

Connecticut Department of Transportation

State Project No. 0165-0512
Route 159 Improvements
Windsor Locks, CT

Thursday, May 29, 2025
Windsor Locks Town Hall

Presenters/Speakers:

Jonathan Kang (CTDOT)
Chris Bonsignore (WSP)
Aaron Foster (HNTB)

CTDOT Attendees:

Rich Bertoli
Muhammad Altaf
Seamus Flannery
Kevin LaRose

Program Management Team (PMT) Attendees:

Grant Olear (WSP)

Consultant Design Attendees:

DJ Logan (HNTB)
Sovannarith Touch (HNTB)

Public Attendees:

16

Presentation:

A presentation was held at Windsor Locks Town Hall for the project. Jonathan Kang, CTDOT Supervising Engineer, welcomed attendees and went over Connecticut Department of Transportation's Title VI Notice to the Public. Chris Bonsignore, Program Manager, then gave an overview of the Hartford Line Rail Program and the technical design was presented by Aaron Foster (HNTB). Jonathan Kang moderated the Q&A session.

The presentation began at 6:00pm. After introductions, Title VI Notices, and overview of Hartford Line Rail Program, the following items were presented:

- The purpose and need of the project, which is to relocate a line of existing utility poles on the east side of Route 159 to the west side of the roadway
- The project will:
 - Facilitate the realignment of the existing track of the Hartford Line
 - Allow for the installation of a second track to support increased services
 - Reduce the number of overhead wires in the project area
- The estimated construction cost is \$5,000,000 (100% State)
- Construction is expected to start Winter 2026 and end Mid 2027

Public Comments and Questions:

The questions and responses from the Q&A session are listed below.

1. **Question:** Can you explain where that cross section is?
Answer: South of Elm Street with the termination being south of Ahlstrom's parking lot
2. **Question:** The intersection at the top left is what?
Answer: South Street
3. **Question:** Is that a new pedestrian crossing at bridge street?
Answer: That is part of the current Windsor Locks station project and is expected to be completed in 2026.
4. **Question:** You are about to move power lines and all sorts of communications from one side of the street to the other. Has there been any consideration to putting them underground?
Answer: There are some underground utilities as part of this project. If your question is why they aren't all being moved underground, that is due to construction costs of burying utilities being 4-5x more expensive than moving them above ground. CTDOT coordinated with Eversource to investigate burying utilities as a relocation alternative and ultimately it was cost prohibitive.
5. **Question:** Has anyone done any survey as to what the project ridership is? Why do we need two lines (double tracking)?
Answer: In 2003, Connecticut initiated a major study to evaluate the implementation of new commuter rail service between New Haven and Springfield. This study included significant public outreach activities and initiation of an assessment of the environmental impacts of new passenger rail service along the corridor. A Service Development Plan was also produced which involved the anticipation of increased ridership through the improvements to the Hartford Line corridor as a result of concurrent implementation of multimodal transportation through the Transit Oriented Design initiative.
6. **Question:** FRA allows quiet zones that permits trains to not blow their horns the required amount/duration. Has anyone not looked into doing a quiet zone around the Windsor Locks station?
Answer: There is a process to request a quiet zone, and that request has to be made by the municipality. You can reach out to me (Jonathan Kang) or google "FRA Quiet Zone" to learn more about the process. CTDOT and Amtrak can support requests for quiet zones but cannot initiate the process.
7. **Question:** Have you considered talking to DPW about future projects that might be running under that street before you mill and pave? We are having to do sewer work after you have done milling and paving, so we end up tearing it up. Some consultation with local officials

should be taken into consideration so we don't have some of the disasters we have had recently where we have had to do change orders after the fact.

Answer: Coordination regarding adjacent projects has taken place with the Town of Windsor Locks.

8. **Question:** Here on behalf of Congregational Church of Windsor Locks. The wires should be buried rather than moved across the street. What are the red dots you are showing near the church?

Answer: The red dots are new utility poles, and the red line is the Right of Way.

9. **Question:** You are showing current and additional poles?

Answer: Yes.

10. **Question:** Do you guys address the driving concerns or is that a different group? Before you leave town, go down Spring Street and picture yourself in a 2019 Highlander with your head ready to explode because you can't make it off Spring Street at certain times of day – Is it possible to put signage that says if you can't turn right, you must continue moving or something to avoid the issues there?

Answer: The Department is assessing traffic conditions internally and the ongoing projects and will coordinate potential solutions with the Town.

11. **Question:** I heard you are putting up walls on the track side where you are taking the poles, is that true?

Answer: There will be new walls installed under the double-tracking project along the tracks supporting Route 159, to provide the sufficient clearances for installing second track.

12. **Question:** The Ahlstrom building acts as a wall and magnifies the noise. Is there anything that can be done about the sound?

Answer: The Department screens all railroad projects that are federally funded by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), to determine if the project meets the criteria for a noise analysis in accordance with the Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual. Because this project is not federally funded, the Office of Environmental Planning has determined that Project 0165-0512 does not meet the criteria to conduct a noise analysis. The noise team has provided a link to the impact assessment manual below, should you wish to learn more. Your inquiry will be recorded in the Department's database, and if a federally funded railroad project is proposed for this section in the future, it will be screened per the federal guidelines. If it meets the criteria, it will then be assessed for noise. Impact Assessment Manual link: [Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual](#).

13. **Question:** Why are you moving the poles?

Answer: There is a clearance required by the Amtrak trains that will be using the double tracking, and the poles would be encroaching on that clearance.

14. **Question:** Is it possible to post the presentation prior to the two-week comment period being up?

Answer: Yes. We will get a PDF of the presentation posted to the project website listed in the presentation. UPDATE: The presentation was uploaded to the project webpage [0165-0512 Windsor Locks](#) on 06/03/2025.

15. **Question:** There is a box at Spring Street and Main Street that people remained stopped at for twenty minutes and that was never the case before the train station. Is there something you can do to look at signalization because it is an issue?

Answer: Part of overflow congestion is due to the multiple construction projects ongoing concurrently. The Department is assessing traffic conditions internally and the ongoing projects and will coordinate potential solutions with the Town.

16. **Question:** There are water lines, gas lines, and sewer lines. What are you going to do about that?

Answer: We have had meetings with all the appropriate entities and existing utilities have been taken into account for the design and construction.

17. **Question:** I really think burying the underground lines is critical. For some reason, I am paying Eversource this public service fee for them to go chase collections. Can they take that money and spend it to bury the lines?

Answer: The Town of Windsor Locks can reach out to coordinate the use of this public service fee for future relocation funding.

18. **Question:** This is a safety issue; I am wondering if the timing of lights can be looked at?

Answer: The Department is assessing traffic conditions internally and the ongoing projects and will coordinate potential solutions with the Town.

19. **Question:** Why can we not use CT flag men?

Answer: CTDOT's Contractors can use roadway flagmen, municipal police, and state police to control traffic during construction operations. The use of roadway flagmen is limited to certain traffic operations and coordination with municipal police.

20. **Question:** Line of sight on Main Street; there is a line of parking cars that inhibits the sightline at Oak Street and Main Street

Answer: The project design meets the Department's Highway Design Manual and FHWA requirements. The project team and CTDOT Traffic will conduct field investigations and review the stopping sight distance conditions and will make any necessary adjustments.

21. **Question:** Sightline restriction coming down Spring Street with the retaining wall outside CVS.

Answer: The project design meets the Department's Highway Design Manual and FHWA

requirements. The project team and CTDOT Traffic will conduct field investigations and review the stopping sight distance conditions and will make any necessary adjustments.

22. **Question:** We had double track at that location years ago and the poles were where they currently are. Why do they need to be moved now?

Answer: Regulation for train clearances has changed since there was double track at that location. We looked at everything we could to keep the poles on the side they currently are on but were unable to make it work.

The following additional questions/concerns were received during the two-week comment period following the Public Information Meeting:

23. My place of business is on Main Street, so I will be affected by the utility pole relocation, i.e., eastside to westside. As such, I ask that you consider placing all utilities underground not only for aesthetics, but also for safety.

Answer: Thank you for your comment. There are some underground utilities proposed under this project. All utilities are not being moved underground, because the construction costs of burying utilities are 4-5x more expensive than moving them above ground. CTDOT coordinated with Eversource to investigate burying utilities as a relocation alternative and ultimately it was cost prohibitive.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm.