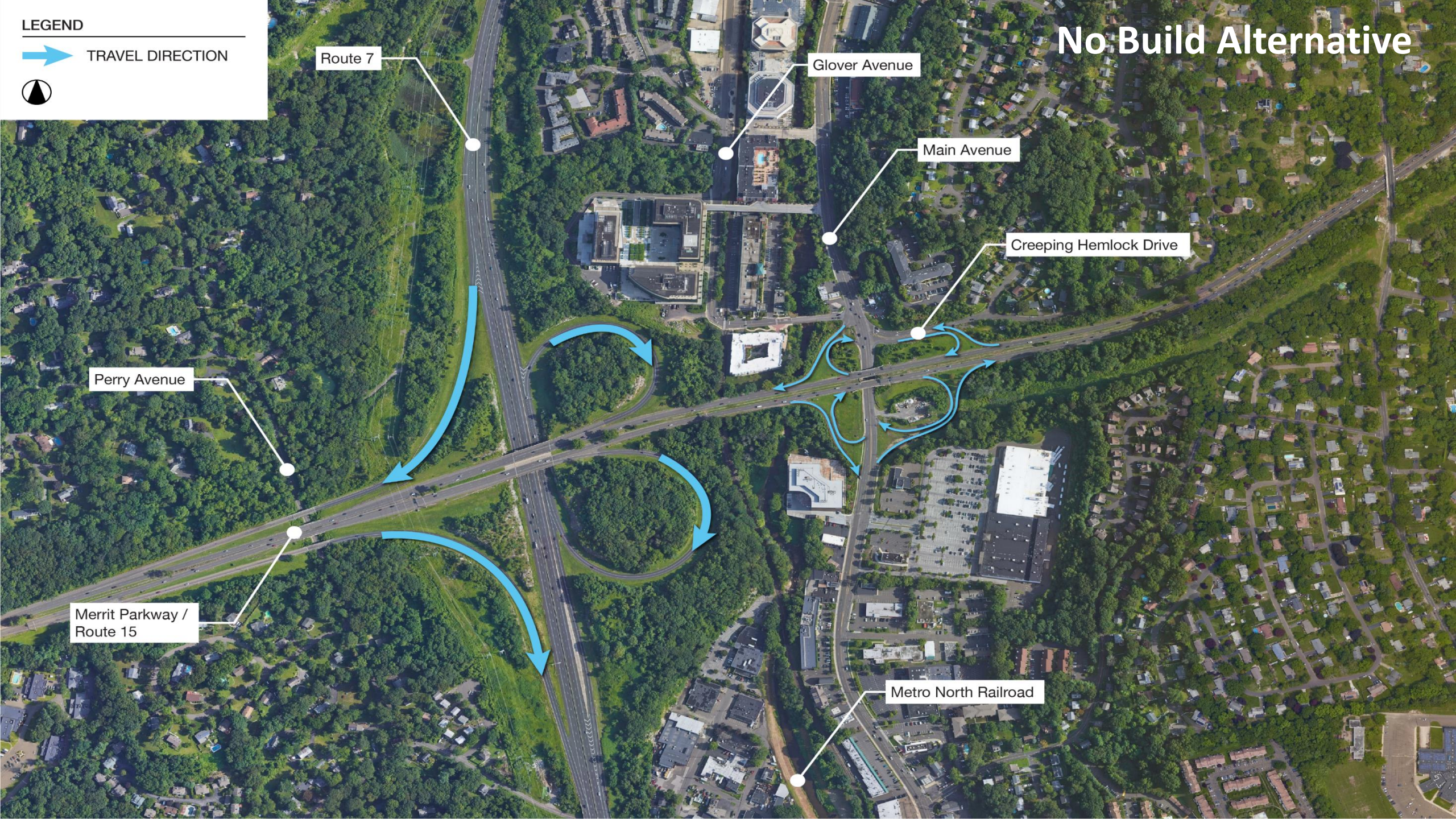
- Review of 20+ initial concepts
- Evaluation of Alternative 21D and 26
- No-Action/No-Build Alternative
 - The No-Action/No-Build Alternative is used as a benchmark to measure the environmental impacts of build alternatives

LEGEND

➔ TRAVEL DIRECTION



No Build Alternative



Route 7

Glover Avenue

Main Avenue

Creeping Hemlock Drive


Perry Avenue

Merrit Parkway /
Route 15

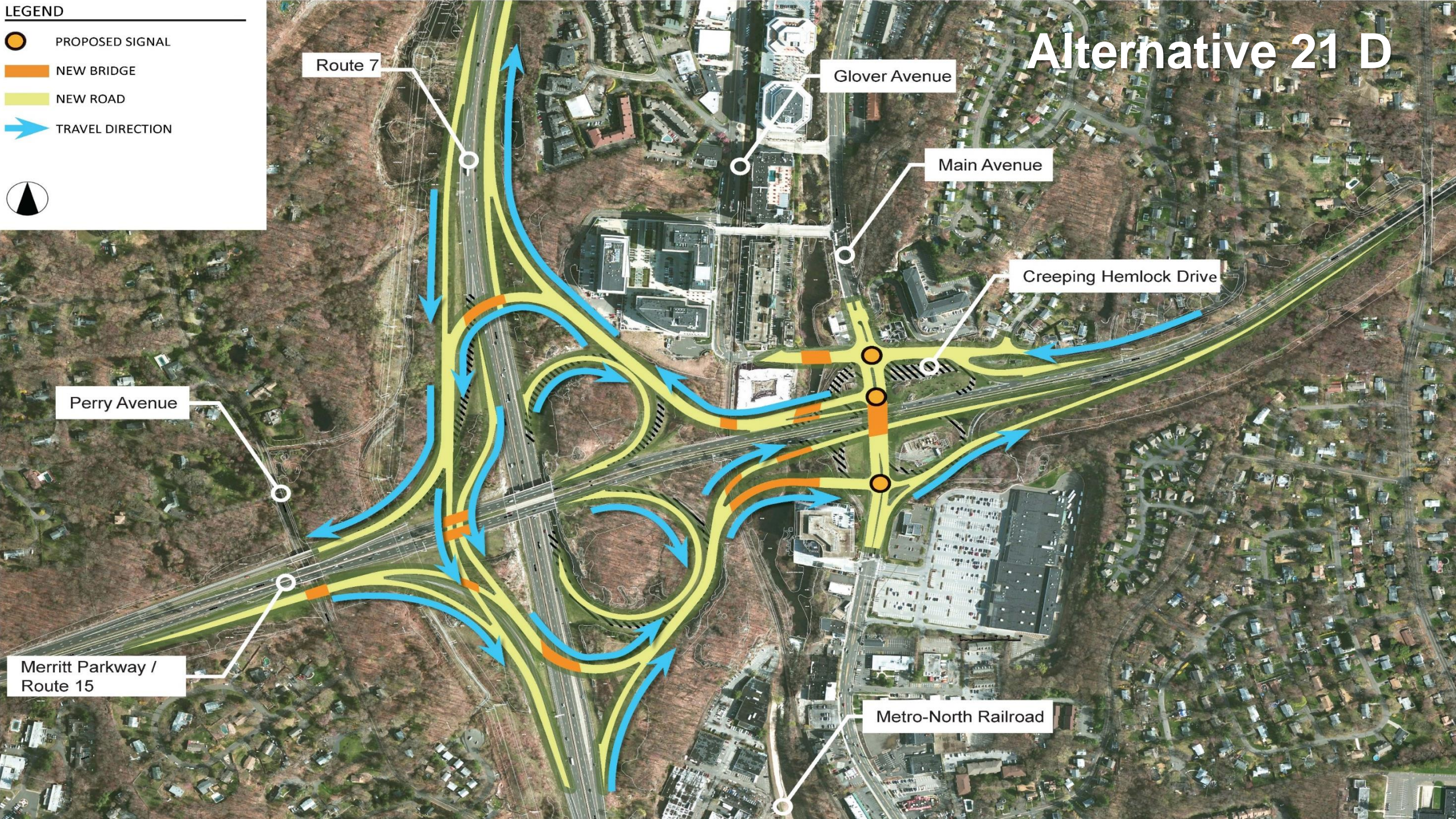
Metro North Railroad

LEGEND






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




Alternative 21 D



LEGEND

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



Alternative 26



Route 7

Glover Avenue

Main Avenue

Creeping Hemlock Drive

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

Perry Avenue

Merritt Parkway / Route 15

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

Metro-North Railroad



WHAT WE HAVE FOUND





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
- **Benefit Cost Analysis**
- Climate Change & Resiliency
- Environmental Justice



Traffic



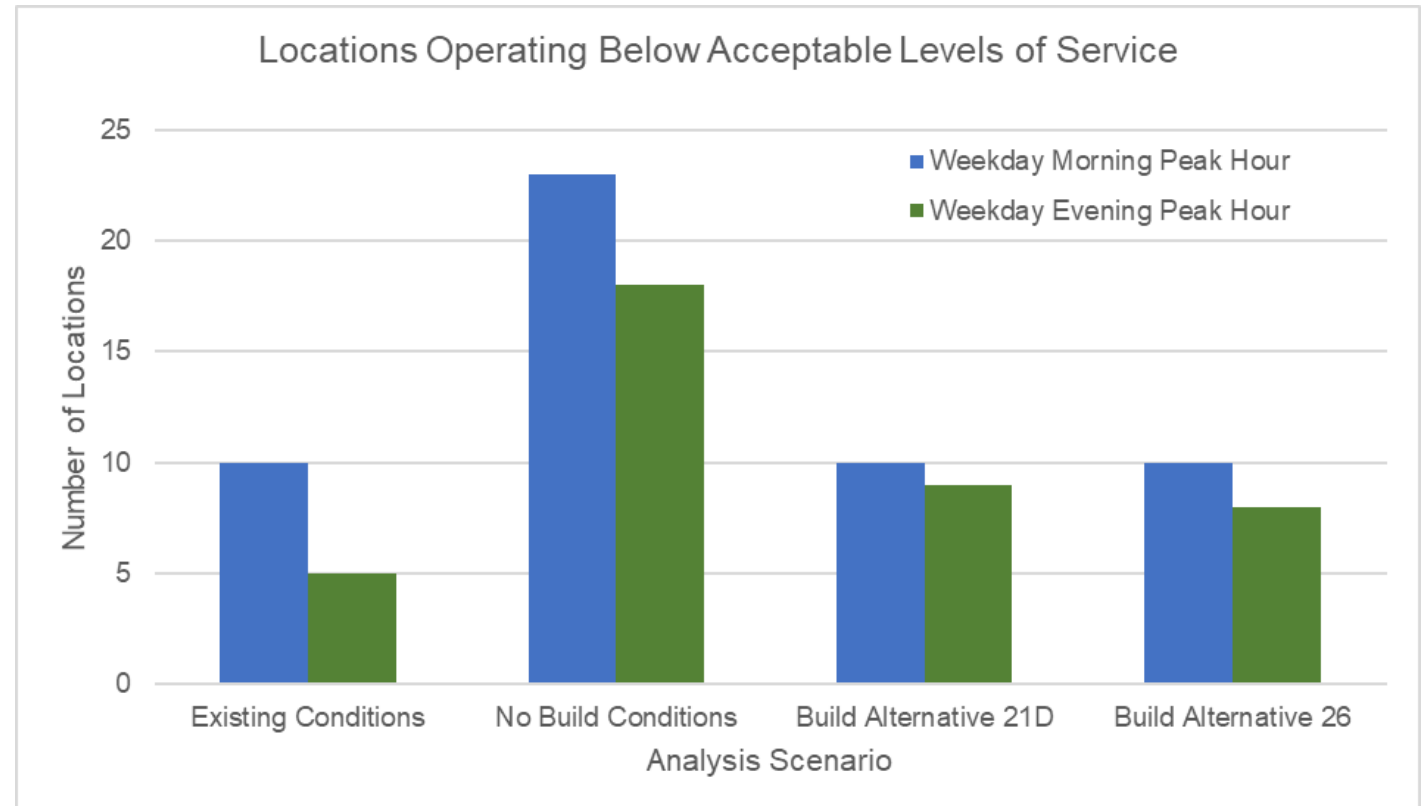


Traffic Analysis Summary



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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 and impacts 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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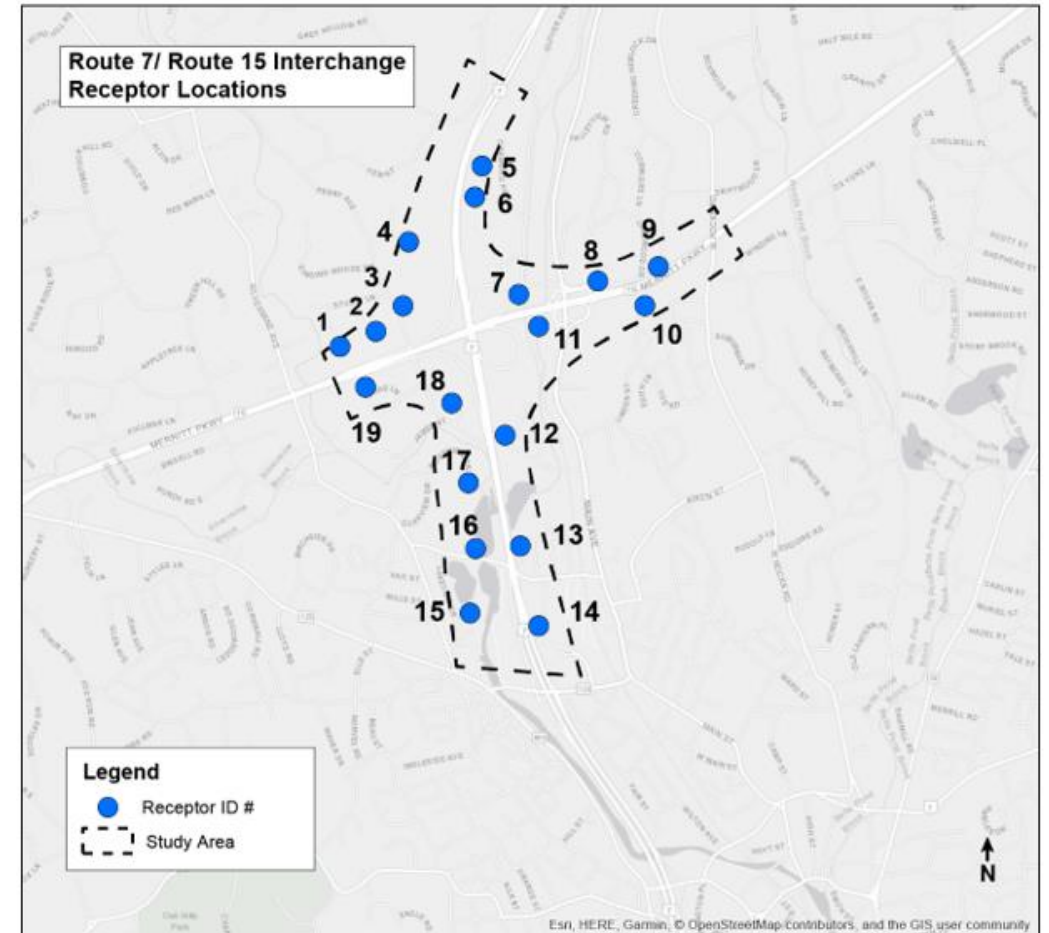
Evaluated Land Uses

- 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)*



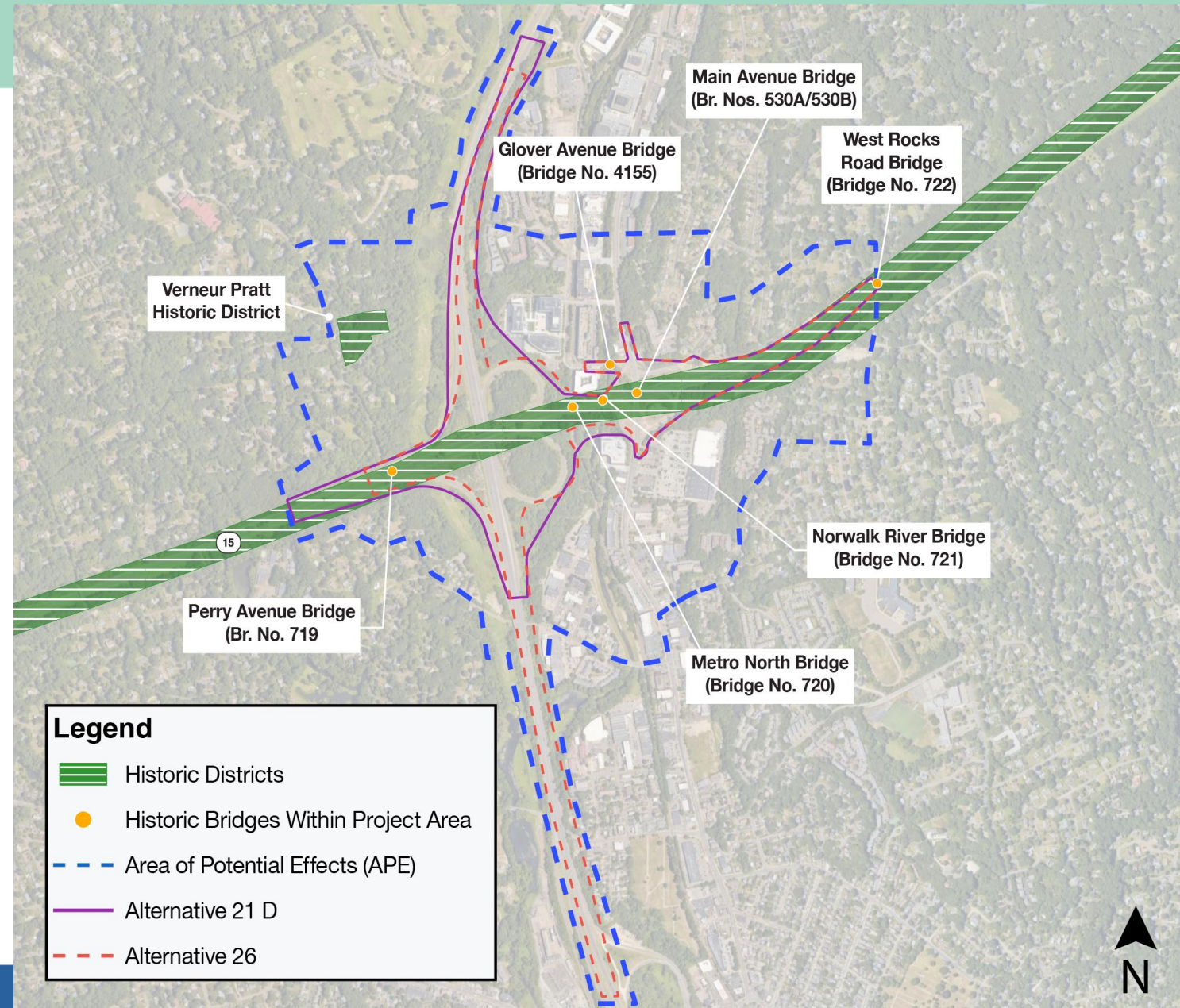


HISTORIC & CULTURAL ASSESSMENT





Area of Potential Effect with Historic Properties





Anticipated Effects on 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 Construction

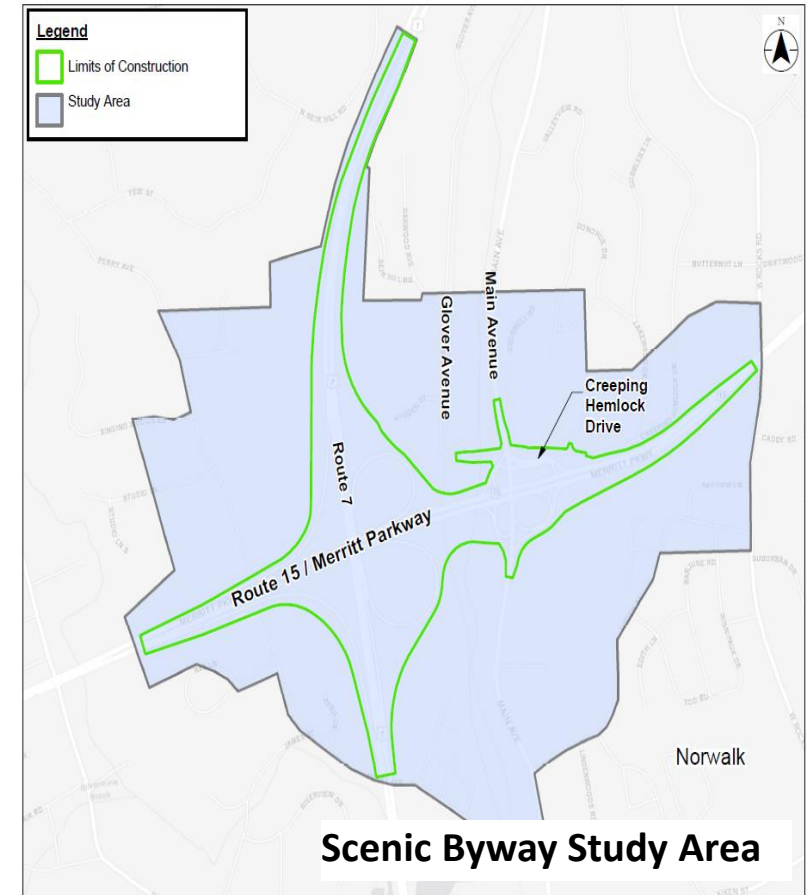


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Drivers & Purpose

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

- Assess the effects of project undertakings on listed properties in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), such as the Merritt Parkway.
- Define and provide mitigation for indirect effects arising from project activities that could impact the integrity of the setting.



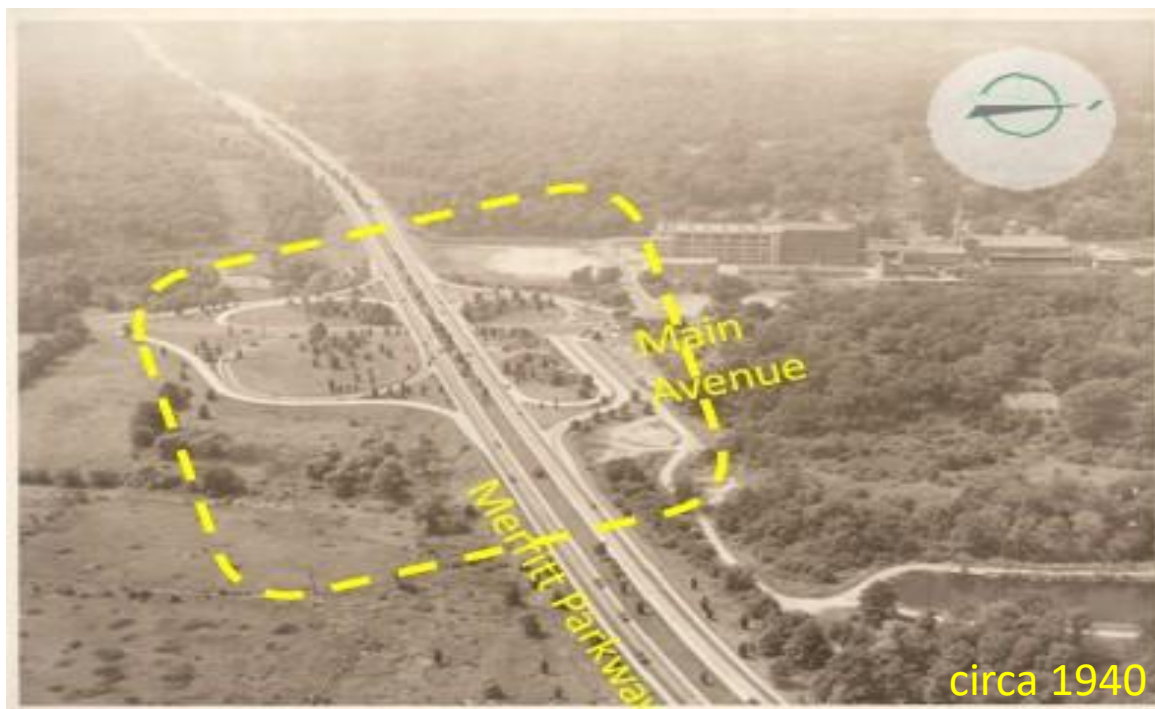


Context



The Merritt Parkway within the Project Site has undergone a myriad of modifications since its original opening.

- Landscape pinnacle, circa 1950 -1960
- Development encroachment
- Loss and degradation of landscape





Landscape Considerations for the Merritt Parkway in the Project Area



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Feature	Attributes
Views within, from, and to Parkway (all user groups)	Varied spatial organization with focal points and park-like experiences
	Views of ramp roadside landscape exhibit park-like characteristics
	Bridge structures are featured, yet integrated into planting design, vegetation, and topography
	Distant landscape views beyond right-of-way (pastoral, architecture, scenic vistas)
Vegetation and planting design	Width of roadside adequate for planting and creating and/or maintaining naturalized landscape character
	Frame views, complement bridge structures, and screen unsightly views
	Non-invasive species and palette complementary of Parkway setting
	Seasonal interest and clusters of native and specimen plant species that provide contrast between ground plane, understory, and canopy
	Preserves existing vegetation that provides aesthetic, buffering and park-like value
Topography	Built road-sides transition into naturalized landscape
	Slight to moderate slopes on road-side conducive to views, planting, and landscape maintenance
Aesthetic Rehabilitation	Rehabilitate remnant, scarred and cluttered right-of-way areas to enhance Parkway character
	Engineered components (e.g. stormwater measures) do not detract from existing Parkway features
Circulation	Roadway footprint does not diminish existing Parkway character
	Fences and barriers do not detract from park-like and naturalized features
Amenities	Design vocabulary is consistent and recognizable as the Parkway
Sustainability	Planting areas provide suitable space and soil volume to allow for adequate plant growth
	Park-like landscape with ease of access for sustained maintenance
Natural features	Landscape reveals natural resources (eg. watercourses, woodlands, rocky ledge)
Safety	Vegetation, planted areas and amenities do not obstruct critical sight lines
	Planting design and vegetated areas conform to CTDOT safety guidelines



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



+ Indicates Advantageous



Design	Alternative 21D	Alternative 26
Compact footprint		+
Enhanced natural features		+
Park-like Setting		+
Reduced Maintenance		+
Fewer Structures		+



Mitigation Through Landscape Design



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- Mitigation of impacts to scenic landscape are being addressed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between CTDOT, FHWA and CT SHPO
- Consider enhancement to view corridors and landscape surrounds in both potentially disturbed and undisturbed areas of right-of-way



Visual Differences Between Alternatives

Alternative 21D



Alternative 26





COST ANALYSIS





Cost Analysis



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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.



EAVEIE CONCLUSIONS





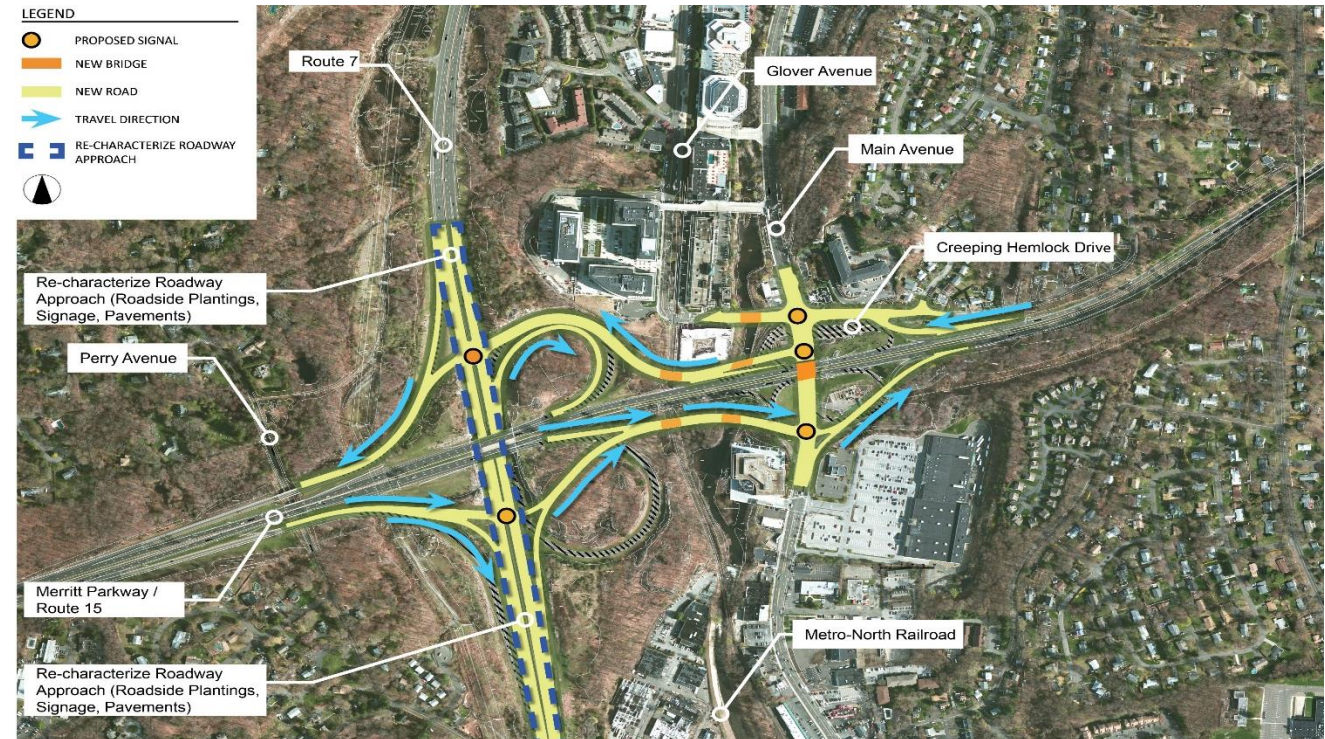
EA/EIE Conclusions



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Recommend Alternative 26 be moved forward for preliminary design based on:

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





NEXT STEPS



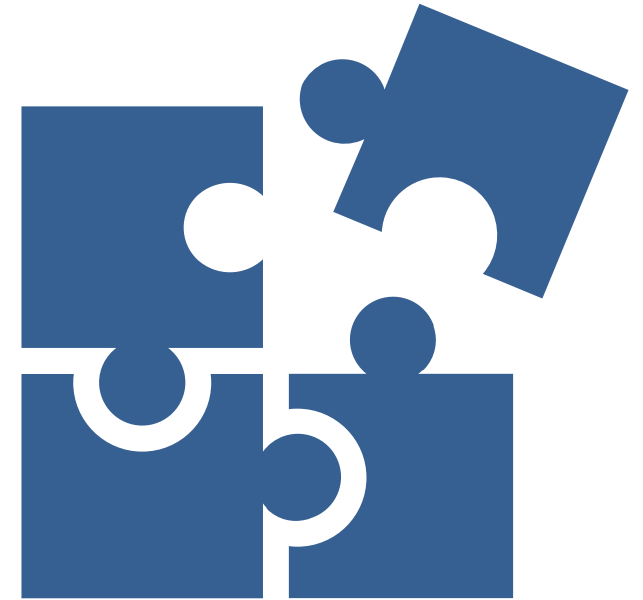


Next Steps



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- EA/EIE to be released for public review July 18th
- Public hearing to be scheduled August 16th
- Comment period closes August 31st
- MOA (mitigation) process continues through design and construction





SCHEDULE





NEPA Schedule



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FHWA Legal
Sufficiency Review

Publish
EA/EIE

Comment Period
Closes



PAC Meeting

Public Hearing

FONSI / ROD



Questions?



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THANK YOU!

