



Route 7/15 Norwalk Project – Project Advisory Committee Meeting #1



Monday, March 27th, Norwalk City Hall



Route 7/15 Norwalk - AGENDA

- Welcome
- Meeting Overview
- Introductions
- PAC Process
- Project Background
- NEPA/CEPA Process
- Update on Work Status
- Alternates
- Public Outreach
- Next Steps
- PAC Questions and Comments





Route 7/15 Norwalk - MEETING OVERVIEW

1. Get acquainted
2. Clarify the PAC's role and process
3. Clarify the project mission
4. Review the basics together





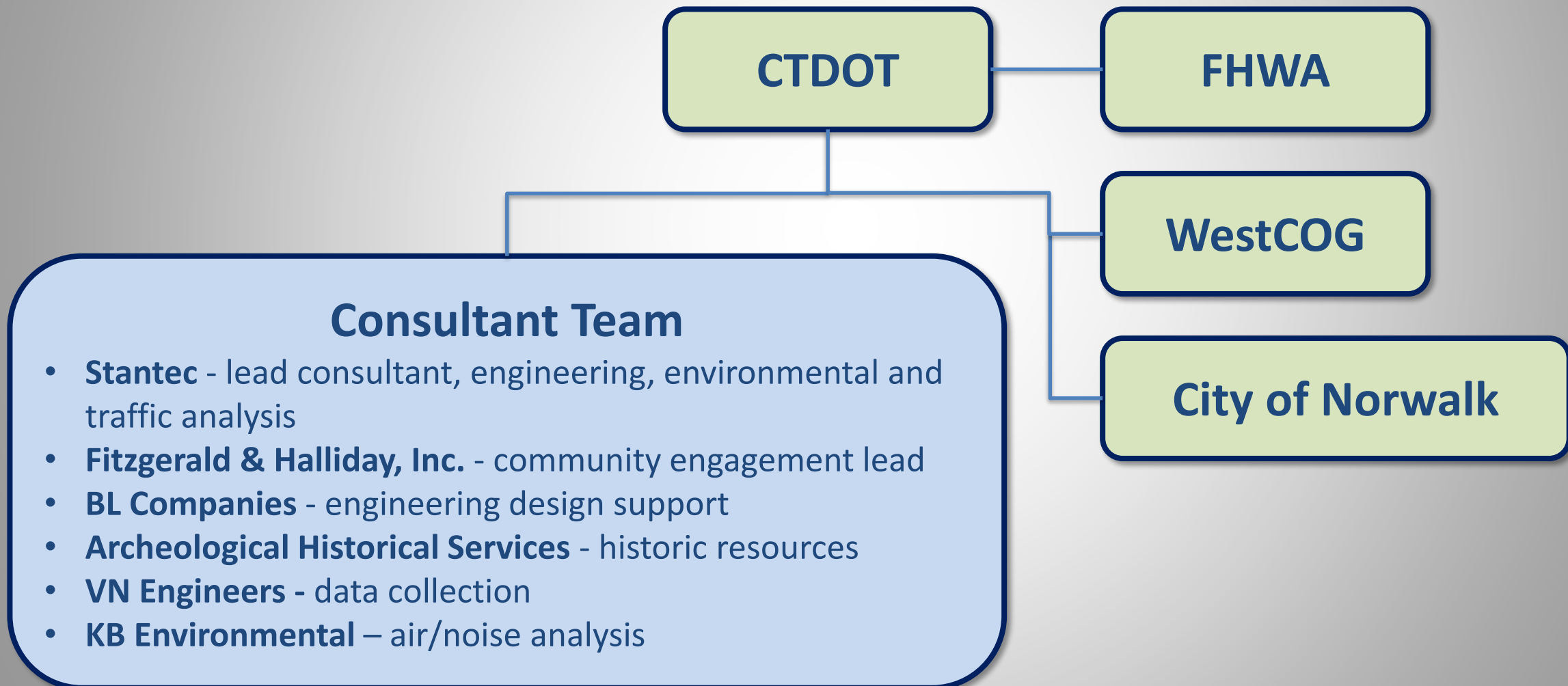
Route 7/15 Norwalk - PAC MISSION STATEMENT

To be instrumental in helping to craft a successful outcome, by:

1. Attend meetings, review material and **educate yourself**
2. **Share viewpoints and ideas** in project dialog
3. Link between the study team and the community - **in both directions**
4. Help reach consensus on project issues and alternates - **honor differences in opinion and perspective**
5. **Support the consensus** of the PAC

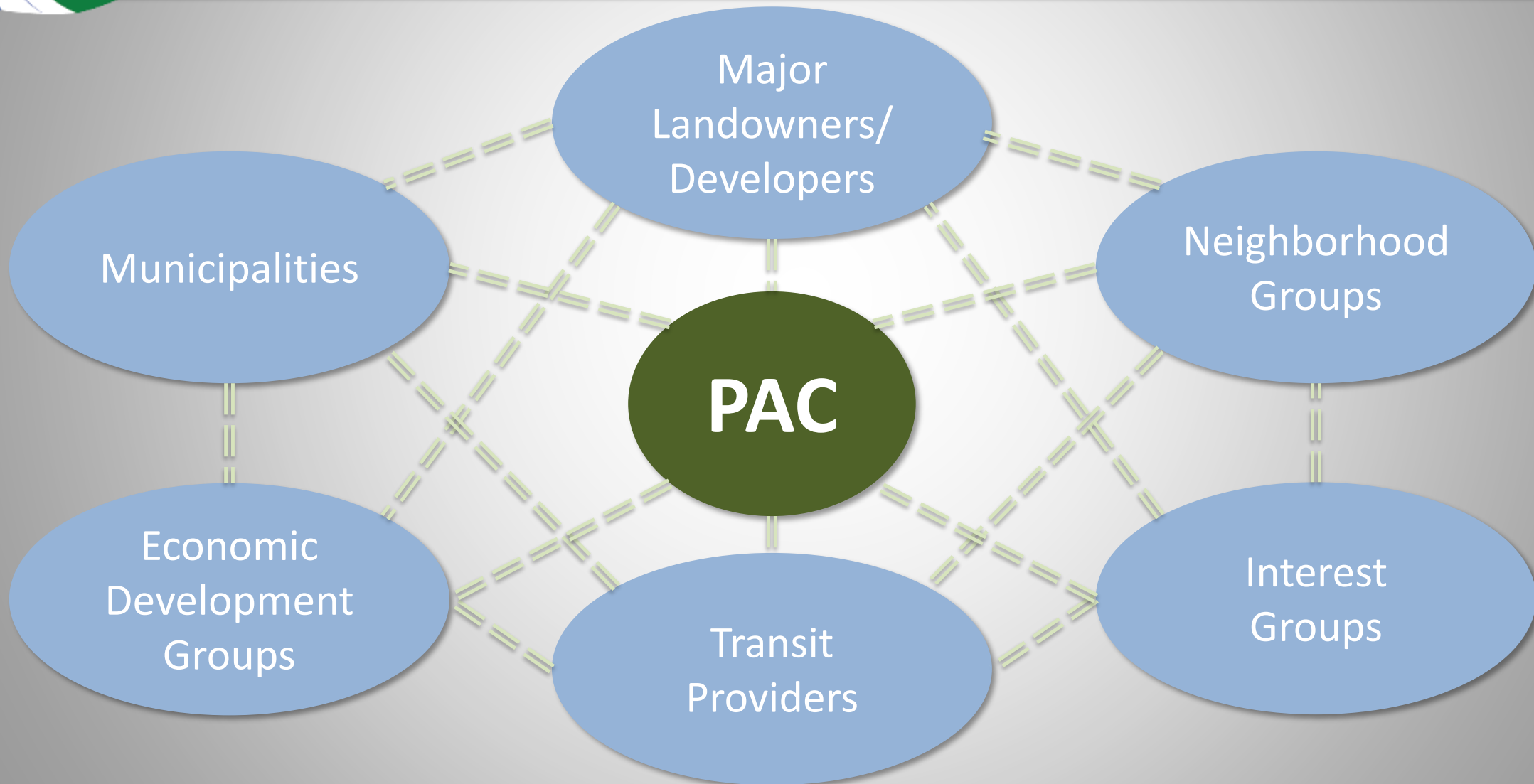


Route 7/15 Norwalk - PROJECT TEAM





Route 7/15 Norwalk - PAC COMPOSITION





Route 7/15 Norwalk - PAC MEMBERSHIP

BikeWalkCT

CCTIA

City of Norwalk

Connecticut Trust for Historic
Preservation

Creeping Hemlock/Cranbury
Neighborhood

CT Trust for Historic Preservation

Greater Norwalk Hispanic
Chamber of Commerce

Harbor Point / Building and Land
Technology

Marcus Partners/Merritt 7

Merritt Parkway Conservancy

Merritt Parkway Trail Alliance

Norwalk Association of
Homeowners (NASH)

Norwalk Bike Task Force

Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

Norwalk Land Trust

Norwalk Preservation Trust

Norwalk River

Watershed/HarborWatch

Norwalk Transit District

Norwalk Valley River Trail

Sierra Club

Silvermine Community

Silvermine Community
Association Board

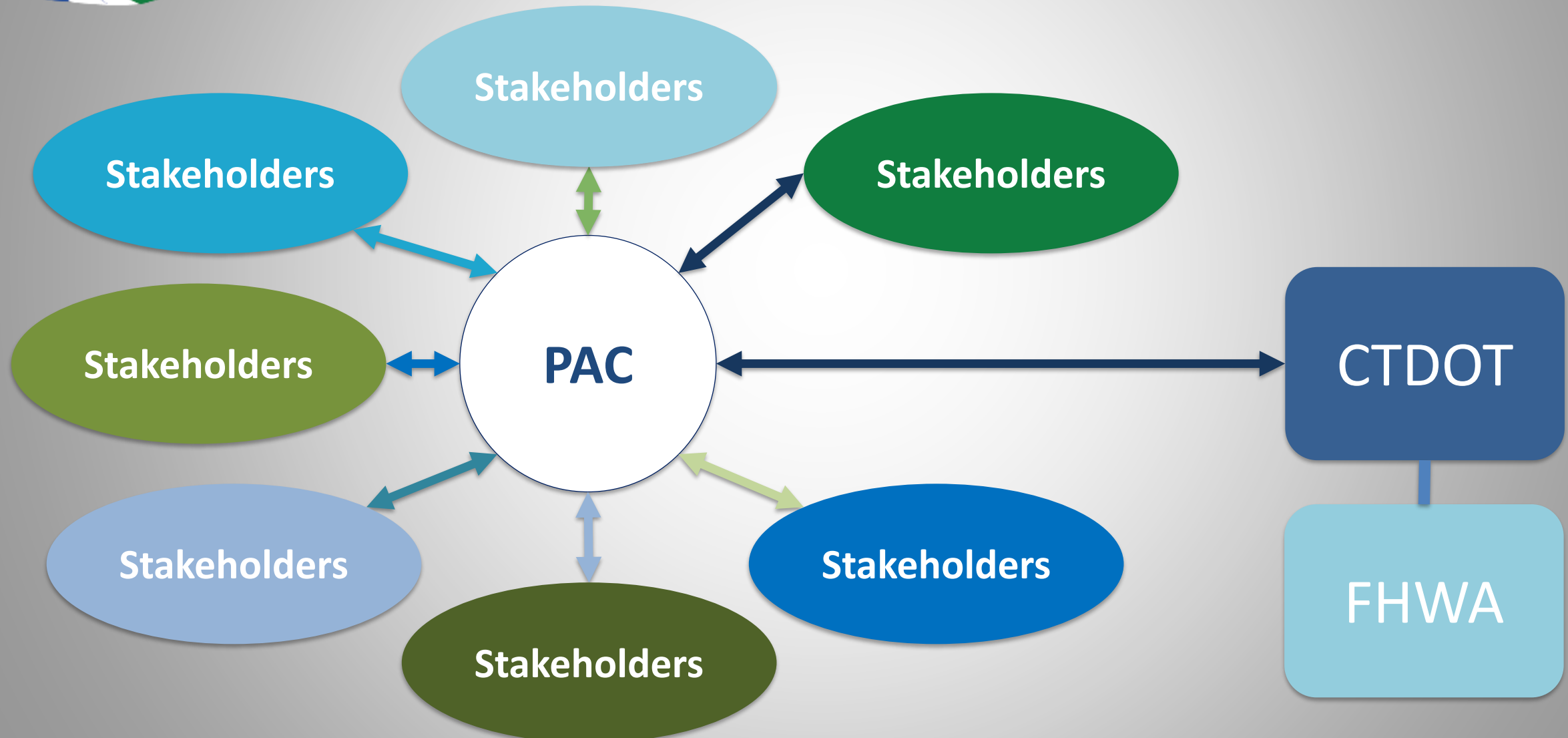
Sound Cyclists

Town of Wilton

Western Connecticut Council of
Governments (WestCOG)



Route 7/15 Norwalk - PAC PROCESS



PROJECT BACKGROUND





Route 7/15 Norwalk

Project Goals

- Provide connectivity
- Increase mobility
- Increase safety
- Improve mobility and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists

SET GOALS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Route 7/15 Norwalk

Guiding Principle for Solutions

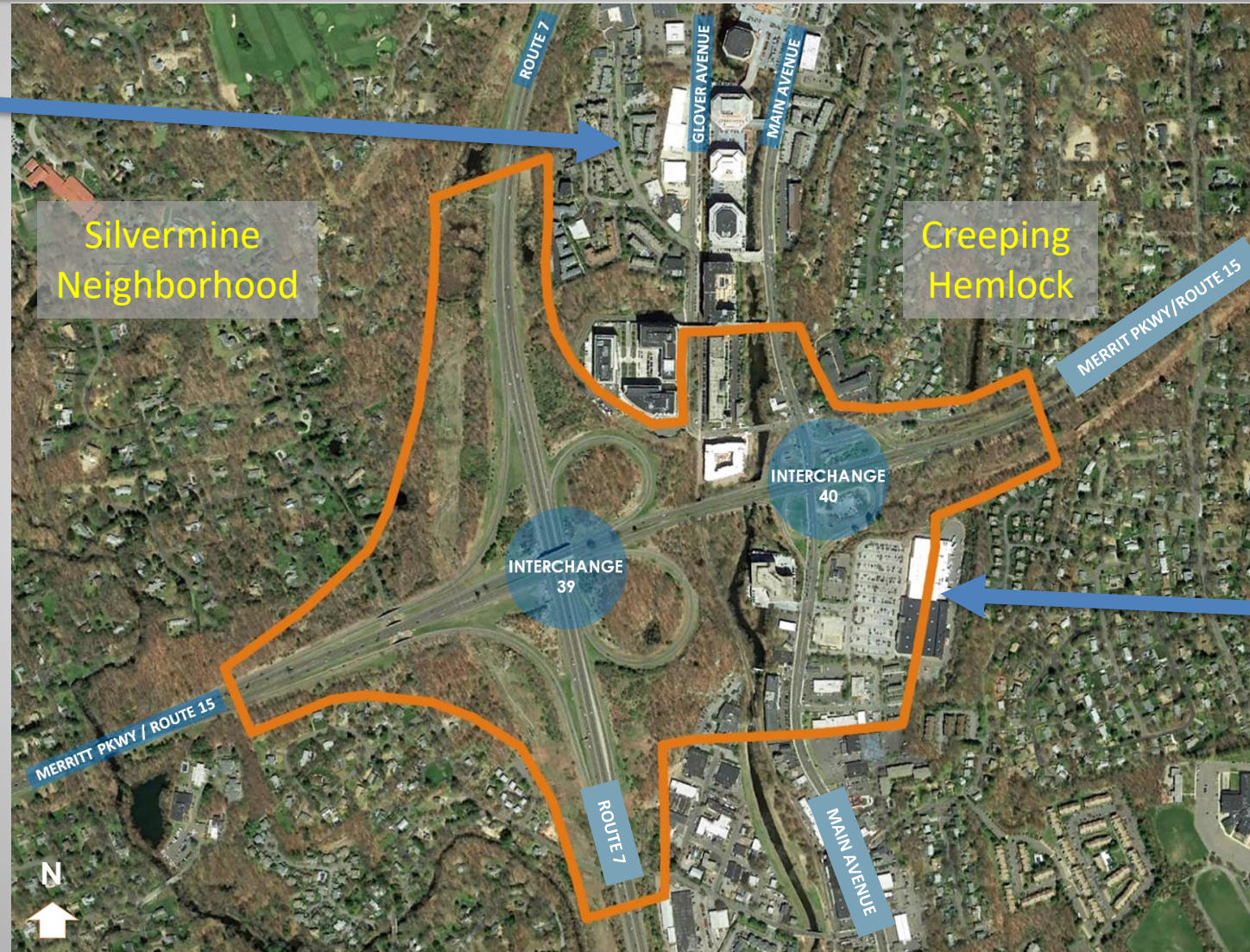
Avoid, minimize, mitigate environmental and historic impacts





Route 7/15 Norwalk - PROJECT AREA

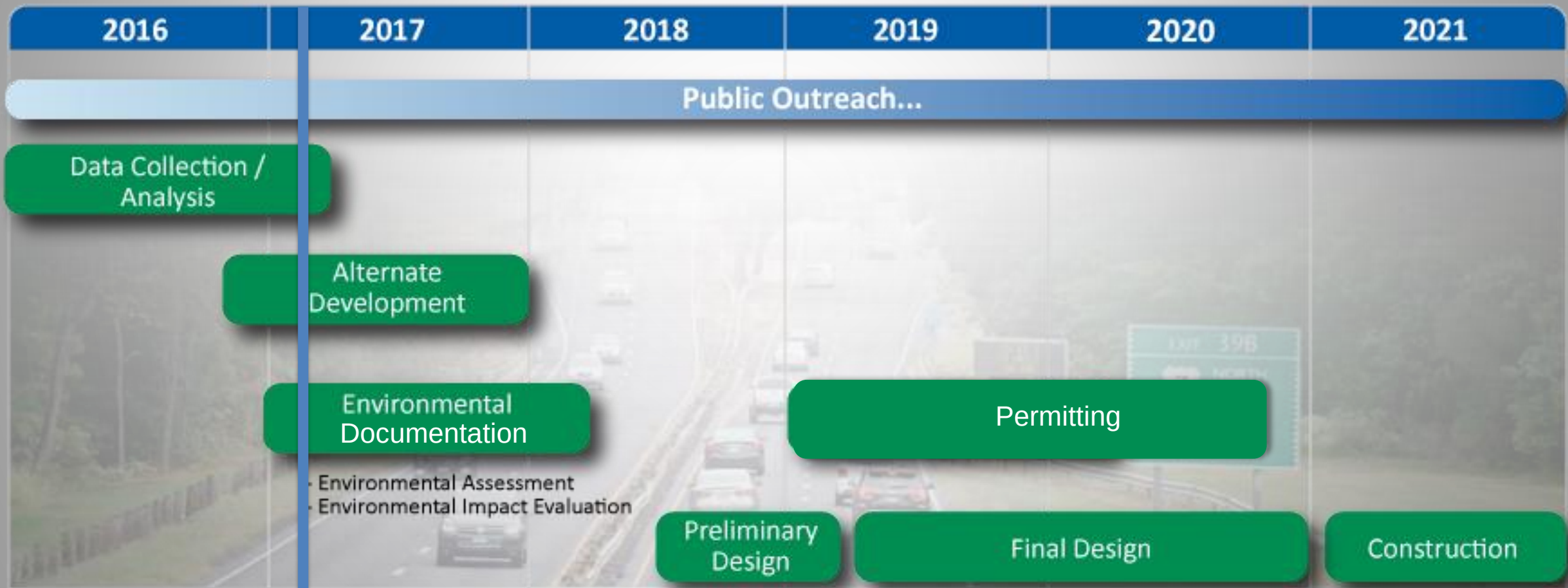
Merritt 7
Train Station





Route 7/15 Norwalk - PROJECT WORKFLOW

(PRELIMINARY)



NEPA/CEPA PROCESS





Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA FOCUS





Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA PURPOSE

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA - 1969)

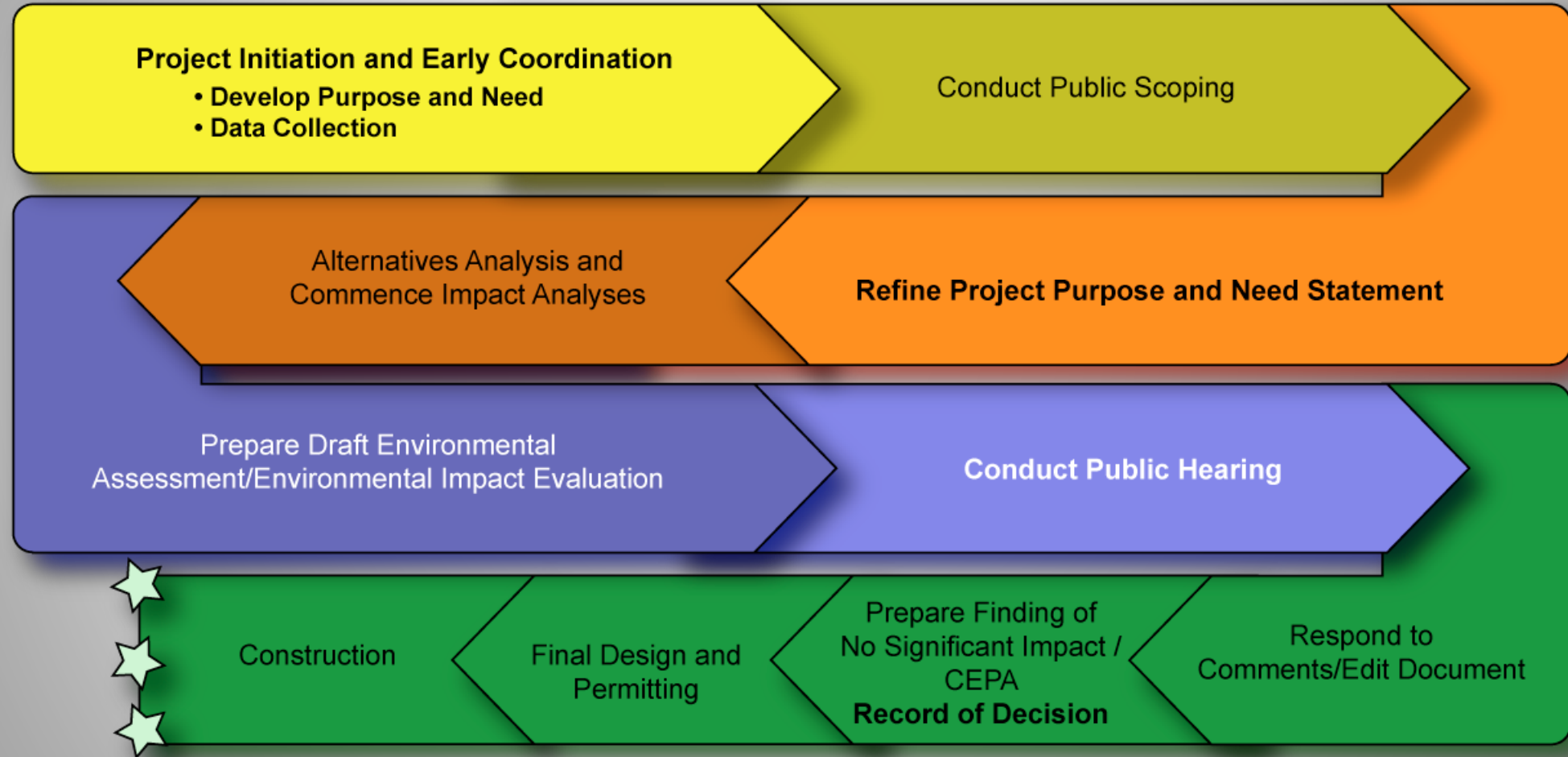
Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA - 1971)

Purpose: To *promote better decision-making* by ensuring:

- A full set of reasonable alternatives is evaluated
- Impacts (and to whom they accrue) are understood before decisions are made
- Impacts are avoided, minimized or mitigated



Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA PROCESS



Scoping Phase



Data Collection and
Documentation Process



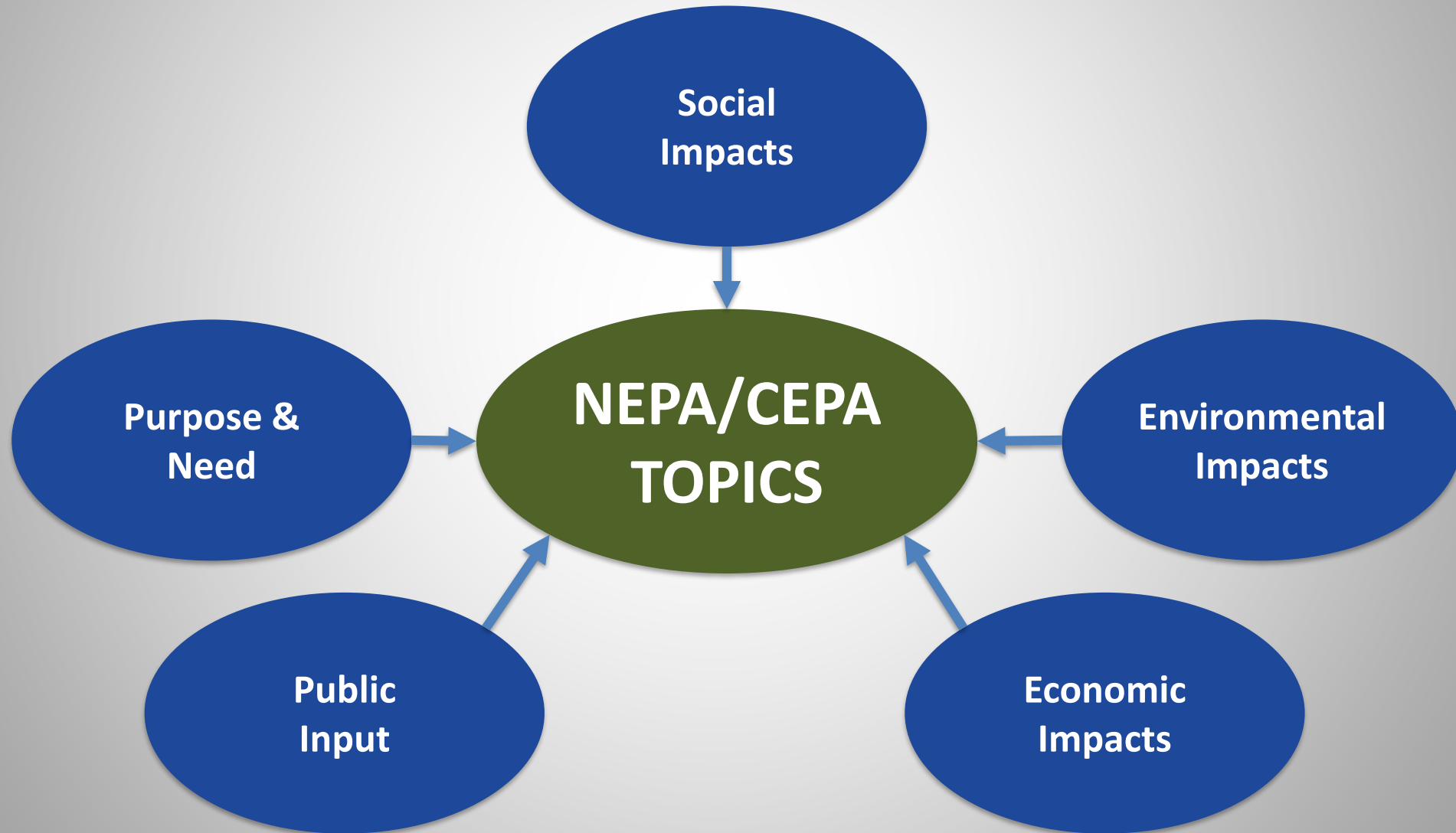
Review Phase



Finalization Phase



Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA TOPICS





Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEPA/CEPA TOPICS

Purpose and Need

- System Linkages
- Mobility
- Safety
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations

Social Impacts

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Historic and archeological sites
- Visual and scenic resources
- Public Health and Safety
- Consistency with State Environmental Equity Policy
- Consistency with Adopted Municipal and Regional Plans

Environmental

- Water resources
- Wetlands
- Water quality
- Groundwater
- Coastal resources
- Endangered, threatened and special concern species and critical habitats
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Agricultural lands

Economic

- Energy use
- Cost
- Cost/Benefit Analysis (CEPA)
- Indirect and cumulative effect
- Support local and regional development initiatives

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Route 7/15 Norwalk- 2008 ALTERNATES REVIEW

- 2008 Stakeholder ranking evaluation matrix of stakeholder concerns
- Are there new issues to consider?

Issue Rank	Issue From Survey	Alternate #12A	Alternate Cloverleaf W/ D2	Alternate #21
1	Improve Safety and Reduce Accidents	++	+	+++
2	Impact to Neighborhoods	Some	Most	Least
3	Impact to Wetlands	Most	Least	Least
4	Tree Clearing	Some	Most	Least
5	Impact to Historic Character/Aesthetic Integrity of Parkway	Most	Least	Some
5a	Number of Historic Structures Impacted	4	4	3
6	Noise Impact to Neighborhood	Some	Most	Least
7	Impact to Historic character of Silvermine Area	Some	Most	Least
8	Ability to Maintain Natural Barriers Between Highways and Neighborhoods/Landscaping	Yes	No	Yes
9	Impact to Home Values	?	?	?
10	Introduce Weave on Parkway	No	Yes	No
11	Advance Project to Construction	++	+	+
12	Reduce Congestion	++	+	+++
13	Ability to Construct Glover Ave & Creeping Hemlock First	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Reduce Project Scope	No	No	No
15	Flooding/Drainage Concerns Due to Less Trees	Some	Most	Least
16	Ability to Accommodate Bicycles/Pedestrians	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Widening of Glover Ave	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Keep Location of Ramps in the Commercial/ Industrial area of Main Ave.	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Impact to the Norwalk River	Most	Least	Some
20	Ability to Include Aesthetic Treatment To New Structures	Yes	Yes	Yes



Route 7/15 Norwalk

QUESTIONS

?

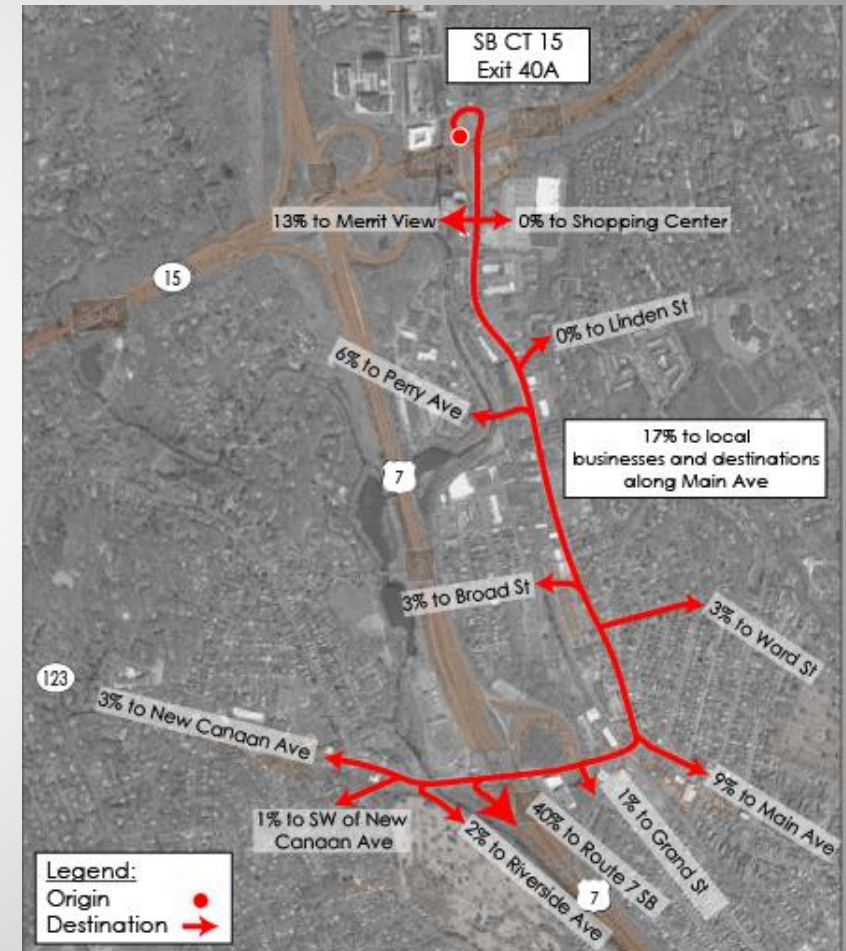
WORK STATUS





Route 7/15 Norwalk - CURRENT WORK EFFORT

- Draft Purpose and Need
- Traffic and Safety
 - Traffic data collection program completed Fall 2016
 - Crash data
 - Origin & Destination Study
 - Travel time and delay data
 - Bicycle and pedestrian analysis
 - Developing traffic models (VISSIM and Synchro)



SB CT 15 [Merritt Pkwy]
Off-Ramp to Main Ave
Origin-Destination Patterns
AM Peak Hour (8AM - 9AM)



Route 7/15 Norwalk - CURRENT WORK EFFORT

- Review future land use and development
- Environmental and Cultural Resources
 - Initial Phase 1A/Archeological Preliminary Assessments Complete
 - Phase 1B Investigations Scheduled for Spring 2017
 - Wetland Delineations Complete
 - Habitat Assessments Complete
- Public outreach- ongoing meetings and promotion

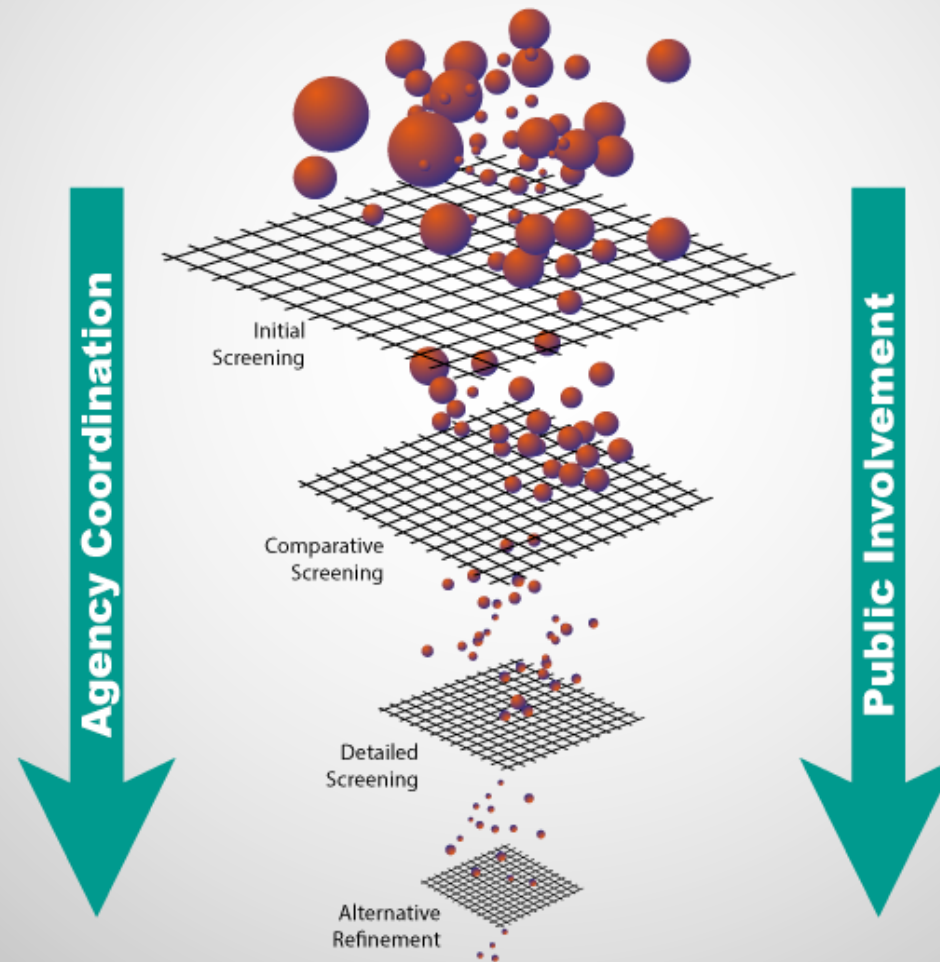
ALTERNATES





Route 7/15 Norwalk- ALTERNATE SCREENING

FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES



FINAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EVALUATION



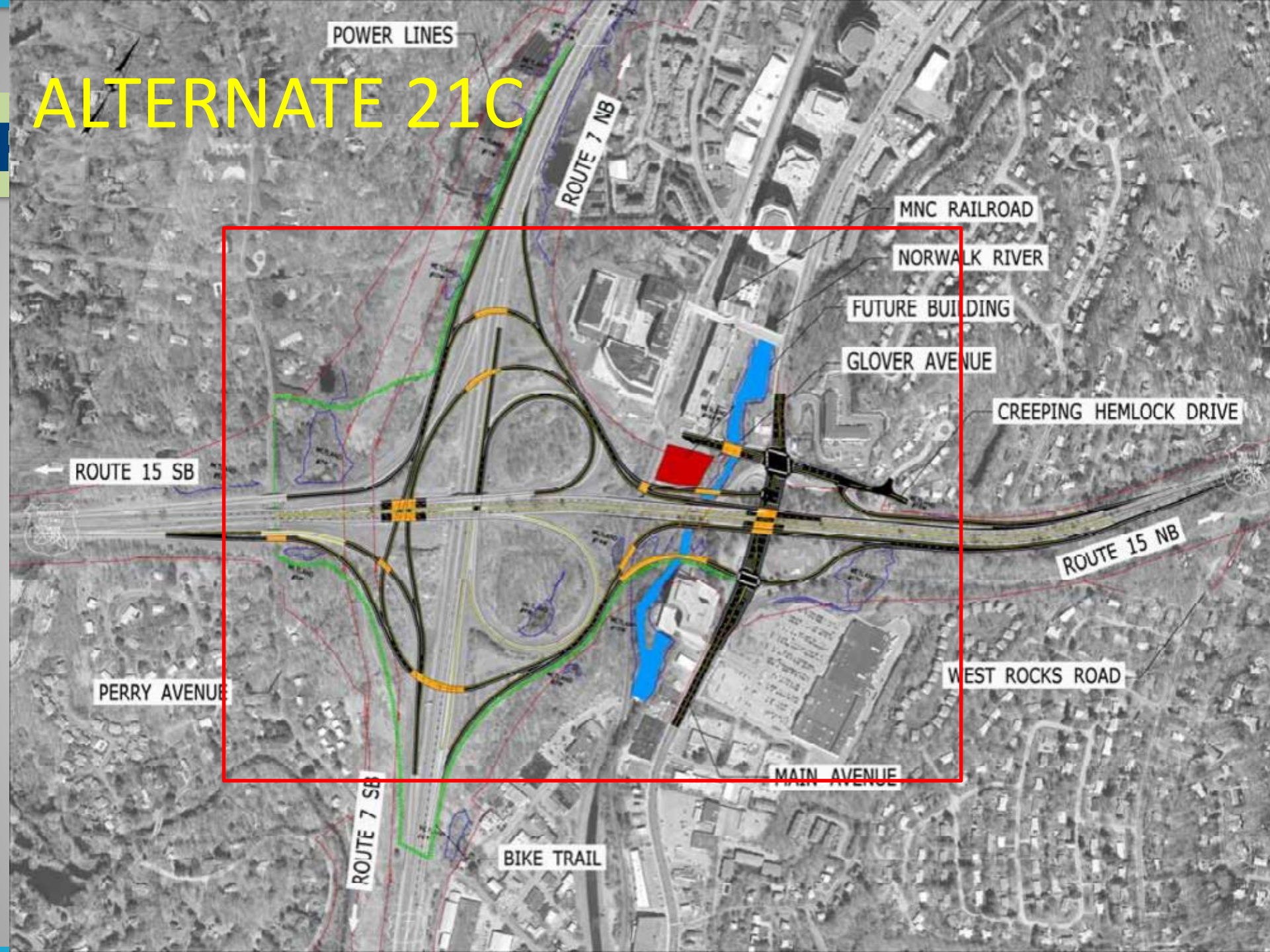
Route 7/15 Norwalk

- Refinement of 21C
- Alternate 26
- Consideration of additional alternates



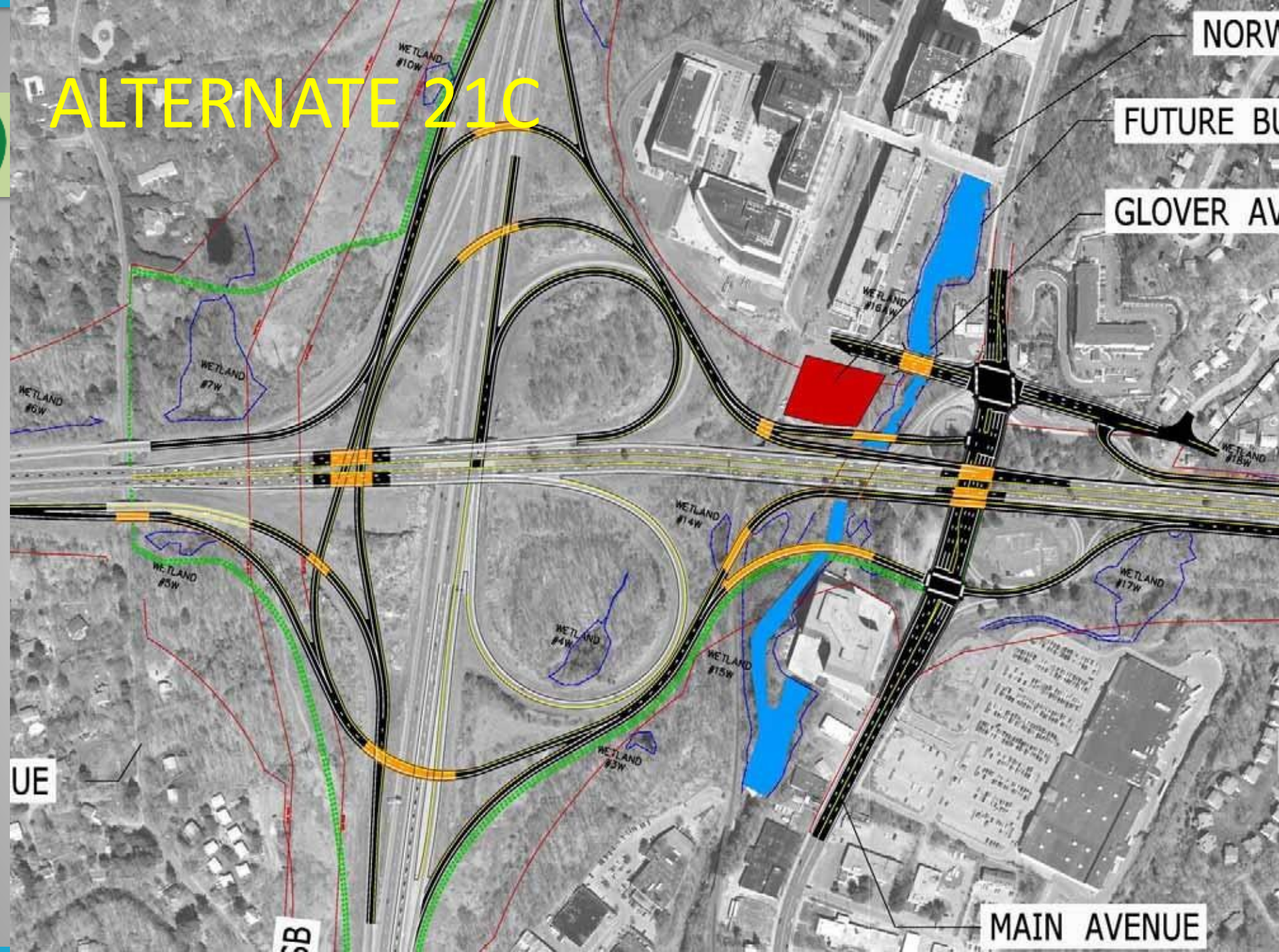


ALTERNATE 21C





ALTERNATE 21C



NORV March 27, 2017
Project #102-358

FUTURE BU



Route 7/15 Norwalk

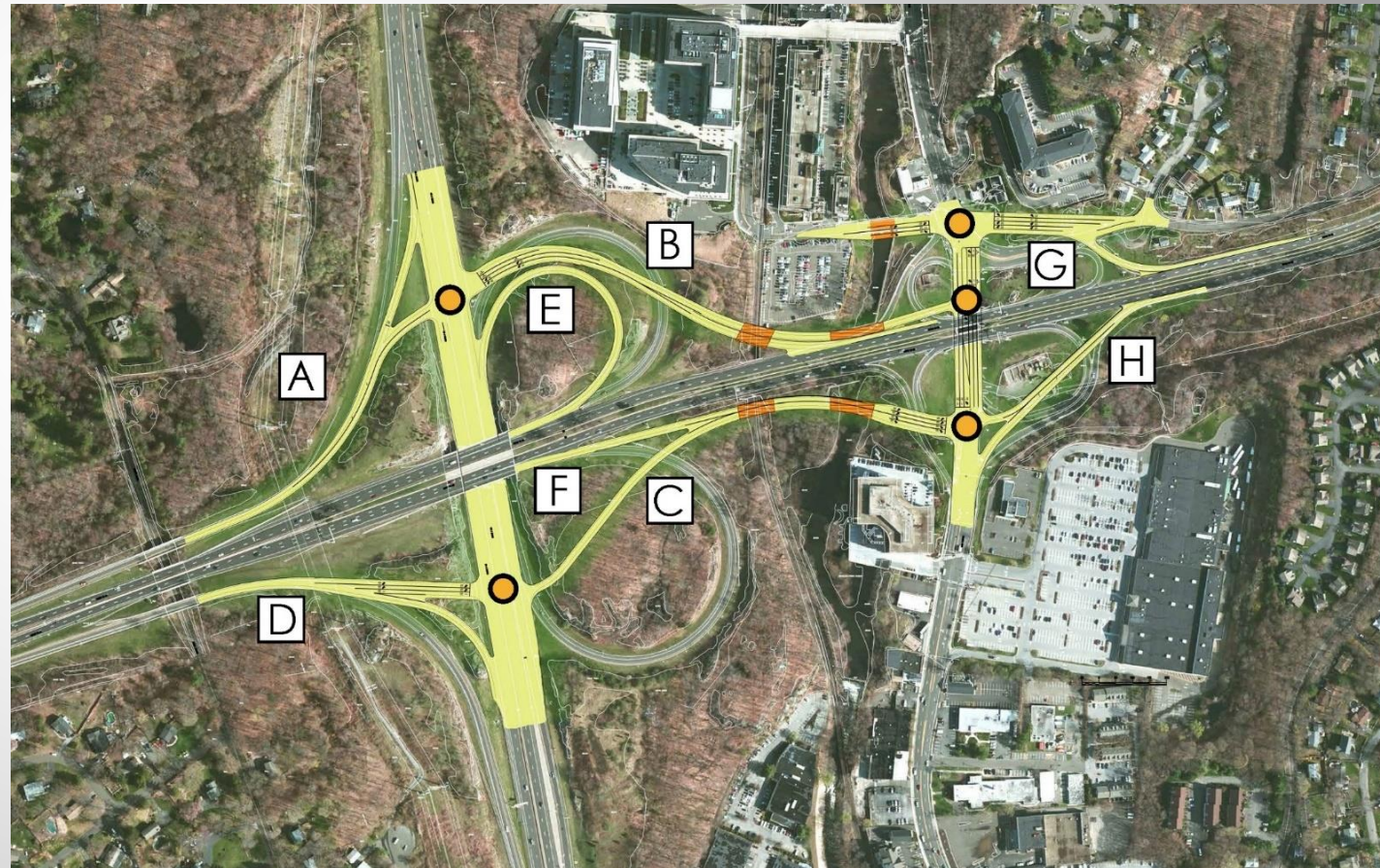
“NEW”- Alternate 26 Design Concept



Route 7/15 Norwalk

Alternate 26 Interchange Configuration

- Make all connections (Route 7 / Main Ave)
- Number of lanes on Route 7
- Eliminate non-standard Main Ave ramps
- Eliminate weaves on Merritt Parkway





Route 7/15 Norwalk

Alternate 26 Review- Benefits and Drawbacks

Potential Benefits

- More compact (less footprint) and simpler interchange for Route 7/15
- Less structures required
- Significantly less expensive - Initial and long-term
- Potential to minimize environmental impacts - both natural resources and historic resources/parkway character



Route 7/15 Norwalk

Initial Alternate 26 Concept Analysis Benefits / Drawbacks

Potential Drawbacks

- Greater air quality and noise impacts on Route 7 (signals)
- Potential safety concerns at new Route 7 traffic signals
- Potential reductions in LOS from Alternate 21C
- Alternate 21C considered free flow (preferred)



Route 7/15 Norwalk

Initial Alternate 26 Concept Analysis Questions to be Answered / Unknowns

- ROW acquisition?
- Travel time benefits (over directional ramps)?
- Alternate 26 Access: Limited? Development opportunities?



Route 7/15 Norwalk - ALTERNATES

Are there other alternates to consider?

- In 2008 refined list of alternates to:
 - 12A
 - Cloverleaf
 - 21C (consensus as preferred alternate)
- Current effort:
 - Alternate 26
 - No-build
 - ??????

ALTERNATE

PUBLIC OUTREACH





Route 7/15 Norwalk - OUTREACH PATHWAYS

- Meetings
- Website
- Newsletters
- Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Newspaper article



Route 7-15
Interchange,
Norwalk
@715Norwalk

Home
Posts
Photos
About
Likes



Like Following Message

Featured For You



Company

Invite friends to like this Page

The Route 7/15 Norwalk Project is an initiative to complete connections between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway, reduce congestion on Main Avenue, and improve safety.

19 people like this and 26 people follow this



Route 7/15 NORWALK

NEWSLETTER
Winter 2017

In this Issue

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Getting Involved	3
Project Team	3
Project Process	4

"Currently, too many drivers are forced to get off the highway in order to navigate between two roads, [...] leading to unnecessary traffic and accidents."

— Governor Dannel P. Malloy



7-15Norwalk.com

projectteam@7-15Norwalk.com

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Department of Transportation Kicks Off Route 7/15 Norwalk Project

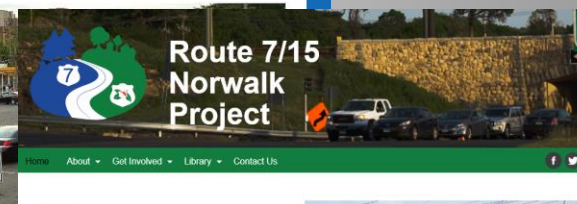


The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is focusing on improving connections between Route 7, the Merritt Parkway (Route 15), and Main Avenue in the City of Norwalk.

The goals of the project are to provide missing connections between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway, and to improve connectivity, mobility, access, and safety for all users through Route 7, the Merritt Parkway, and Main Avenue interchanges. The current layout of the Route 7/15 interchange does not allow direct connections between:

- Route 7 northbound to Merritt Parkway northbound;
- Route 7 southbound to Merritt Parkway northbound;
- Merritt Parkway southbound to Route 7 southbound and;
- Merritt Parkway southbound to Route 7 northbound.

The missing direct connections require travelers to use Main Avenue, resulting in heavy congestion and long delays. The



Welcome

The Route 7/15 Norwalk Project is an initiative to complete connections between Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway, reduce congestion on Main Avenue, and improve safety.

What's New

Planning and public engagement for the Route 7/15 Norwalk Project began in earnest in Fall 2016. Check this section frequently as new content and announcements are posted. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter, too! Click the links in top right corner.

Events & New Materials

Read the Winter Newsletter!
Catch up with recent media coverage
Nancy on Norwalk: CTDOT Consultant Reveals New Idea
Sign up for our mailing list





Route 7/15 Norwalk - Meetings

- ✓ City of Norwalk
- ✓ Town of Wilton
- ✓ WestCOG
- ✓ Merritt Parkway Conservancy
- ✓ MPAC
- ✓ NASH
- ✓ Merritt 7/Marcus Partners
- ✓ Building Land Technology
- ✓ Norwalk River Watershed
- ✓ Norwalk Preservation Trust
- ✓ Norwalk Transit District
- ✓ Cranbury/Creeping Hemlock Neighborhood
- ✓ Norwalk River Valley Trail
- ✓ Norwalk Bike/Ped Task Force





Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEWS COVERAGE

THE HOUR

News Sports UConn Nation Business Entertainment Living Obituaries Classifieds

More vetting ahead for plan that would add signals to Route 7 Connector

By Robert Koch Published 12:00 am, Monday, February 6, 2017



Photo: Alex Von Kleydaff / Hearst Connecticut Media

The Route 7 Connector looking north to the Merritt Parkway overpass and the exit southbound to New York City on Thursday, Feb. 2, in Norwalk.

NORWALK — Motorists driving the Route 7 Connector will be hitting the brakes if the Connecticut Department of Transportation picks Alternate 26 to overhaul the Route 7-Merritt Parkway interchange.

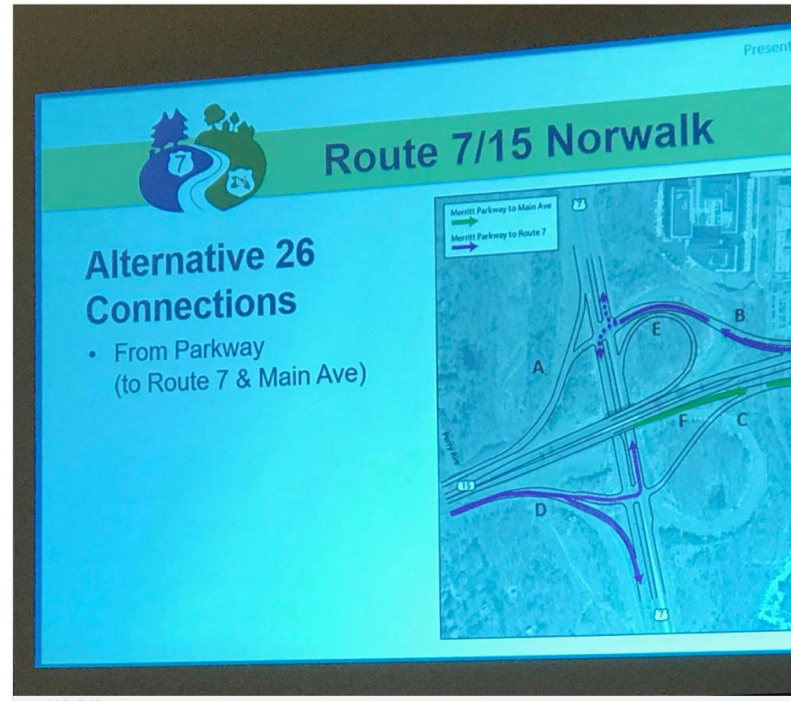
Alternate 26, as the design is called, would add missing links, make the interchange fully directional and create three traffic lanes in each direction along the connector near the parkway.

But it also would change the connector from a freeway to signalized boulevard by installing two traffic signals — one north and the other immediately south of the parkway.

And that would create a whole new commute for the thousands of motorists, many of whom use the connector to get to and from their jobs at nearby Merritt 7 Corporate Park.

NANCY ON NORWALK

ConnDOT consultant reveals new idea for Merritt Parkway/Route 7 interchange



THE HOUR

News Sports UConn Nation Business Entertainment Living Obituaries Classifieds

DOT explains Route 7/15 interchange project

By Kaitlyn Krasselt Updated 9:40 pm, Wednesday, January 11, 2017



IMAGE 11 OF 11

NORWALK — As public input always seems contentious in major construction projects, the state Department of Transportation is trying to stay ahead of the curve on its latest Norwalk plan.

The department held its 19th informational meeting since early 2016 Wednesday night, regarding the U.S. Route 7 and Route 15 interchange, a project more than a decade in the making.

"We're really trying to reach out to as many small groups as possible to have these informal informational meetings," said DOT Project Manager Andy Fessenmeyer. "In the old days, we would have just had big public meetings, and that's not always the best way to have these conversations. We're doing the best we can to get public input, and it's important to come out early when we really have very little done. No one can say later that we did all this work without them."

The groups present at Wednesday's meeting included Harbor Watch, Earthplace, the Connecticut Fund for the Environment and Save the Sound, and others with environmental concerns. The environmental groups are concerned about the water quality of the Norwalk River and the protection of wetlands and natural habitats in the watershed.

The DOT brought members of its primary consulting team, Santec, and Mark Alexander from the Office of Environmental Planning.

The largest concern, it seemed, was not necessarily the impact of the interchange project, but the combined effect of several projects along the Norwalk River set to take place over the next few years. Projects include the Walk Bridge replacement project, repairs to the Yankee Doodle Bridge and the interchange.

Overhaul of the Route 7/Merritt Parkway/Main Avenue interchange has been more than a decade in the making, receiving both support and opposition.

The purpose of the project hasn't changed — to create a full-directional interchange between U.S. Route 7 and Route 15, otherwise known as the Merritt Parkway, while maintaining access at Main Avenue to and from the parkway, according to the DOT.

As it is, motorists traveling west on the Merritt Parkway cannot exit to either the northbound or southbound Route 7 connector. Motorists driving either north or south on the connector cannot exit to the eastbound parkway.

In May 2005, the Merritt Parkway Conservancy and other preservationist groups filed a lawsuit against the Federal Highway Administration and the DOT to get the state to downsize its original design, which the groups considered too large, too costly and destructive to the parkway.

The following year, U.S. District Court in New Haven found that the Federal Highway Administration had not met its legal "obligation to ensure that all possible planning was done to minimize harm prior to approving the interchange project."

NEXT STEPS





Route 7/15 Norwalk - NEXT STEPS

- Upcoming meetings-
 - Schedule PAC Meeting number #2 - May
- Six-month lookahead
 - Public Scoping Meeting- June
 - Alternate Analysis
 - Fall PAC meeting to review alternates
- How to stay connected?
- Additional focus meetings?
- **Invitation to meet individually**



Route 7/15 Norwalk - CONTACT INFORMATION

- CTDOT
 - Andy Fesenmeyer - Project Manager Andy.Fesenmeyer@ct.gov
 - Jen Sweeney - Project Engineer Jennifer.Sweeney@ct.gov
 - Rich Armstrong - Principal Engineer Richard.Armstrong@ct.gov
- Stantec
 - John Eberle, - Project Manager john.eberle@stantec.com
- Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
 - Ken Livingston - Community Engagement klivingston@fhiplan.com



Route 7/15 Norwalk - THANK YOU!

We deeply appreciate your time and your commitment to helping us reach the best possible solution for the State, the region and the City.

Your 7/15 Norwalk Project Team