CHAIRPERSON MARGARITA T. ALBAN: Good evening. This is a meeting of the Greenwich Planning and Zoning Commission. This evening Mr. Fox will be absent and Victoria Goss will be seated for him. Mr. Levy is running late and Mr. Lowe will be seated for Mr. Levy, I guess until he arrives, you'll have to duke it out.

Ms. DeLuca, there were a couple of opening comments you were going to make?

MS. KATIE DELUCA: Yes. Thank you. Good evening everybody. I just want to say thank you all for coming. This is an important project and I just wanted to discuss a quick procedural issue. You may have heard about the municipal improvement, air rights, site plans, special permits, text amendments, and I just want to spend a minute explaining a little bit about what each of those
things are and what we are hearing tonight and what we are not hearing tonight.

On the tentative agenda that we had posted on the website we had noted that we thought we were going to be hearing a municipal improvement. A municipal improvement is required when you have an issue dealing with lease arrangements, which is potentially going to be an issue in this case, as you have read in the paper, etcetera. But we are not hearing a municipal improvement tonight. The reason for that is before the Planning and Zoning Commission can hear such an application it has to be moved forward by the Board of Selectmen. That has not happened yet, therefore, we do not have a pending municipal improvement application.

The applicant, I’m sure, will speak a little bit more about the relationship between the municipal improvement and the proposed improvements to the project. But I do want to just make that clear that we were not -- the Commission will not be taking that up.

One important distinction between a municipal improvement and the other application types is that the municipal improvement falls under the Town Charter, Section 99 and Section 100 specifically. That’s an important distinction because that falls under the
Planning and Zoning's planning arm versus their zoning arm.

The other application types that are pending and will be heard this evening include a preliminary, site plan and special permit and also a text amendment. Preliminary is just that, it is a preliminary application meaning the Commission this evening will be listening to the presentation and then they will be offering guidance. They are going to be asking at some point later in the evening for you all to provide your comments. But just so we're clear a preliminary does not have legal standing so to speak so if the Commission were to move it forward that's what they would be doing as opposed to approving something.

That is different than a text amendment. There is no such thing as a preliminary text amendment. A text amendment is a text amendment. And the text that the applicant is proposing to amend is the text in our zoning regulations. The zoning regulations are what the Commission will eventually be reviewing as it relates to a final site plan and special permit, but this evening we're just reviewing the preliminary.

The text amendment is a proposal to change some of the regulations. The applicant will get into some
of that. But I do just want to make it clear that we are
just here on the zoning side, not on the planning -- not
on the planning side as it relates to the municipal
improvement. And with that I think I have covered that
distinction. If there's any questions I can certainly
answer that at some point, but probably a good idea to
hear the applicant.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So just on the format
for tonight what we're going to do is the applicant is
going to present the project, the Commission will then ask
questions, and then we'll open it up to the public for
comment and questions. The Commission briefed this morning
on this and we had basically three buckets of questions.
The first is that the first objective is to have the
station be as useful and user-friendly, if you will, as
possible versus what it is at the moment. How do you make
it optimally functional.

The second one was how does the visual, the
architecture, the structure of it fit in with the
surrounding community. And the third question was about
the public benefit that's being provided, the offering to
us, and is that what we're looking for. And we don't
answer questions at the briefing, we just kind of get our
minds around what we want to grapple with at the meeting
so those are the three buckets of questions that we had in our mind and we were trying to stick with a bigger picture rather than drill down on a million tiny details involved in the project. Because at this point the question is, how does the project work for Greenwich’s strategy going forward?

And with that --

MS. DELUCA: Ms. Alban? I forgot to mention the most important point. Some may ask, well, if you’re not having the municipal improvement on this evening why are you hearing the other application types? The answer to that is that the planning side doesn’t have the same statutory timelines that the applications on the zoning side do, so we do have statutory timelines that have been initiated. It happens when the application is submitted so the clock is ticking so to speak. This is a long process. One that obviously will not be resolved this evening or even for the next few meetings, so that is why we wanted to at least start this tonight. We added this meeting onto our regular meeting schedule so that we could give it the appropriate amount of time, people could hear it, people could speak on it without being rushed with other application types. So we wanted to proceed with this so we don’t run into any difficulties with the timeline.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- okay then. And with that, Mr. Cohen, your show.

MR. BRUCE COHEN: Thank you Ms. Alban, members of the Commission. Bruce Cohen, representing the applicant, Greenwich Plaza, Inc. And we did attend this morning’s briefing, as you know Ms. Alban. We heard the points that you’ve addressed initially and we are planning to address all of those tonight.

I’m here on behalf of Greenwich Plaza, Inc. to present to you land use applications that are a necessary step to achieving a partnership with the Town regarding that portion of the Greenwich Plaza development that lies immediately to the north of the railroad right-of-way, south of Railroad Avenue, between Arch Street and Steamboat Road. The --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: If people want to turn their chairs or whatever so you can see the screen?

MR. COHEN: -- the aerial photo that’s up on the screen shows the Greenwich Plaza project in its totality. The two office buildings known as Greenwich Plaza, the railroad track and the south side of the railroad track that involves the drop off/pick up area for the eastbound Metro-North trains. And then the north side of the -- of the tracks running between Arch Street and
Steamboat Road, which contain a combination of uses, including the Town’s last remaining movie theater, the railroad station, which is owned oddly enough by Greenwich Plaza, Inc. under a deed from the railroad, and parking and a mixed use of stores being restaurants, retail stores, and a bank.

I’d like to give you a little history of this site by showing you this marked up version of a recorded map, map number 4864 in the Greenwich Land Records. And that shows -- the upper part is north and the lower part is south, and it shows essentially four parcels as described on that map. The first parcel, parcel one shown in yellow, is that portion of the Greenwich Plaza development that we’re going to be speaking about mainly tonight where the railroad station and the movie theater and stores are located.

A very small part of the, I guess, orange parcel will also be involved involving a new railroad station building that’s being proposed. But essentially what you’re going to hear tonight is mainly dealing with that light yellow piece.

The blue parcel is owned by Connecticut Department of Transportation, I believe under lease to Metro-North, that’s where the railroad tracks run. And
below it and on the left-hand side you’ll see the parcels enumerated. Parcel two and parcel four are the areas in which, first of all, the drop off/pick up area for the eastbound trains are located and also the Greenwich Plaza office buildings. Parcel one and two, and a portion of parcel four, which is shown in the middle as track one, were purchased by Greenwich Plaza, Inc. from the New Haven Railroad in the -- oh, well, in 1967 at which time the railroad, if you may remember, was in bankruptcy. At that time the Town and Greenwich Plaza entered into a transaction whereby track one was given to the Town for no consideration. The Town already owning track two and three and thereby ending up with all of track four and the parties entered into an air rights agreement whereby the air rights over parcel four were leased to Greenwich Plaza so that they could build those two buildings subject to a number of requirements, including the payment of annual rent, and also the requirement that Greenwich Plaza construct what has become the commuter parking lot under parcels two and four.

Those rights, the air rights lease, the Town’s commuter lot right over parcel two all will end in the year 2057. And so this became the moment that the Ashforth family that controls Greenwich Plaza, Inc.
determined that we should look to the future and trying to formalize a relationship with the Town that will permanently provide the Town with the commuter parking lot and provide additional public benefits.

The next image shows pretty much what’s there right now plan view, the theater is shown in blue, stores are shown on either side of the railroad station which is in bright yellow, and then there’s a 36 space parking lot on the left-hand side of the image and then the office buildings or directly south of the tracks. The next image shows what is being proposed, you know, in plan form. The theater would now move from the east side to the west. The station would be enlarged and the theater would be enlarged, although reduced in numbers of seats, and the stores would pretty much stay the same in terms of floor area. And in the corner of Steamboat and Railroad Avenue where the existing theatre is located would be a new privately owned public park.

Now, the proposal that is going to be before you tonight really relates to three items, as you enumerated it Mrs. DeLuca. One, the site plan, two, the special permit, three, the text amendment changes. The municipal improvement, which was filed with the Commissioner -- Commission under Charter Section 99, will
not go forward tonight merely because the Board of Selectmen has not yet referred it. We expect that they will. We hope that they will and they will do it hopefully by the time of your next meeting on this -- on this application.

You’ll hear tonight about not only the design and the development and what’s being proposed piece by piece, but you’ll also hear about the planning that has gone into this application. Planning not only by the owners of the property, but also the Town through the First Selectman’s office. They have engaged outside counsel and outside appraisers in terms of issues related to the MI, which will be presented to you at another time.

Should you, by the way, have any questions about the municipal improvement, notwithstanding the fact that it’s not before you tonight, Ben Branyan, the Town Administrator, who was key in working up a draft agreement between the parties, is here to answer questions. In doing its planning not only did we -- did the Greenwich Plaza, Inc. talk to lots of folks, but we also had input from public officials, from commuters because there are lots of commuters that we have access to through the Greenwich Plaza office buildings, but also through the Connecticut Department of Transportation, who is deeply involved in
the operation of the railroad. And one of the people that
Greenwich Plaza dealt with at some length is here tonight,
Rich Andreski, he is the Bureau Chief of the ConnDOT
Department of Public Transportation, that he will be here
to talk a little bit about what he thinks about railroad
traffic in general, where it’s going, where it’s been, and
how this proposed new train station impacts it.

One of the things that I heard you discuss
at the -- at your staff briefing this morning had to do
with public benefits and you wanted us to focus in our
public benefits are being offered by this proposal and
we’ll do that as you hear the rest of our presentation.
But I’d like to kind of summarize them so that you can
keep them in mind as you’re listening to the presentation.
A part of this application will involve a new railroad
station in the place of the one that we’re familiar with
on the north side of the tracks. It will also involve the
construction of a new smaller station on the south side of
the tracks to address increased commuter use of that
eastbound facility.

It will also involve a new park that you’ll
hear described for you tonight. As a part of the MI
presentation you’ll hear that an agreement will be entered
into by Greenwich Plaza to permanently maintain at its
cost both the railroad stations and the park. There'll be improved pedestrian access to the train platforms, which you'll hear about. There'll be a considerable improvement in the drop off and pick up experience on both sides and you'll hear our traffic consultant, John Canning, from the firm of Kimley-Horn address that.

There'll the an opportunity to address the entire streetscape at one time and I thought that was interesting in light of a provision of the POCD that reads, and I'm looking at page 26, at the present time projects in downtown tend to be evaluated on a site by site basis. Such a process is heavily dependent on the regulations we have rather than the type of development we want. By preparing and evaluating alternative scenarios Greenwich can identify preferred policies and discourage incompatible activities. And I think that ability to look at an entire block of a whole area of the Town is something that we can offer that really no one else can as a result of the fact that we own, we being Greenwich Plaza, owns the entire block.

I also in looking at the POCD I was interested too in the fact that the importance of the movie theater was mentioned in the POCD, also at page 26 as it follows. Greenwich is, I'm sorry, in addition to
retail establishments community facilities such as the Senior Center, the Arts Council, the Bruce Museum and the movie theater contribute to making this downtown area a special place and we think it does and we’ve spoken to many people who felt that the retention -- retention and improvement of the theater was a worthwhile goal.

And finally the improvements to the train station, the main train station, that you’ll hear really also conforms to the POCD in that on page 44 it states under the heading of what we should do to promote transit the Greenwich train station is an underutilized resource for solving traffic problems in downtown. And we think that a lot of what we’re proposing tonight, the way trains are used, the way we believe trains are going to be used in the future really comes under that heading. And of course the Downtown Planning Committee addressed the same thing in terms of improving access to the train as one of its goals.

So if I may, I’d like to introduce the balance of our team to describe in detail what we’re proposing tonight. You see a lot of photos around you, you’ll see them on the screen, and that will help us -- help us with our explanation. The first speaker tonight will be the co-Chair of Greenwich Plaza, Daryl Harvey, and
he’s going to talk a little bit about the background of
the existing public/private partnership between the Town
and Greenwich Plaza. And he’s going to talk about his
observations and research about train use and
understanding of where it’s going. He’s also going to
introduce Mr. Andreski from ConnDOT to talk a little bit
about their views of public transportation, and
specifically the train use.

And then to get into the details of the
design and the architecture will be Frank Prial of the
firm of Beyer Blinder and Belle, who have been working
with the Greenwich Plaza for quite some time in developing
the plans you’re going to see tonight. And then finally,
John Canning, as I mentioned, is going to talk a little
bit about the traffic issues, specifically dropping off
and picking up at the station.

Also, not speaking, unless you have some
questions for them, are the project civil engineer, Craig
Flaherty of the firm of Redniss and Mead, and Eric Rains,
our landscape architect, who is the chief designer of the
new park that’s being proposed at the corner of Railroad
and Steamboat Road. So if I may, I’d like to introduce
Daryl Harvey.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You mentioned that you
had some research from commuters. Would you be able to
give us the results of your commuter research at some
point in the future? Could you send to staff what you
learned from the commuter research that you did?

MR. COHEN: Certainly.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you.

MR. DARYL HARVEY: Thanks very much, Bruce,
and thank you to the --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Mr. Harvey.

MR. HARVEY: -- oh, I’ll grab my water.

Thanks. If you’re going to speak for an hour and a half
you need some water.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We won’t be here.

MR. HARVEY: I know. Exactly. But thanks
very much, Bruce, and thanks to the members of the
Commission for scheduling a special meeting to hear our
project. As Bruce mentioned, I’m co-CEO of the Ashforth
Company, and I’m here on behalf of our family company,
I’ve got a number of my relatives here, including Mike co-
CEO and cousin, Andy Ashforth; Hank -- Hank Ashforth back
there; my nephew, Ryan Harvey is here tonight; and
numerous other members of our company and our outstanding
team of consultants, many of them are here also.
We’ve been working on and have extensively researched this project for about the past six years with input from multiple experts who I will be citing tonight. As Bruce mentioned, we view this is a tremendous opportunity to continue our partnership with the Town by dramatically revitalizing what we developed 50 years ago. The existing buildings actually do represent what was a huge improvement when they were completed in 1970. All you have to do is go back and look what was there before and you realize what a major change that was in ’70. But we feel they’ve passed their useful life given a number of significant changes since 1970 that I’d like to briefly discuss to try to put our project in the context of trying to look ahead for the next 50 years.

The first change relates to how rail travel itself is changed and is projected to continue to change in the future based on our discussions with and our research received from Metro-North and Connecticut Department of Transportation. One of the most significant changes in Metro-North train travel is somewhat surprising involves the riders themselves. The ridership, as you probably have guessed, has increased dramatically just in sort of broad numbers and continues to do so having increased in Greenwich by over 20 percent in just the last
15 years. Now over 8,500 riders use the Greenwich Train
Station every weekday and if you add that -- you add
weekend use results to that it comes up to about 2.5
million total rides per year to and from the Greenwich
station. But probably most importantly, in 1970 the vast
majority of those riders were commuters. Even 30 years ago
67 percent of passengers boarding each day were still
commuters. And many of us still think of the train as just
a commuter line. But now, according to the MTA, commuters
on the Metro-North line are actually in the minority at
only 48 percent and that percentage is projected to
continue to drop as the number of non-commuters using the
train grows.

So what we've tried to do is be more
focused on this growing 52 percent of riders who are not
commuters and the prediction that their ridership will
continue to increase, which makes some sense as I-95
continues to get more and more congested. It's actually a
hard concept for me, for example, at my age since I
commuted in the 1970s from this area and it's very hard
for me to get rid of that image of bouncing along in the
train with a bunch of commuters reading their papers and
thinking that's all this train really does. It's been hard
to get that out of my own mind. But the statistics are
compelling and a couple of additional facts are the number of people reverse commuting to Greenwich from New York City and the number commuting to Greenwich from other parts of Connecticut have also both increased dramatically as has the number of Greenwich residents now commuting to other parts of Connecticut. For example, more riders are now getting off in Greenwich in the morning every weekday coming from east and west than the total number who get on in Greenwich to commute into New York City. And that’s just a dramatic change from 1970 when we first built the existing station.

So we believe we need a revitalized transportation center to address these new trends, including a new station on the south side for the increasing number of passengers who arrive or depart from the south side, particularly during inclement weather. Also, trying to look forward the rail travel to and from New York City we anticipate growing further when the Grand Central Eastside Access project is completed. That’s due to be completed in about 2022. Now, it’s not exactly a model project in that it’s 15 years late and three times the initial budget, but it’s supposed to be completed around 2022, around the same time our proposed project by coincidence would also be completed.
And Eastside Access, just to dwell on this for a minute, results in about -- if you’re not familiar with it, it results in about half of the Long Island Railroad trains that are coming into New York being able to cut across to the west across the East River and come down into Grand Central. And the big deal for us on that is that frees up access at Penn Station because now half the trains coming from the Long Island Railroad are going to Grand Central. What we’re able to do is then start using the Amtrak line, Metro-North can use the Amtrak line to cut down into Penn Station. So it comes down through the Bronx, swings through Long Island City and comes into Penn Station, which is a dramatic change in terms of freeing up access to Penn Station with its separate labor force for both people who are commuting into the City and for people who are commuting out of the City to come out to Connecticut. So in effect we’ll be linked to another labor pool through Penn Station once the Eastside access is completed. And that is a dramatic change. It happens --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Sorry.

MR. HARVEY: -- hi Mr. Levy.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Levy has just arrived.

MR. HARVEY: That happens, in case you
don’t know it, it’s right after New Rochelle is where the tracks diverge and you can either go the Amtrak line goes off to the south and heads down to Penn Station and the Metro North now heads directly into Grand Central.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Just a quick question Mr. Harvey. He said that 52 percent of the ridership now are not commuters. What is a non-commuter, what do they do, what’s the definition of a non-commuter?

MR. HARVEY: Someone who is not commuting to their job, not traveling to their job.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So they -- in the City?

MR. HARVEY: They’re going into the City or they’re going elsewhere in Connecticut and they’re traveling and --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Are they going to jobs in other locations?

MR. HARVEY: -- no, they’re -- no. Non-commuters. This is -- which Mr. Andreski will talk about a bit, this is a different type of commuting. These are -- a lot of them are off-peak. These are the numbers that are going up as people are looking for other forms of transportation besides driving, and I’ll get into that in a second, as patterns are changing.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Thank you.
MR. HARVEY: But it’s a very good question. These statistics are pretty -- are pretty surprising.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: As soon as you open a window.

MR. PETER LOWE: Sorry. That occasions a question. So are these people possibly working flexible hours, but not engaging in a traditional commute, the 8:00 to 5:00 or 9:00 to 5:00, whatever it is, is it possible that they are sometimes working at home and then are able to have flexible hours or are you saying that they are not engaged in commuting associated with work?

MR. HARVEY: It’s described as non-commuting, which I connect with a job. But also Mr. Andreski will talk about this and be making the distinction between discretionary riders and non-discretionary riders and that to me is perhaps a better way of thinking. And if you’ve got to get to your job you have no discretion about that and your attitude toward the train and its purpose is very different than when you have discretion of not using it and you decide to use it. And what we’re starting to see now, we’re particularly seeing it with younger people, a lot less dependency on cars. Some of them having -- couples only having a single car, much more used to using Uber wherever they’re going or
Lyft wherever they’re going. A lot of the younger people not even getting licenses. I mean, this is sort of shocking to me. When I was growing up getting my license and getting that first car was absolutely the top of my list. A lot of the younger people we talked to and have spent time interviewing say, I don’t want to spend my money on a car. I don’t even want to get a license right away. So we’re seeing that trend growing, the younger people just view car travel a lot differently than we do, and the expense of a car differently. Or they rent a car for just as needed.

So I’m glad you raised it because this is a really important finding and it’s very -- we think it’s very important when we’re looking ahead how this station will be used over the next 50 years. Another change that’s happened is how riders get their tickets. The ticket office in our train station has been closed for several years now because the tickets are mainly purchased from ticket machines on the platform, or purchased over the Internet. Even I’ve gotten pretty fast at being able to get these things just in time for the conductor to come by and check my -- and check my iPhone. So Metro-North has indicated, we don’t need a ticket office in the station anymore, and what that allows is a major redesign of the
station because where is it’s a big blocker right now in terms of trying to do something attractive right on the platform.

Picking up on something I said earlier, another major change has been the way in which people get to and from the station, that’s also changed from strictly individual riders in cars and taxis instead to using Uber and Lyft, particularly the young people as I mentioned. And in addition, you’ve got shuttles coming to and from the station, which we didn’t have back when we built the original station. We’ve got bikes, a lot more people biking. We’ve got in the future probably driverless cars at some point, plus a lot more pedestrians looking for access to the station as Bruce was mentioning. So we definitely in our opinion need better drop off and pick up areas. And the Greenwich Downtown Planning Committee indicated in its report we do need better pedestrian access to the train and that’s one of the things we’ve tried to provide for.

But Metro-North has been a huge help. Mike Schiffer (phonetic), Vice President for Planning, who was at our press conference a few weeks ago, was particularly helpful. And the State has been very helpful to us on this through ConnDOT, as Bruce mentioned, particularly
Commissioner of Transportation, Joe Giulietti. Joe Giulietti, who was brought in by Governor Lamont, who actually I'd worked with before on other projects related to 30-30-30, which I've been a big advocate for and worked on in my role at the Business Council of Fairfield County, and so I got to know Joe then. But Joe is particularly qualified to be helping us on this project because he was the former President of Metro-North. So he spent his life dealing with trains so he is a true expert. And he has allowed us to work with Rich Andreski, who is here tonight, and he's nice enough to have come down just to share with you his view of the project.

So on that particular point I'd like to try to get Rich up to give you some insights. I've suggested to him, since he's traveled a long way to be here, that he'd be pretty early in the program and he could probably leave, so you might want to ask him some questions while you've got him. But he's been terrific in helping us so I'd love to have him share his view. Rich?

MR. RICH ANDRESKI: Good evening.

COURT REPORTER: Could you state your name for the record please?

MR. ANDRESKI: So I'm Rich Andreski, Bureau Chief for Public Transportation for the Connecticut
Department of Transportation. My address is 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, Connecticut.

So I’m here to support the Ashforth Company’s Greenwich Station redevelopment project. The DOT, that I represent, welcomes a significant private investment in our state’s public transportation system.

First, a little bit about the DOT and what we do. We are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the statewide public transportation system and this includes the CT Transit bus system, six passenger rail lines, including the New Haven line. We own most train stations, with the obvious exception of Greenwich and a couple of others, many parking lots, and we jointly own the rail cars and locomotives that operate in service with Metro-North.

This statewide enterprise transports 84 million people every year and it’s arguably the backbone of our state economy. But here in Fairfield County public transportation plays an even larger role where over 10 percent of all residents commute by bus or train. So Greenwich Station, again, is, you know, one of these stations that we don’t own in Connecticut. There’s one other. It is the fourth busiest rail station, active rail station in the state after Stamford, Bridgeport and New
Haven.

So Daryl eluded to these changing travel patterns. With these changing travel patterns we now see, again, slightly more people coming into Greenwich every day than leaving in the morning peak period. And while some of these commuters and others throughout the day are walking to their nearby destinations many are using Uber and Lyft and other services to connect to their final destination and that’s particularly important as we think about the evolution of the train station.

The other significant change in travel patterns, again, Daryl eluded to, is a shift from non-discretionary which typically is trips for commutation, to discretionary trips. And this is a continuation of a longer-term trend, not just here in the New York Metro area, but throughout the country. And to give you a specific data point on that, commutation on the New Haven line has actually decreased slightly, the commutation trips since the beginning of this year, while discretionary travel is up 2.8 percent and that’s just since January.

The customer experience, including station amenities, are particularly important to attracting and retaining these discretionary travelers. So again,
commutation, you typically have your head down headed to
the office, in a hurry, you have generally fewer options
and the pain point of traveling on I-95 is so great that
rail is sort of a no-brainer. As a result, we now think of
stations not strictly as rail stations, but more as
transportation hubs and the ability for people to wait
safely and comfortably out of the elements for a shuttle
bus, a car service, is a critical need as much as reliable
and comfortable train service.

The proposed building on the south side of
Greenwich Station will serve this purpose. Travelers
arriving from New York or other points will enable -- will
enable customers to remain on the south side waiting in
comfort for their connecting service. They will have a
warm, dry space in the winter and a cool place to sit on a
hot summer day.

Now, there’s ample research on how a high-
quality transit station can improve public perceptions and
actually increase ridership. According to one federally
funded transportation research bureau study upgraded
facilities and customer amenities, such as those proposed
in the Ashforth Company’s redevelopment proposal, improve
the overall public perception of rail and transit,
increase the sense of safety, and make transit more
efficient and easier to use. The Ashforth Company’s proposed investment in Greenwich Station and adjacent supporting retail development is particularly important and welcome from our perspective. The customer experience at Greenwich Station, again, it’s the fourth busiest in the state, will be significantly upgraded. Customers will benefit from improved communication, new waiting areas, new restrooms, and new retail options.

Additionally, the Ashforth Company is bringing private capital to bear at a time when State financial resources are especially constrained. If not for the private capital it would likely be 10 years, perhaps decades, before a similar public investment could be made at Greenwich Station. And DOT and Metro-North Railroad, we work very closely with Metro-North, are prepared to support the Ashforth Company’s redevelopment project. Specifically our team will provide feedback on the station design and ongoing technical and field support during construction. Collaboration of the design and construction of the station around an active electrified railroad will be key to its success.

We look forward to seeing the completed project come to fruition in the next few years. This project will have lasting benefits for our rail customers.
and we hope for your community for years to come. Thank you for your time.

MR. NICK MACRI: Mr. Andreski? I’m having a hard time getting my mind around here this -- the difference between a discretionary rider at a non-discretionary rider.

MR. ANDRESKI: So we start -- we start with U.S. Census data, which shows journey to work trips, and it does it by census tract. So if we look at the latest available U.S. Census data it tells us the story of how people are traveling for commutation purposes. So the U.S. Census makes a distinction between commutation and non-commutation. So there’s a pretty significant body of work both available from -- from the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as some of these research agencies such as Transportation Research Bureau, that talk about how people travel and for what purpose.

Typically, just to simplify a bit, typically we look at commutation as occurring between 6:00 and 10:00 a.m. on weekdays. We also have Metro-North does periodic customer surveys and that’s another data point that we use. So discretionary travels, think of it this way, they’re typically folks that are making a trip other than for work, maybe for dinner, maybe for a Broadway
show, maybe for a doctors appointment. Typically, the reason we consider them discretionary as many of them have alternatives. If I talk about congestion on I-95 typically off-peak weekdays and weekends your congestion levels are different. Parking rates at many locations your parking fees tend to be lower. Discretionary riders often travel in groups, so if you’re going to see a Broadway show you’re probably going in a group. So these are individuals that have options and they’re always evaluating, right, the hassle factor, the cost of the trip including parking and tolls, and so these are the folks that really -- where the amenities really count. They tend -- they tend to -- the perception, again, of how easy it is to use the train, a sense of security and safety, that all comes back to the way the facility is designed and maintained.

MR. PETER LEVY: Sir, could you comment on the -- the ridership over time the past few years? Has it increased? Has it stayed the same? And also, what is the significance of commuter traffic diminishing?

MR. ANDRESKI: I’m sorry, the significance of commuter traffic?

MR. LEVY: Diminishing?

MR. ANDRESKI: Oh, diminishing. Well, it’s a good question and there’s a lot of -- a lot of ways to
answer that. So I’ll echo what Daryl said about the -- the increasing preference among a different generation for rail travel. The significance is that these are trends. They’re not short term trends, we believe they’re long term trends. The significance is that the way we provide service has to evolve. There was a focus at the beginning of my career on commuter parking and park and rides and that has subsided a bit, right, because there’s these alternatives and many people are not using the car to get to the train. So I think that’s one factor.

The other factor is the evolution of the line as more of a rapid transit system. So we typically had very frequent peak period services and now what we do is if you look at our latest train schedule you’ll see half hourly service all day in both directions. So you can go to -- well, most of the day, not 24 hours. But we have significantly more service today than we did 30 years ago and so that -- the significance of that is also on the demands to the State in terms of how we invest. We have more pressures today than we’ve ever had. Not just financial pressures, but pressure to increase capacity on the trains. Operating budget pressures to get more -- to find more resources to increase service further.

And then we have this new vision from the
Governor on 30-30-30 which is taking what is already a really high-performing system and making it even better with faster service, more express service. So there’s all these external pressures on the State.

MR. LEVY: What factor does population have? Can you comment on how static the population is whether that’s -- whether you see that trend continuing and how that impacts rail travel?

MR. ANDRESKI: Yeah. That’s the most interesting part of this. The population has not increased proportionate to the ridership, right, it’s lagged. So the population increase isn’t what’s driving the ridership increases, it’s more frequent trip making. So the same person years ago might’ve been making one trip -- one round trip per day, many individuals are now making multiple trips within a day or more than five round trips in a week. So we think, again, we think that trend -- my observation just watching other regions, Boston, L.A., other parts of the country, we’re seeing -- we’re seeing this trend play out just about everywhere.

MR. LEVY: I just want to ask you some things that are a little bit off-topic. But who is responsible --

MALE VOICE: Can you speak up please? We
cannot hear. Sorry.

FEMALE VOICE: Speak louder please.

MR. LEVY: -- oh, yes. Certainly.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You know you have to have your mouth -- yeah.

MR. LEVY: Okay. So who is responsible for maintaining the platform and the reader boards and emptying trash?

MR. ANDRESKI: So I’m going to -- I’ll speak to the communications and the technology. The DOT’s responsibility is the implementation of investments. We own -- we own the tracks and the infrastructure to the State line. We fund the improvements to the railroad so display boards, as an example, are something that we pay for, but as the owners of the station the Ashforth Company makes that available to us.

MS. VICTORIA GOSS: A lot available, what’s that please? What is, that, you said, Ashforth makes data available.

MR. ANDRESKI: The space in the station. So for example, in the station building the display of the technology it’s our hardware, it’s our technology, the back-office system is ours, but the space for that is provided by the Ashforth Company.
MR. LEVY: So Ashforth is responsible for maintaining the platform and everything on it or -- so if there's an issue who was responsible for reporting the issue and who's responsible for maintaining it?

MR. ANDRESKI: The maintenance of the station is the responsibility of the Ashforth Company.

MR. LEVY: Okay. So if there's a leak in the roof, the structure on the tracks, Ashforth needs to be apprised of it and then they will take care of it however they do, is that the idea?

MR. ANDRESKI: I'm going to, yeah, I'm going to let -- would like to speak to that?

MR. HARVEY: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Before you do that --

MS. DELUCA: But don't go anywhere.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- oh, because --

MR. ANDRESKI: I won't go anywhere.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- I was just -- okay.

MR. HARVEY: I'll just answer quickly. We do not maintain the platform. That's dangerous area so we are not sweeping and painting. There's a distinction, which you learn quickly, it took me a while, the station, what is the station? Is the station the whole thing, including the tracks? Or is the station the station
building? So the station building we own and we do maintain that. But the responsibility for the platforms and making sure they’re cleaned and maintained is not us, that’s between Metro-North and ConnDOT because we are not -- we’re not insured for working on the platform at all.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Andreski?

MR. ANDRESKI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I assume that for your position you project ridership numbers in the future. Would it be okay to share those with us? Would you be able to send something to our staff so that we know what you’re projected ridership growth is, discretionary, non-discretionary? Number one. Number two, if you’ve looked at how they will arrive at the station, you said you’re no longer looking at parking considerations as much, how will they arrive to the station? What would be the -- would there still be the kind of drop off/pick up? Anything that you have that you presented to your own department in terms of the trends you’re seeing will help us, I think, assess this if you could connect somehow through the applicant and with our staff we’d be very grateful.

MR. ANDRESKI: We will make that available.

I’ll just clarify. The ridership forecasts are maintained and performed by Metro-North and we can provide -- we can
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You can steal them?

MR. ANDRESKI: -- yes, of course.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And then the other thing is, again, any information you have on what travelers look for in terms of the amenities? Because although something is being presented and you’ve reviewed it to actually have the surveys it would be very helpful. We were, in fact, thinking of surveying our own community, generally, to find out what our citizens want from their own train station. But if you have a lot of that data you could save us a lot of legwork.

MR. ANDRESKI: Absolutely. And also make available the study, the Federally --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: That amenities increase ridership?

MR. ANDRESKI: -- amenities, how amenities are linked to increased ridership.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The Federal study?

Yeah, unless it’s a million pages long and we won’t be able to understand it. Okay.

MR. ANDRESKI: No. It’s straightforward.

It’s well-written.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Great. Okay. That
MR. MACRI: Mr. Andreski, you mentioned peak times before. What are the peak times for the station?

MR. ANDRESKI: While, I don’t have hour by hour trained counts, but what I can tell you is we define peak period as 6:00 to 10:00 a.m.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And then 4:00 to 8:00, 7:00 maybe?

MR. ANDRESKI: 4:00 to 8:00, yeah, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

MR. MACRI: What about weekends?

MR. ANDRESKI: We don’t generally consider that peak travel. But it depends, again, time of year. If you’re looking at the holiday season between Thanksgiving and the end of the year that is a -- that’s a peak travel time on weekends.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Anything else? Oh, Mr. Hardman.

MR. DAVE HARDMAN: Yeah. It’s very intriguing because we’re looking at something that will hopefully be there 50 years from now and there will certainly be changes in both how we get to and from the station and traffic on the tracks themselves. What can you
tell us from your position from a planning standpoint that
we might anticipate in 10 years, 20 years? I mean, things
that will dramatically change and how you incorporate that
into bricks and mortar.

MR. ANDRESKI: I love that question. I
spend a lot of time thinking about that. There’s a lot of
discussion about the coming of autonomous vehicles and
what that means for public transportation. I will tell you
that in highly -- in dense corridors, especially with
connections to New York City, it’s unlikely that for the
foreseeable future train service will be replicated by any
other mode. Train service is a very high-volume, high
capacity means of moving people. So I think -- I think the
future as far out as we can see is going to continue to
emphasize rail. I think what will it change is the way
that people -- the reason people travel and how they get
around locally. But the connection to New York City I
think is going to just continue to grow in importance. At
least that’s my professional judgment.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. That’s our
assumption on the new plan we’re working on as well. Okay.
Nobody else? One more question, two more questions.

MR. LOWE: You’re ostensibly predating
changes to this configuration at the railroad station on
observed changing patterns, right, and yet I’m a little puzzled by the fact that population hasn’t changed, but you’re saying that the ridership has shifted. But in the face of the ridership shifting it would seem as though there are more options for people, such as Uber and Lyft and other ways of transportation. So I’m confused as to what’s -- what is predicating the need for changes given the fact that the population has stayed the -- is staying relatively stable, you’re seeing shifting, you know, 48 percent, 52 percent, whatever it is, and yet there’s also new technology, new businesses coming in that are challenging the whole underlying rationale for a railroad, if you will, or the need for the use of the railroad and you’re seeing more short term or short travel distances being utilized, but I don’t know how all of that comes together because it doesn’t seem to be -- make a logical argument.

MR. ANDRESKI: Yeah. You hit the nail on the head. It’s the trip purpose and trip length. So depending on where you’re going and how far you’re traveling that’s definitely a factor. While Uber and Lyft have made significant gains, as a matter of fact, there are more Uber and Lyft trips now every year than all of the bus ridership across the nation. So although that’s an
interesting statistic what it doesn’t tell you is that those trips tend to be shorter in length compared to rail travelers. Rail travelers tend to make longer trips. And it’s also the pain point, there’s very few good options to go to New York. You know, there’s only a couple of ways to New York from here depending on where you’re ending up and all of those ways are often congested, they’re often expensive, congestion pricing is taking effect now in New York City, there’s lots of reasons why people are now increasingly choosing rail. I think, you know, the top level number doesn’t really tell you the story so I appreciate the question. Maybe some of the data we can make available will help answer some of those questions.

MS. GOSS: Am I hearing that your objective is to increase -- DOT to increase the rail use in the state? What’s the benefit in this to DOT in this project?

MR. ANDRESKI: So every time an individual makes a trip, right, they’re participating in the economy and so trip making by itself is not the goal, just to have people riding, but the movement of people, the access to educational opportunity, the access to medical care, the access to entertainment, those are all important factors in terms of making Connecticut more livable. There are important factors in terms of driving and stimulating our
economy. We see -- there's other -- there's other research out there, again, I can make available that shows proximity to rail increases property values, it increases income levels, income levels tend to be higher around rail. So, I mean, there's these other benefits of rail that exist because rail is there.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Did you get your question?

MS. DELUCA: Yeah.

MR. LOWE: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. We kind of need to move on. Yeah, Dave?

MR. HARDMAN: Just a quick question. You've obviously participated with Ashforth in sort of the overall scheme. But if it weren't for funding and if the State owned this facility what, if anything, would you do differently than the design that we see before us right now?

MR. ANDRESKI: So, you know, we've not been involved too long with the Ashforth Companies, they've approached us and we've had a couple of meetings. It's sort of a theoretical question in my mind, there's -- we are generally playing catch-up on the investment in our public transportation system, so I would love to have a
conversation about sort of if resources -- if we weren’t resource constrained. But we tend to find ourselves just barely keeping up with, you know, bridge replacements and station platform replacements and just the basics.

I think from what I’ve seen of the Ashforth Company’s proposal it’s a very fresh, forward looking, contemporary, you know, it really opens up the sightlines, brings in natural light, improves the sense of safety and security. So we’re very interested, and again, I’ll go back to my earlier comments. It would be a very long time before we could make such a similar investment.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MS. DELUCA: A quick comment and then a question. The exciting thing about this project for me personally is that for a long time now people in town have been trying to get some sort of art installation underneath the underpass from 95 in Metro-North to connect upper Greenwich Avenue, upper downtown if you will with lower downtown. Bruce Museum is putting a big investment into -- into the museum itself and so the timing is right it seems and I just wanted to note for people that are interested in this, because I know people have been working on it for 20+ years that you’ve been very helpful in that respect and you’ve sent a copy of the process for
how one goes about going through this art installation and
who to speak with and I just wanted to note that that is
on the record and that is, I think, something that we want
to pursue.

And then my question is unrelated to that.

Could you just very, very briefly just give us an overview
of what the 30-30-30 project is and how that will impact
the Greenwich train stations?

MR. ANDRESKI: Yeah. So Governor Lamont’s
30-30-30 vision is 30 minutes on the train, you should be
able to make a trip, 30 minutes from Hartford to New
Haven, that train trip should take another 30 minutes from
New Haven to Stamford, and then 30 minutes from Stamford
into New York City. That trip today takes close to three
hours. It’s an exciting vision. We’re still working out
the details about how we’re going to move towards getting
to those type of trip time improvements. We’re taking it
very pragmatically and step-by-step. It’s a vision and so
the Governor will announce ultimately his plans for that
vision, but that’s generally the broad strokes, faster,
higher performing train service.

MS. DELUCA: And will that mean expanding
the right-of-way or what will actually potentially
physically be the impact in Greenwich?
MR. ANDRESKI: Yeah. So stay tuned. We’re doing a mile by mile review of the railroad. What we are doing is being very -- we’re grounded in this in terms of what needs to happen, so we’re looking at everything from design of trains to design of stations to higher-speed tracks. It does not mean -- I can be very clear, we’re not proposing any bypasses or high-speed express tracks coming through the downtown. That’s not in the cards.

MS. DELUCA: That’s good. Good to hear.

Okay.

MR. ANDRESKI: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We have you on the record.

(Laughter)

MR. ANDRESKI: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Thank you Mr. Andreski.

MR. ANDRESKI: Thanks.

MR. HARVEY: Yeah. Not to keep us on this topic for too long, but I’ve been spending a lot of time on 30-30-30 myself. The two big factors are first getting to a state of good repair as Rich said. The State first needs to get its tracks up to Federally mandated standards, that’s actually causing the trains to go a
little bit slower now because you’re not in good repair, it’s not fully safe, you can’t go at full speed. So that is step one, which is not as expensive. The study I was involved with is being confirmed now by the -- by the Department of Transportation.

Part two is the longer part, which is a number of the bridges need to be replaced and they need to be funded for getting the second part of 30-30-30 trying to simplify it. But my conclusion has been, for what it’s worth, that probably the future of the economy in Connecticut really depends on being able to move its human capital around more efficiently and that’s going to be very hard to do in places like 95, which is already way over capacity. So being able to -- when you look around the world at other places that have rapid transit we’re way behind on the rapid transit and our trains and it’s a lot easier and a lot less disruptive to be able to have more trains running faster than it is to double deck 95 or squeeze more people on 95.

And a very quick story, which I can’t resist, is we brought in Michael Gallas (phonetic) 20 years ago, he’s a transportation expert, consulted around the country with many metropolitan areas, he took a look at Connecticut for us and issued a study and he said, if
you don’t fix your transportation system Connecticut will become an economic cul-de-sac. And he predicted that in 1999. We’ve really made no improvements. We got through the great recession and you watch this recovery and you see how Connecticut didn’t participate in it from an economic point of view and we asked them, well, what do you mean economic cul-de-sac? Where’s the ending? And he said, well, my prediction would be you’d probably have decent development and activity and economic activity in till about Stamford and that’s about where it would stop. And that was 20 years ago that he predicted that. And so that in my opinion has become completely true and I believe that rail travel is going to be the answer.

The right-of-way changes to get the speed or not that dramatic. There’s some curves that need to be straightened a bit, there’s also technology, there is also digitization that’s occurring. All of these I think are much better than working on 95. And to answer the questions about the benefits to the DOT and the whole system the more people you can get on the train the fewer people you have a 95. So actually, some of the income that comes from the Federal government for 95 can be used if it’s a high congestion area on things like mass transit, buses, multimodal solutions, but especially trains. So
that’s how the Feds are viewing it.

And also, New York is encouraging this. New York MTA for the first time they are really encouraging growth out through the Bronx up through Westchester and into Connecticut because they’re getting -- their getting very tight in New York so they’re looking up the east side. New Jersey is going to be blocked largely because these tunnels have to be fixed for a long time, so there’s a lot of pressure on trying to improve transportation. Joe Giulietti is a huge plus on this because he’s in Hartford and for the first time we’ve got someone in Hartford who is connected to New York and Metro-North and the MTA on making all this work. So we think that transportation is hugely important, particularly rail travel for the future of the state, so this ties in with some other stuff that a number of us have been working on and I think it would be a great statement if Greenwich had the -- if that’s the truth, that Greenwich would have by far the best train station between Boston and New York and that would be really exciting and make a statement. Also, we’re the first stop in Connecticut, so that also makes a statement. So that’s -- sorry to have gone off on that for a bit, but that some of what we picked up on the future of transportation. Now, I’ll only be a few more
minutes because I want to mention in addition to the changes in rail travel we've noticed major changes in the town of Greenwich over the last 50 years, particularly in the downtown area to identify just a few into place -- I was pretty -- I was in college when we were building the one 50 years ago and worked on it a couple of summers, but I do remember very well what Greenwich was like at that time.

And what in 1970 was viewed, and I didn't use this word, another local politician mentioned this word, so I take it in the right context, in 1970's the lower part of Greenwich Avenue sort of viewed as the seedy and of Greenwich Avenue to the extent there was anything ever seedy in Greenwich, but that's how it was viewed. So it didn't seem odd then to be building a big, sort of almost walled theater at the bottom of Greenwich Avenue, there just wasn't that much there. But when you think of how the high end retail stores and restaurants have moved farther and farther down Greenwich Avenue toward the corner of Railroad and have just poised to turn the corner, right where that is, we think that's no longer a spot for a big -- for a big wall. That's one of the reasons we want to move the theater besides the fact that it's going to fall down soon, that's another important
factor, because neither Bowtie nor we want to invest in an antiquated theater building when, as I’m going to mention, theatergoing has changed dramatically also since the 1970s.

The other thing that’s happened is a lot more office buildings down in the downtown area and around the station. We’re one of the first. It was a totally spec building. A lot of people thought we were nuts when we built the building, who the heck was going to come out of New York and be in a building in Greenwich. So there are a lot more office buildings now making use of the station and the reverse commuting and so forth.

And then this movie going is very interesting because it also has changed significantly. The new theater model is a multiplex with reserved, which I think is incredibly important if you notice, luxury recliner seating with food and beverages, including alcohol, so that you have more of a full-service experience. And if you haven’t gone to one of these modern theaters yet I really encourage you to, it’s quite a different experience. And again, the younger people, as we look forward to building this for the next 50 years, we’re trying to figure out what they’re likely to want versus what we want. Just the way I don’t think we should be
thinking about creating a station that's better for the old-fashioned, heavily dominated commuting population. So the problem is the seats are bigger and they recline so you need more space even though you have less seats sort of -- and it's a little bit counterintuitive. The fewer seats you have the more attendance you seem to get because people really like in advance being able to reserve the seats for the night they want, be able to come, they couldn't see it on Saturday night so they say, oh look, on Wednesday those seats that we like are available. We're going to get them. And you actually have the attendance going up and the seating prices are not much different.

But we currently have -- Bowtie currently, our current tenant, has 654 seats in its auditoriums now. The new theater would have -- that we are planning would have approximately 546 seats. So that's a reduction of 108 seats or about 17 percent. But to do that, to allow them to get the facility they want we need about 25,000 feet versus about the 17,000 square feet that we have now just to fit those larger seats in, even though there are fewer of them. I hope you guys can all follow that, it's a little counterintuitive as I said.

And Bowtie has indicated they believe they
need at least 25,000 square feet to be able to have enough seats to compete as a boutique theater with the competition in the area. Just to give you some rough numbers, 25,000 feet here would be competing with 80,000 feet in Port Chester with the 14 theaters that are there. Stamford Landmark, which happens to be Bowtie, but here you’re talking about attracting people to Greenwich, Stamford Landmark is about 50,000 feet. Stamford Majestic, 40,000. Region Norwalk, 40,000. Royal Norwalk around 35,000. So for them to compete they really need about 25,000 feet. That’s why we’re asking for some more space for the theater to make it viable for this type of a boutique theater. It’s still considered a boutique multiplex theater at 25,000 feet.

But the smaller auditoriums also provide a civic purpose for people like our film festivals. The Greenwich International Film Festival, and the focus on French cinema, and also for private events we’d be able to rent the theater for a private event with a group. Presentation spaces in the summer and for business and nonprofits and they could be used in the mornings, particularly before they’re theaters. We have to work out parking with Katie to be able to do that, but if it’s businesses that are using it who are already here and they
can have a small say, 75 seat auditorium that can be set
up for audiovisual, has terrific sound and everything,
that could be a real -- that could be a real plus for
businesses in the area and a number of people we’ve talked
to have expressed an interest in that, businesses and
tenets that we have.

Joe Masher, of Bowtie, is going to speak
later. He’s here to testify about the changes in the
theater industry and the possible additional uses of the
auditoriums. And we also have Ginger Stickel of the
Greenwich International Film Festival and Amery Ketchum
(phonetic) of the French film group speaking on the
importance of the theaters and this change for their
future because they really actually want to see the
theaters continue.

And lastly, I’m just going to say during
these last six years in terms of trying to address the
changes we, as Bruce mentioned, have relied on the Town’s
Plan of Conservation and Development and the Downtown
Development Report for insights into the Town’s vision for
downtown. With particular focus, and the thing I looked at
very hard, was the concern for, and I’m quoting, “the
individual”, the role of the individual within public
spaces, and this is quoted from the Downtown Development
Report, by improving the aesthetic, making public spaces cleaner and safer, replace the emphasis on the individual, the pedestrian in the downtown area, by improving the public amenities and adding to them we encourage the individual to stay. The report also emphasized place making, the need to improve our public properties. And we think this applies to both the proposed train stations and to our proposed privately owned public park, which as we will describe in more detail shortly, is going to open the pathway that Katie was referring to under the tracks with the ugly trestle. And one of our meetings with Metro-North and ConnDOT we confirmed that there is a way, it's been done elsewhere, where you can put something attractive in front of the trestle that could be really attractive in a sign or a mural or something like that as long as it's not against it. They don't want anything done to it because it starts masking decay and problems and for maintenance they've really got to be able to see it. So that trestle, which a lot of people have noticed, we believe can be made much more attractive so we create a pathway and be able to lead down to the soon to be expanded Bruce Museum, which Katie was just mentioning just got a really nice bequest, and who we have met with. And Suzanne Leo, their COO, is also here tonight to speak on behalf of the Bruce Museum
and we’ve consulted with.

So finally, now based on all of the input,
I’m not going to go through them all, that we’ve gotten
from ConnDOT, Metro-North, Bowtie, Bruce Museum, the
Town’s POCO, input from residents, commuters, we talked to
companies, owners, our own tenants of course who have many
people commuting out from New York, retailers in the area
and what has changed over the last 50 years and what’s
predicted to come. With all of that sort of in our pocket
we turned to Beyer Blinder Belle, who has tremendous
experience with transportation centers, including Grand
Central, the designer of the restoration of Grand Central
in terms of what makes a space more vibrant and a place
that a community, the residents would like to spend time
and I get their idea of how we should design this for the
next 50 years.

And now I’d like to turn it over to Frank
Prial for probably what you’ve really been waiting for is
the explanation from our architect of how we arrived at
this. I’m sorry. Yes?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I believe -- you seem
to have changed the number of seats proposed for the new
movie theater. The submission we have says it will be 525.

MR. HARVEY: Yes. The -- the -- what was
submitted was sort of a placeholder for a theater --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. And so the correct number?

MR. HARVEY: -- the number that Bowtie thinks they can fit in? What we’ve done with Bowtie, and they’ve been terrific for us, is --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It’s 546?

MR. HARVEY: -- it’s 546 is what they think they can fit.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Thank you. No, I didn’t want to have a long discussion. I just wanted to get this. That’s fine.

MR. HARVEY: Yeah, well, it’s in flux and I’ll tell you one of the reasons is we’re finding as we get into the construction there’s a cantilever we might have to do over coming up the railroad tracks. It’s quite complicated construction. We might have two shrink the building slightly so the numbers been flux, you know, in flux for these seats, how many they can fit and how many theaters they can squeeze in that. And we do not have any binding agreement with Bowtie, but we want to work with them because they’ve been terrific tenets for us, but we really can’t do much with them until we know what we’re allowed to build there and whether it will be able to be a
viable number of seats for theater. But I’m glad you
picked up on that because that number since we submitted
that placeholder, that was not their final design, that
was just sort of a placeholder for around the number of
seats.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HARVEY: And Frank, I think you’re on
finally. Thank you.

MR. FRANK PRIAL: Thanks. Good evening. I’m
going to see if I can do this a little -- this way perhaps
so I can -- my apologies to people behind me. But since
I’ll be introducing some visuals it will be helpful to be
able to see both. My name is Frank Prial. I’m a principal
with the firm of Beyer Blinder Belle in New York City
where I have been employed for approximately 25 years. And
I have worked almost all of that time in or around Grand
Central terminal. It’s been a great opportunity. It’s been
a great learning opportunity more than anything else, it’s
informed just about everything I’ve done ever since and
it’s been one of the reasons that I’m here tonight, not
the only reason fortunately, rather circuitously but in a
very sort of logical way it led from one thing to the
next.

I have worked with the Malkin (phonetic)
family for many years on the building you may have heard
of called the Empire State Building. Some of the issues
are similar. My practice has mostly been involved with
restoration, but restoration of active buildings.
Restoration of buildings that are not simply monuments or
museums, but have -- present particular needs for current
use and for future interpretation.

Much of my practice has been involved in
train stations. It makes sense from the work that I’ve
done at Grand Central. It’s like to work in Hoboken, the
famous station, St. Paul, and other smaller ones along the
Metro-North and Jersey transit lines.

But I came to Greenwich through the Malkin
family having been recommended to work on the
transformation of the local Post Office to Restoration
Hardware. And I stood in this very room I think
approximately 8 years or so ago and went through a very
similar process and it’s nice in any profession, but
especially in architecture, to come to the next project as
a result of the success of a previous one. And I think,
again, there are some lessons learned from that. The
things that go specifically into how we addressed some of
the design that you’ll be seeing this evening that I will
be able to explain to you.
The charge from the Ashforth family was, quite simply, to take all of that information that you've heard so far from the people who spoke before me and somehow create an architecture that speaks to all those needs, to the programmatic needs of the site, to the expectations of the people in the Town and the Town officials of Greenwich, but that also somehow looks to the future as well. A very simple assignment, right? Well, we think that we've done the best that we could and we do it in the way that Beyer Blinder Belle always has and we call it by doing our homework.

We start with a very thorough examination of everything around it, everything that came before, everything that exists, and a little bit into the future as well. And I'd like to explain a little bit of how that work that I had done originally for Restoration Hardware was able to inform and make me think a little bit more carefully and I think maybe even more successfully about this project as well, which has a slightly different set of expectations and criteria.

You can go to the next one. This plan resulted from an examination of the local area that we did. The Post Office is interesting because it’s not only a landmark on the National Register individually, but then
it's also a part of the downtown historic district, so we needed to become intimately familiar with the District at-large. Now, my first experience in coming to Greenwich was as any other person experiencing it for the first time, very high expectations, taking the train from Grand Central, getting off and wondering if I had come to the right town. Am I in the right place? Where is the train station? Where is the downtown? And I was disoriented for a while because it took me a moment to figure out where to go and it really was an interesting distinction. I had just finished a project in St. Paul, Minnesota on the St. Paul Union Depot, which had a very similar arrangement of upper and lower town area and the train station was essentially a bridge to those two locations. And in fact, one of the goals of the project was to lure people into the lower area and kind of create a circuit, if you will, to tie the knot that would bring people to a downtown area to give them something to do and a reason to be there, not only for the purpose of taking a train.

So coming to Greenwich, experiencing it for the first time, and determined that it really took a while before -- to actually go up the hill before I had actually arrived was an interesting and I think very inspirational experience. But then we went and did a very diligent
examination of all of the existing landmark buildings, how
they were arranged on the street, what they meant to one
another, what their origins were, what they were designed
to do originally, and how they had changed and been
adapted over time.

And I won’t go into great detail, but what
I will say is that we were able to come to a series of
collisions and observations that informed the work that we
did. And one of the primary observations I made was that
the buildings of Greenwich have a similar character and I
call it a formal elegance. It’s not to say that they’re
simple or that they’re dull, because the people who
commissioned them were of means and taste and were well
informed in how architecture should be designed and they
hired very good architects. But the buildings have a
simplicity and elegance which speaks to function, scale,
purpose, and less about ornamentation and detail. So this
was something that we could use to inform the way that we
design buildings going forward.

There’s also a commonality of material.
There’s an emphasis on masonry, brick, and on stonework.
But there’s also an idea that there is a place -- these
buildings have a place in the community, they’re cited
very carefully, and they’re very carefully scaled as well.
So all that sort of informed the way that we would approach a new building such as the one that I'll show you in just a moment.

But very importantly, the site, which is at the bottom of the hill here, is what you would -- we would consider the anchor. Really sort of the destination should be a destination rather than a place that people arrive in and then leave very quickly, it should also have the alternate purpose of attracting people to it. And the lesson that we learned at Grand Central, it was very much the same. When we began our project 20, 25 years ago, 42nd Street and Times Square was the place to be avoided. It was a place that you rushed through very quickly only because you had to because you were doing it -- you were discretionary, you were not non-discretionary, you actually had to rush through to get to your train and so it was a necessary experience. But we were able to transform that, take advantage of its location and of its inherent opportunities in terms of its great architecture and be able to lure people to come to that place because they wanted to be there, or there were other similar experiences that could be shared.

We talk about the future of a building.

When I talk about the opportunities that are specific to a
train station, for example, the future is not only in the numbers of people for how it's used to service the trains, but we see the future of the building being defined by the other experiences it can provide, the other reasons that people might want to come there. Is it simply a train station or can it also function perhaps as a civic center? Can it also be a place where people gather to prepare for an entertainment experience? Is it a lobby perhaps that can also help people -- attract them and come to the theater? Can it also provide retail opportunities? Can it also be a place to in many ways celebrate Greenwich or provide a visual icon, a recognizable feature, something that people will identify with the Town in a positive way. I think that Rich Andreski spoke to the other positive experiences that people will associate and create reasons that people will want to go there even if, perhaps, they're not even taken a train.

So this was kind of the goals that we looked at. We thought that the site needed to be somehow attached to and connected to in order to provide continuity down Greenwich Avenue so that you didn’t feel like the Town stopped here somewhere, but that you could then make it come down to the station and also have retail opportunities and other experiences that would unite it so
that it was coordinated so that it became a part of Greenwich rather than feeling now as a separate entity.

There's also experiences that we talked about the ability to coordinate with the Bruce Museum. There may be on the other side of the train tracks. I'll speak about that in a little bit more detail in a moment as well.

Next. Here's an overall view of the new site. And what I'd like to do is to go through and show you a little bit in an overall view some of the component parts that speak in a little bit more detail of each of the individual pieces. I think what I'll do is I'll start at the bottom of Greenwich Avenue with the new park, which provides an amenity, it is a public park which will have two specific functions. One is a place of relaxation or a place to sit and respond to -- to relax on a pleasant day. It also provides better access up into the train platforms. Immediately adjacent is new retail. This is an entrance pavilion here and a tower which will enable people to go into what we hope will perhaps be a place -- perhaps a food hall. And I'll speak about that in a moment as well. Additional retail immediately next to it. In the center is the train station, which we consider to be the keystone, sort of the icon image at the center anchoring
the entire development.

Immediately to the west is the new theater above, the multiplex, and below parking, below grade parking. Around the other side on direct access with the North Station is the new South Station, and I’ll speak about it in just a moment as well. With improved vehicular access and there’s also a bicycle stand on the opposite side as well not visible in this image.

Along Railroad Avenue there is an improved streetscape. We will have more generous sidewalks with new trees, which will be more indigenous and be actually sensitive to the local environment. We will have canopies which provide a covered shelter for walking along Railroad Avenue. We will have an improved drop off in front of the station with access to the bus stop on the other side, but then also much more generous, and much safer drop off for automobiles in front of the actual station itself.

Let’s go to the next. Here, very simply, just to kind of show and reinforce a plan, what you saw a moment ago. Railroad Avenue, we’re facing north, this is Greenwich, which turns into Steamboat, on the very corner, again, is this park which is a proximately 3800 square feet. Immediately adjacent is a retail food market, and we envision that as a possibility of a new food hall with
multiple tenants who might be able to provide a variety of different types of food options. We see it as an exciting sort of destination. I have some images in a moment to show how we’ve done similar kinds of arrangements in New York City. Additional retail here with a combination perhaps of some retail.

Staying there is the Olive Branch Restaurant, which has a lease, which it may stay. That’s a possibility that the Ashforths are considering at the moment. There will be some construction considerations how that will happen, but it’s very likely that this piece will have structure, which will remain, but will be stripped down to it’s just bare structure and then rebuilt with a new roof and new materials on the exterior to match what we do elsewhere.

The train station at the very center here, the new north station, again, anchoring in the very center. We think it’s at the very crest of the hill here so it’s in its most prominent location to identify the site and give a kind of iconic image to it. To the left is the cinema. Access to the cinema will be through the train station so the station has a much more longer-term during the day of activity where it’s open longer -- longer hours during the day. I’ll speak a little bit more detail in a
moment.

Underneath is parking, potentially two levels, one directly below and then another possibly even below that further down which would be intended for employees. Coming round the other side on Arch Street and then up and into this new drop off area which will be widened. Coming by a new area for bicycle and scooter, Vespa parking. The numbers of course for bicycle commuting is a part of, you know, the multimodal access to train stations is just exploding so many more people are taking bikes, cycles, and other similar sorts of vehicles to get -- so this will be a place where they can be parked and then easily access the track platforms.

And then our new south station here that we mentioned as a wonderful amenity and certainly an improvement for people who are coming and going on that side of the platform, either commuting to points to be east, or in inclement weather perhaps being picked up in the evening as well with wide access by -- much safer here. Even arriving this evening at about 5:30, quarter to 6:00 this was a very congested and very dangerous and very inefficient area at that time.

The next one. And here's what exists today as one arrives at the intersection. You come down the hill
at the intersection of Railroad and Greenwich terminates and then it becomes Steamboat here. It's the existing Bowtie movie theater. Certainly is of its particular era, circa 1970, with this very attractive split face concrete block. Certainly a building that has served its purpose, but whose day and time has come and gone.

As I think Daryl very successfully expressed before, the function has changed, you know, the way that people use movie theaters, what they expect from a movie theater is completely different. It's not that they've gone away, they've just changed and transformed and so people's expectations for the better now are much higher than they used to be. So for a number of reasons, both in terms of how the expectations of the theater, but then also programmatically from a planning point of view it made a lot of sense to us to relocate this building for a number of reasons. Number one is simply its presence, its kind of hulking and intimidating presence in this location, but then also because it allowed us to consider and reconsider in a better way and a much safer way access to the train platform because many, many people use this access without actually even going up Railroad Avenue, people will park on the other side, on the south side of the railroad right-of-way, come underneath the overpass.
and then dart right up rather unpleasantly, unsafely
because these stairs now currently wraparound, up and over
the Dumpsters from the movie theater and restaurants.

So here’s what we’re proposing from a
slightly similar, slightly higher but similar point of
view. Here’s a new park designed by -- very elegantly by
Eric Rains. It’s in development so I won’t speak too much
to particular materials at this point, I’ll just kind of
give an overview to the -- to the designed elements. And
what you see here is a very large stone open area
surrounded by elm trees and local greenery. There’s an
opportunity right here on the corner, as I believe Daryl
eluded to, for a coordinated exhibition with the Bruce
Museum. There’s a spot here where perhaps a sculptural
item or some other kind of element could be rotated on a
regular basis as a kind of allure if you will to a new
connection that’s being considered and promoted to the
Bruce underneath the train trestle, which will also be
improved in some way in coordination with ConnDOT.

The access to the train will be through the
new stair here, which will be much more -- much wider. A
little bit -- we’ve stretched it out a little bit so it’s
not as steep and it makes it much more -- much safer, much
more pleasant to be able to get up and down. Now, the park
itself is aligned with an open area, but that directly
behind is a wonderful water feature which is inspired by
other similar pocket parks like Paley Park in Manhattan,
for example. And what it does is it provides an
extraordinary kind of white noise. It's a really wonderful
and relaxing experience to sit on a day such as today and
listen to the sound of the water behind you. It kind of
takes away or smooths away the sounds of the urban
environment and the trains behind it is really quite a
relaxing experience.

The park itself is also immediately
adjacent to our new food and beverage location, so there
will be an opportunity with tables and chairs to purchase
food inside and then come out and sit outside either, you
know, as an activity for morning, or for a quick coffee or
Danish or bagel if you’re anticipating the arrival of a
train. Similarly, the street experience we’ve widened the
sidewalks here, we’ve created a covered canopy to make it
a little bit more pleasant to walk on in inclement day.
The roof you’ll notice we have included as much greenery
as possible. These are green trays, which absorb water,
which also provide an extra element of insulation to the
spaces below. And then the area of the roof is also
designed to collect rainwater and put it into a tank
essentially, which will then be used to recirculate within
the water feature itself. So there’s kind of a nice way of
balancing it and using water that’s existing rather than
having to draw it from the municipal system in a closed
recirculating manner.

We have a close-up where we show a little
bit more of the activity that’s possible in this kind of
space. You’ll see how it has direct access, visual access
to the food halls here. We have clocks on the tower to
kind of emphasize its, and reinforce its identity as part
of a transit-oriented development with the functional
activity of the trains behind. And then this location here
where we left it blank at the moment, but it’s sort of a
blank slate, if you will, an opportunity for coordination
with the Bruce for some kind of art exhibitry.

Next. These were -- we thought we would
provide just a couple of visual images for the kind of
food hall that we are imagining in that space. They’re
very popular. They’ve become very successful in the City
and they appeal to a younger generation. They’re casual.
There’s an emphasis on high-quality, on the individual
identity of the actual tenants, the retailers themselves.
What’s most important is their branding and they’re kind
of emphasis on unique food products. So what the challenge
here is to create a space that's almost like a black box theater in many ways, you fill it with a number of these different participants, they bring diversity of different kinds of foods, prepared juices, foods for all manner of things that can be eaten locally or they can be packaged and taken with you. But the experience is one of sort of a mid-priced level and they're very, very popular with new or younger generation.

We see it as a place where people would want to come before going to the theater, for example, would be able to come in in the evening, stop here for something casual as an opportunity to maybe eat at the bar here or -- and then go off to the movie or take it home. Sometimes you can call in advance and they'll have things ready for you. We've done -- I've personally been involved in two in New York City, one in the dining concourse level of Grand Central, we're actually investigating a redesign there because that one's now aged out a little bit and it's been kind of a learning experience both pro and con. We were also involved in one not far away, it's called Urban Space on 45th Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, which has been extraordinarily successful.

Next. And here's the railroad station. We know it's the railroad station because it says it's the

POST REPORTING SERVICE
HAMDEN, CT (800) 262-4102
railroad station, but it's not necessarily what you would identify as a railroad station. It certainly was utilitarian and it certainly served the need. It's never the -- we have an ethical obligation as architects not to diminish the work of architects who came before us because we are very confident they satisfied the needs of their clients at that time and we think that they certainly did here in this case. However, it certainly was quite utilitarian. What it did very successfully was process people, provided a place where a ticket could be bought, where you could wait outside of the elements and then prepare for a train to arrive. But it certainly did not have much to say about the town of Greenwich and certainly did not contribute to it in any sort of great or iconic way. It's not the kind of building that you would certainly -- would appear on anyone's top 10 list of a building that you would expect to represent Greenwich in any way.

It was also difficult to, if you set, meet me at the train station, it would be hard to find because you'd have to walk up the street. There's really nothing other than the marquee that identifies it. And although it's been redone relatively recently with this dry bed exterior there's nothing much that distinguishes it much.
from the retail buildings on either side and the dark
glass also doesn’t help to understand the function that
goes on within.

    Next. So what we’ve done is try to create a
building that satisfies all of those functional needs, but
yet, as I mentioned a moment ago, also tries to look to
the future. Tries to speak to a new Greenwich. A Greenwich
that’s beginning to rethink itself and its priorities, to
look to a newer generation, and to understand how a
building can contribute to that change. Many of what --
much of what you see here has been informed by what we’ve
done at Grand Central Terminal and that is not that it
intends to copy in any way what came before it, there’s
certainly nothing here that would in terms of materials
would necessarily look like a neoclassical building from
1913, but much of what goes on within and the inspiration
that created is drawn directly from Grand Central. And
that is that the building functions first and foremost as
a train station and will facilitate the processing of
people, the ability to get safely and quickly from the
street from their vehicles up a set of stairs and to the
platform behind, but will do so in a way that will elevate
them that will make them feel good about what they’re
doing, make them feel safe about what they’re doing, but
then also provide other opportunities while they’re there as well.

It will actively encourage people to gather as a civic space, as a place where they will come to meet, to take advantage of other entertainment or food service opportunities around them. But will also then most importantly create a place that, oh yes, that’s the Greenwich Train Station. Let’s meet at the station. Meet at the Greenwich Train Station. The one that you see when you ride by on the trains or the one that you see that we’ve heard about, the one that, you know, the one that is on Railroad Avenue, the one that has that extraordinary presence on that street. So those are the kinds of ways that we began to think about and we’ve thought about what kinds of materials it would be, what it would look like. We wanted it to be transparent. We wanted it to be open to allow natural light in to create a sense of spatial excitement. To manage the light very carefully because you’re exposed to a tremendous amount of sunlight that comes in during the day, so we have some techniques for managing it.

But then also it uses materials that speak to sustainability, to durability, and to timelessness. So the building itself, the station building is sheathed in
zinc, which is a material that’s used in many stations today, but it’s also been used -- it’s a recyclable material and it is a very elegant and durable material that will age very, very beautifully. And the buildings adjacent to it, the retail building to the left and the cinema to the right, we’re using brick and we’re using storefronts, we’re using painted aluminum. The brick will be very carefully selected. It’s from -- it’s a brick that will reflect the kind of masonry construction, the sort of solid volumes, and I said this formal elegance that was expressed in buildings that we’ve seen along Greenwich Avenue.

In terms of access I talked about a little canopy here. We’ve extended this marquee out to create a better sense of security and protection from the elements underneath. Working with John Canning, and others, we have enlarged and made a much more generous drop off zone on Railroad. We have created a better connection across the street to the bus on the other side, again, all with a thought to how this works as an emphasis and an encouragement of this idea of transit-oriented development and of the active encouragement of pedestrian access. We want people to walk to the station. We want them to -- sure, they can arrive in a car and they certainly will
continue to do that, but one of the goals will be to bring people down here and encourage them to walk to this location and to feel comfortable doing that.

We also want them to walk at night and we think that by illuminating this --

MR. MACRI: Mr. Prial?
MR. PRIAL: Sure.
MR. MACRI: Can you do me a favor? Can you go back two slides?

MR. PRIAL: Of course.
MR. MACRI: Yeah, that one.
MR. PRIAL: Yeah. To this one, the existing?

MR. MACRI: Yes, that.
MR. PRIAL: Yep.
MR. MACRI: One forward please?
MR. PRIAL: No, the --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Forward. Forward. There you go.
MR. MACRI: Okay. Great. Thank you very much.
MR. PRIAL: Sure.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Similar.
MR. PRIAL: And the night view again, just
to begin to talk about how we consider this -- one of the
goals of the project is so that the building will serve a
function and provide amenity to the community not just
during the regular hours of the train station. So the
hours will be extended. More people will be coming here.
We'll encourage pedestrian access. It will be a beacon, an
icon we like to think. We use these words, but how we use
them is important because it informs the materials that we
use. The glass we think will provide visibility all the
way through. There's transparency, will not really block
any views because you'll be able to see all the way
through to the other side.

    We did -- the building is a little bit
higher than what would be regularly allowed. We will
require a variance for that, but we think that's
important. We think that's significant because this
building needs to be able to express itself, needs to be
able to say that it is the most important component part
of this large programmatic arrangement. It needs to be the
building that's most visible and identifies the railroad
station revitalization.

    Light is also very carefully controlled. I
want to emphasize that the interior light that you see is
reflective. If you look very carefully you'll see that on
the structural columns there are up lights that are directed at a highly reflective ceiling with -- what this does is allows us to create an interior glow with very, very little, minimal spill. So the light will be -- it’s almost like a -- like a lantern that has -- a glows from within, but does not give a lot of off light. There will be no illumination that will escape from here and then illuminate the night sky. There will be no up lighting along the exterior, that’s -- a little here, a little here, that’s just the rendering conceit and a little bit of reflection that comes from interior retail lighting. But all of the lighting I can emphasize will be very, very carefully controlled, it will be urbanistically appropriate and will allow this to glow only internally as, again, as a kind of like sonic beacon on the crest and very highest location of Railroad Avenue here.

Next. The other way. There we go. This is just to kind of emphasize, again, before and after. I think the term used before was an underutilized resource. This certainly I think reinforces that idea. It served a purpose and it did exactly what it was supposed to do for very long, but it’s time has come and gone and the opportunity here is to take this and go to the -- take it to the next level. At this point here, obviously, it
doesn't even seem to read as a train station, so we think
that what we've been able to do is to learn from this but
to be able to move on to this, which is our sense of how
this space really can be a celebratory location for the
people of Greenwich.

  We want this, again, to function
successfully as a train station, but to mean so much more.
And in order to do that what we tried to do was to create
an open spacious interior flooded with natural light, but
carefully controlled. You'll notice that the southern
exposure is modulated by a screen of sun break here and
then the interior at this point is still in development.
Materials are being considered. But we have proposed and
have been investigating durable timeless materials, local
granites, beautiful bronze metal handrails. The wall could
be sheathed in travertine, which is a direct reference to
Grand Central Terminal. And again, this highly reflective
ceiling above which does two things, it insulates and
reflects sounds so it has a nice -- it modulates the
amount of interior sound and keeps it to a very low kind
of hum, but then also allows us to reflect light during
evening hours up and off of it so that there's no actual
direct light down onto the floor other than what's
illuminated by the interior retail spaces and the cinema
Right around this corner back here is the elevator access. There’s two. They’re sized, as we learned from one of our early meetings with ConnDOT, to allow first responders to access the platform should that be a necessity, so there’s a technical background to all of the programmatic design work. Bathrooms are as well located around through this opening behind. But what you won’t see here is the things that you might normally associate with the train station. Where’s the ticket office, for example, and I think Daryl addressed that very successfully earlier. Well, that technology has changed. Here is some signage. We don’t know yet quite what that will be, probably arrival and departure. There’s more above here, which will signal, you know, people have come to expect now the signs that show when the trains are coming and where they’re going, so there’s that limited amount of information. But yet, ticketing is all done either remotely or on phones or in another way that doesn’t require an actual architectural programmatic space which would block the view. So that’s a benefit. We’ve been able to take advantage of that technology and have a very positive benefit on the architecture as well.

Next. Now we’ve gone around the corner,
we’re on the south side. This photo was taken on a very relatively quiet afternoon. It doesn’t really do justice to the chaos that is normally expected there during a regular normal business peak rush hour. But what you have is an existing taxi stand. These are the canopies for the platforms behind. This is the unfortunate but very efficient overpass that was installed by Metro-North a number of years ago and fortunately because we would have preferred other finishes, other materials, but that’s a subject for discussion in the future.

So what we needed to do is -- to transform this we needed to identify what was wrong with it, what wasn’t working well, and figure out a way to make it work more successfully for us. One of the things we identified was the narrowness of this roadway. At this point between the existing taxi stand and this barrier here, this planter and ventilation barrier is really just about 1 1/2 lanes, so that makes it very difficult to drop or pick somebody up to get the -- and then to -- or to just drive right by. There is right in this point an area of significant congestion, confusion, and also danger.

This vent actually allows exhaust from a significant amount of electrical equipment, switch gear, transformers, etcetera, that are -- that address the
office buildings immediately to the south and then they are obscured here by these plantings. So what we will do as a part of this project is to relocate this barrier, just simply move it back approximately 5 or 6 feet. The vents will stay where they are, but they will go into the roadway and that will enable us to increase the width of this roadway to make it about 24 feet. I think a standard highway lane is about 12, so that makes -- we’ll have drop off, we’ll have handicapped parking, we’ll have two lanes. John Canning will speak in a little bit more detail about this, but it is very, very viable solution.

But from an architectural point of view that’s all just the sort of arrival, departure, and transportation aspect look. From an architectural point of view we propose to do this, which is the addition of a new south station that Daryl and Rich Andreski spoke about a moment ago. I call it the younger sibling of the North Station beyond. The same materials, the same sort of sun barriers in the open glazing, but it will be conditioned, it will be a place to sit, there will be a place to wait for trains that are arriving or departing, or also if you arrive you’ll be able to wait outside of inclement weather for your ride to come.

Again, the materials once again are the
HEARING RE: GREENWICH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 30, 2019

1 exterior zinc, the curtain wall is glazing, the double
2 glazing insulating glass, which is very energy-efficient,
3 and then a similar kind of up lighting inside to make this
4 sort of a small jewel box without an extraordinary amount
5 of exterior lighting as well. I think that's it as far as
6 the architectural discussion.
7
8 What I’d like to say is that any projects
9 such as this, I’m simply one voice, and I think Daryl
10 eluded to our extraordinary team. It’s been an incredible
11 collaboration of very qualified and dedicated and talented
12 professionals. This is just the beginning.
13
14 CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: If I -- if I could Mr. Prial? Mr. Cohen,
15 I had originally thought that we would
16 let all of your people speak before we went to the public
17 input, but at the rate we’re going it’s going to be very,
18 very late before everybody has spoken. Most of the input
19 we have gotten from the public has been regarding the
20 architecture. So once the Commission has asked questions
21 of Mr. Prial would you be okay with us opening it for
22 public comment on the architecture itself, on the design,
23 and not having the rest of the speakers finish?
24
25 MR. COHEN: Sure. And then we have an
26 opportunity to --
27
28 CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: They can't hear you.
You know, it’s all being recorded where it’s a public hearing. On sorry. I didn’t mean to make you stand up.

MR. COHEN: -- I said, that’s fine with us as long as we have an opportunity to conclude our presentation after the Q and A.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Oh, yeah. No, we’ll -- we’re not going to -- we won’t go anywhere.

MR. COHEN: So neither will we.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. I just -- I think there are people in the public who may only want to focus on the architecture.

MR. COHEN: That’s fine.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. So Mr. Prial, what we’re going to do is the Commission is going to make some comments I would expect and then we’ll open it up for public comment.

MR. PRIAL: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And for those of you that are primarily interested in the architecture, and if you’re interested in the rest you’re welcome, but I sense from the e-mails that we’ve gotten is that there’s very strong interest in the architecture. Commissioners, any comments?

MR. LEVY: Just briefly. I just want to
make some comments. I thought that there were a lot of very good -- there's a lot of very good thinking that's going behind this and I really appreciate it, I think we all do, and I'm hoping that you even go a little bit further as far as circulating with pedestrians and vehicular traffic. I hope you can do more. Specifically drop off. I think there could be a lot more to organize that and create more space in front of the station on Railroad.

MR. PRIAL: On Railroad?

MR. LEVY: Yes. And I think that -- I appreciate all of the ideas about creating a hub and organizing different venues, retail, transportation, and other uses, movie theater, but I would encourage you to consider other configurations that might increase the, or maybe more centralize the pedestrian activity into one central hub. I mean, right now you've kind of created a park and this rather spectacular -- spectacularly large urban space and if there was a way to create a joint -- a space that joins all of these things so that the pedestrian traffic is more concentrated I was thinking that that could be a very good idea about just organizing it as a more -- making it more central and giving the, you know, this part of town a real knuckle to move around.
Now, but apart from that what you’ve done as far as I’m concerned works very well. I just think that you’ve created a very good urban solution to these problems and I would love to see a little bit more detail that makes it a little bit more about our town. I appreciate all of the ideas that you have put forth, but I know this is very early in the design process --

MR. PRIAL: Correct. That’s very true.

That’s why we’re here is to receive these very specific comments.

MR. LEVY: -- I appreciate the direction you’re going.

MR. PRIAL: Okay. Well, thank you.

MR. LEVY: I think it’s very good. And as far as the metro north is concerned the platform itself isn’t very attractive --

MR. PRIAL: Right.

MR. LEVY: -- and I don’t know what kind of relationship you have with Metro-North, but it would be wonderful if you could incorporate ideas that -- that could be put forth to them for their consideration and maybe get some real input there so that they could upgrade the platform. We have reader boards, which sometimes work, it’s taken them years for them to work and the technology
is antiquated and the information is not very useful. I have more information on my phone.

MR. PRIAL: Right.

MR. LEVY: And the canopy, as you said --

MR. PRIAL: Yes.

MR. LEVY: -- I think are -- are quite dated and in need of great repair and thought about how they can --

MR. PRIAL: We -- do you want to just --

MR. HARVEY: Yeah. I can give you a quick thought on that. Metro-North and ConnDOT are in a program where they’re redoing platforms and canopies at different stations and you get put on a list and we’re talking with them about ways of moving up on the list, particularly if we’re during the construction anyway on the rest of the station. And as you know, when you start making one area look pretty good it gets a little embarrassing for the people who have the other part and we’re hoping that with the Department of Transportation and the focus on rail and perhaps a friendly Governor who lives in our town that maybe we can get this moved up on our list so that the canopies and the platforms can be done as part of the -- part of the project. So you’re right on point on that.

MR. LEVY: And obviously because you’re
redoing it the location of things may not make that much sense afterwards.

MR. HARVEY: Exactly. They could re-look -- they could re-look at the platforms and the canopy and that’s something -- we’ve been talking with them about that.

MR. LEVY: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. PRIAL: You’re welcome. Thank you.

MR. MACRI: Mr. Prial, could you bring the slide up of the station itself? One more please. That’s great.

MR. PRIAL: Yes.

MR. MACRI: I’m kind of stuck on the fact that something we were talking about, actually, trying to find the entrance.

MALE VOICE: We cannot hear. Sorry. You’re still not transmitting what’s going on.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m sorry. You don’t shout out here. If you have a comment you go up to staff, Katie is right there, and you let her know. Thank you.

MR. MACRI: Doors to the station --

MR. PRIAL: Yes.

MR. MACRI: -- they are where they always have been. I was kind of struck by the fact that actually
you have to go into the station to go into the theater,
which would be a little confusing to me because I’m not
going to the platform, I’m going to the theater, but
there’s nothing at the street. It’s kind of strange. And I
think actually something that we didn’t address here was,
actually, the theater building itself and how it
progresses down the street on top of the garage --

MR. PRIAL: That’s correct. Yes.

MR. MACRI: -- the end of the block. It’s
almost as high as the station itself. A lot less detailed.
You do have the vertical fenestration as it moves down.

MR. PRIAL: Correct.

MR. MACRI: But the back of that building
as well --

MR. PRIAL: Will be on the side of the
platforms, yes.

MR. MACRI: -- yeah. But that’s actually a
face of Greenwich as well and I think that really needs to
be looked at and addressed.

MR. PRIAL: Yes. We’ll have similar
articulation on the other side.

MR. MACRI: I was also struck by the fact
that, actually, the station itself is very, very tall,
almost in effect I’m actually looking at all of the
sections here it’s almost another story and a half taller than just the people who are passing through and occupying it and I found that fact actually kind of strange here for Greenwich as this is our station, but now we’re creating this very large Grand Central lobby for our small town train station. It glows at night, you have lots of light inside, but it would seem to me, actually, understanding that the -- how the sun passes that it would almost be better -- you’ve got glass on one side, it would almost be better to have skylights to bring the light down into it as opposed to the north light. There are a lot of other little details and things. I think, actually, in this rendering is a good example, you have a new street tree here that looks like it’s grown up tall against the building and I think, actually, that’s one of the things maybe about the -- understanding what’s going to happen in the future, we’re looking at 50 years, the tree grows up, you had a slide here that showed, actually, the street trees that are there have grown up on the side of the building and how does that work and how does that -- any kind of interference long-term.

But I was wondering, was there any thought as to reducing the height of the building, the station itself, and giving it street presence a little bit more
steps to say, yes, this is the entrance to the station. Excuse me, actually even better, it’s not, is the entrance to the platforms.

MR. PRIAL: Right.

MR. MACRI: Because there’s nothing, as you said, it’s all automated now, you’re passing through from here to the platform.

MR. PRIAL: Right.

MR. MACRI: And when you went to the interior I see the entrance to the theater, which is a little odd to me, I see entrances to other spaces and then the elevator is kind of tucked away in a small space in one area. I thought maybe because this is such a gathering place that, actually, maybe celebrating the elevators themselves so rather than tucked away as an afterthought is actually central to the lobby because you’re going up to the platform, you have to go up to the theater as well, so -- the -- I don’t want to get into the weeds here, but I think, actually, understanding the whole scope, all of the lighting, all of the signage, everything that’s going to be happening here needs to be addressed.

And I think, actually, one thing that Mr. Levy had brought up at our briefing was that talking about why the station needs to be in the center and could it be
actually near the public park so you could pass through
the park and pass through the station to the platform. And
it was kind of an interesting idea because then, you know,
as a welcoming space you’re actually having that
transition from the street -- the procession, the street,
park, to the station itself.

Now, your thoughts on the brick, that
hasn’t been decided, but has it been informed? You were
seeing other brick that was in town, the YMCA --

MR. PRIAL: Yes. We’ve looked at samples on
numbers of buildings and we’re just at this point we have
received various samples. We just have a representative
depiction at this point, but that whole process is still
to be exhaustively studied.

MR. MACRI: -- and your work on the -- on
Restoration Hardware, the buildings that are surrounding,
what I’m seeing here is kind of a very contemporary
detailing. Was there any thought as to trying to bring in
some more traditional detailing, keeping in the perceived
character of Greenwich, the small-town New England feel,
that kind of thing?

MR. PRIAL: We thought about it and it has
always been part of our consideration. We think that there
is a way to use those materials though in a way that is a
little bit more contemporary. I mean, traditional can be interpreted in a number of different ways. Because there’s a number of buildings that look alike are from a particular period that lends to a kind of a definition, but maybe it’s a simplistic definition we think that there’s an opportunity to use those materials in a more modern way and a way that speaks to sustainability, a way that looks too, you know, being able to be more energy efficient, to having the glass -- the green roofs and so forth. But a simple expression of an intelligent use of the brick, we think, and the zinc and the metals can also have a very -- it’s traditional, but it’s a slightly different interpretation of that term.

MR. LEVY: I just would like to put forth the idea that although I agree with you scale is a fundamental idea here that --

MR. PRIAL: Absolutely.

MR. LEVY: -- that I don’t see in the cinema building. The scale of it does not represent something that I see -- that seems to be something that I equate with Greenwich, I equate that with other towns that have larger box buildings and in that regard I would like to see you do some work with that. That building would serve well to be either lower, set back, use of screened -
- whatever, to try to capture a much more elegant idea about our town. And height doesn’t serve it well.

MR. PRIAL: Bill, can we go back to the overall please?

MR. LEVY: So as in the old design you’ve created the same thing on the other side and so I think that I would love to see you do a little work on figuring that out. And also from -- as Mr. Macri said about the other side of the train tracks, that would be a good task to figure out how that should look.

MR. PRIAL: It will be similar. I will say, just to take a step back, that what you see here has been the product of an exhaustive planning study and analysis of all of the component parts and where it made the most sense to locate them. There’s also a response to FAR, to zoning allowances. My understanding is that the movie building does not exceed at this point, I mean, it’s within its allowable height at this point, so --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: That’s correct.

MR. PRIAL: -- what we’ve done is to try to acknowledge that.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: 40 feet is the max allowed in the zone and that’s what the movie theater is proposed at. The station is proposed at 50.
MR. PRIAL: That’s right.

MR. LEVY: -- right. But my point is -- my comment is about the massing and the scale. I don’t think that fits your idea that you put forth, that you’re trying to -- that you think that there’s a, you know, a nice kind of reserved elegance about some of the architecture, especially on Greenwich Avenue it existed there.

MR. PRIAL: Right.

MR. LEVY: I don’t think that that reflects your idea.

MR. PRIAL: Okay.

MR. LEVY: And I do think that, while I appreciate the glass box idea, I hope that you can work on that and I think that you can come up -- I’m hoping that you can come up with something which is integrating these large public spaces and pooling them better so that you don’t have different things going on and bifurcating the opportunity to bring people together in a much more strategic way to create a much more centralized idea about this site.

MR. PRIAL: Okay. That’s a very interesting idea. I’d like to respond only by saying that there was a very intentional reason for the location of the station. Again, it’s at the high point of Railroad Avenue. It’s,
again, we used this concept of the keystone, it’s sort of the center of the programmatic arrangement of all of the component parts. It’s centered on the platform, it’s the center of the station itself. So, you know, if you access the platforms from this building you have the choice to go, you know, to the back of the train or to the front of the train depending on where you get off, but that’s an equal distance. So, you know, the actual, like -- it’s in the location where the station has always been, you know, the one before it and the one before that, the original one that was -- that the Ashforths purchased in the late 1960s.

MR. MACRI: But does it really need to stay in the center? I mean, Grand Central Station the train goes to the end and you walk down to the platform and if you want to get to the far end you walk to the far end of the platform.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah, but now they have the entrances from the north side for that very reason.

MR. PRIAL: I’m not sure that -- well, it’s to be discussed, obviously, but --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. It’s something to be thought about.

MR. PRIAL: -- absolutely.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: How about comments from the other Commissioners?

MR. LEVY: I just want to -- a comment that I'm not -- my comments have nothing to do with where it is, it can be in the center, but I do think that you do have to really think more about drop off, because that happens and that will always happen.

MR. PRIAL: Yes.

MR. LEVY: And it's a mess right now and just not to do anything about that is unfortunate.

MR. PRIAL: Well, I think we do. John Canning will speak to some very specific improvements that we've made that work in concert with the street.

MR. LEVY: The idea of creating more of a -- a procession up to the tracks is a very elegant idea and you've kept things kind of the way they are and there might be an opportunity to push that structure back a little bit and create more of an open area so that that receiving can seem more like the entrance to something. So I just think there's a lot of things that you will hopefully explore and I think you're going in the right direction --

MR. PRIAL: Well, that's helpful. I mean, these are very helpful comments.
MR. LEVY: -- just one comment about these things and --

MR. PRIAL: Thank you. We certainly will.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Other Commissioners?

MR. MACRI: I have one more question. The south side?

MR. PRIAL: Yes Sir.

MR. MACRI: We’ve heard testimony that the ridership is actually increasing both coming and going. It seems that the south side has gotten bigger --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, it doesn’t --

MR. MACRI: -- here, okay? But --

MR. PRIAL: It doesn’t exist. Yeah. It’s a new building.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- it doesn’t exist.

When you say bigger, it doesn’t exist.

MR. MACRI: -- okay. It doesn’t exist.

MR. PRIAL: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: 500 square feet is all it is.

MR. MACRI: Can I ask you a quick question?

MR. PRIAL: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: What’s going to be constructed is 554 square feet.
MR. MACRI: Where did the taxi office go?

MR. PRIAL: It’s no longer there.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: They’re not going to have one anymore.

MR. PRIAL: Yeah. That’ll be addressed -- either there’ll be an off-site solution for that or they will, you know, most of the trends and drop off/pick up are going more towards app-related, you know, Lyft or Uber, so there will be -- we won’t need the physical sort of brick and mortar presence of the taxi stand anymore.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The issue, however, and I don’t think you’re the right person to address these two, what’s going to happen, that’s a circulation question. We’re going to wait until we get to Mr. Canning. Do I have any more architecture comments? Okay. After that goes Peter Lowe, who’s tried twice.

MR. HARDMAN: Go ahead Peter.

MR. LOWE: David, no, please.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Go ahead.

MR. HARDMAN: I have a much better understanding of what you’re trying to achieve with the stations themselves. You know, my concern is really about how you dress up the warehouse look of the theater building --
MR. PRIAL: Okay.

MR. HARDMAN: -- how you might improve the facades of the retail, it looks like there’s a lot of glass. But you mentioned formal elegance in your analysis of what makes Greenwich Greenwich and I don’t see much of that outside of the station itself. The station and its form and the light is one discussion and I think we’ve covered that in great detail, but I think you’re challenge will be to work on the of the buildings because I think we’ve got a great opportunity, as we talked about in the briefing this morning, to create something that 50 years from now we’re saying, gee, we did a good job 50 years ago. And today, you know, the existing cinema looks like, you know, a block house.

MR. PRIAL: Right.

MR. HARDMAN: So I think you’re challenge is really where do you capture that formal elegance and it doesn’t have to be cookie-cutter from what you see everywhere on Greenwich Avenue. There’s a lot of variety there, but I just don’t see that on either side of the station.

MR. PRIAL: There is an opportunity to break down the mass. We’ve done a few gestures. I think you can see, Bill, if you go back, breaking up the facade,
you know, with fenestration, with lighting that can be eliminated. We can, you know, there's sort of a horizontality to it that we can use to break down this concern that the -- of the height. The parking below will be open, that's actually a pre-cast concrete system, which is 50 percent open so that we can have ventilation for the parking below, but we will also incorporate a vine -- a green vine system that will allow a growth that will actually come up like a vine that will enclose the building as well, which will give it a softer kind of greenish look as well. But there are ways that we can certainly look at that.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Lowe?

MR. LOWE: You mentioned -- you eluded to the buildings in Greenwich and described their function and purpose and it was less about ornamentation --

MR. PRIAL: Yes.

MR. LOWE: -- and we can argue how you define ornamentation. But when I look at that box that has an extra I think 10 feet above the current regulations my question is, why that high? And I believe you said it needs to be able to express itself. And I like that phrase, but I have no idea what it means.

MR. PRIAL: Okay.
MR. LOWE: Alright. I think -- I think some people are struggling with -- and this -- the applicant is going to have to struggle with justifying the height of that building to the extent that there is any kind of objection to it.

MR. PRIAL: Sure.

MR. LOWE: If you could possibly address yourself to that? The other thing, when we move the movie theater down there in place of the parking lot you -- and, you know, I recognize there are trade-offs in various design features, but you eliminate the view from the platform looking back up this way, which you can look up Arch Street and back up to Town Hall and suddenly that’s blocked over by the movie theater, cement blocks. Just comments and if you could address yourself particularly to the rationale for the extra height of this center?

MR. PRIAL: Sure. When I say, express itself, I mean to have presence. We think it’s the most important building of the composition. Clearly we probably have spent the most creative energy and, you know, drawing from the inspiration I mentioned just a moment ago we think because it will be the signature building which identifies the project and also we hope that it will become a civic center. You know, this is how we define it
in terms of its multipurpose use. So the extra height we think well just give it extra significance. You know, it will define it as the most important building in this composition of other programmatic uses adjacent to it, a theater, retail, park, parking beneath. Clearly this is the most important building, the one that defines the redevelopment. So we think for those reasons it justifies a more important presence, you know, a greater -- and we don’t, you know, to stand there, I mean, I think we can certainly do studies that will explore it. It’s not out of scale with the other buildings around it we don’t think where there’s a kind of a commercial quality and nature to the street there. There’s the car dealerships, there is an office building, you know, on the other side, on the north side of a similar height, a very, very similar height. So we don’t think that it really will be completely out of scale or will speak to itself or be arrogant in a way, we think that it will in fact be one of a company, you know, one of -- consistent with the other buildings in that area. We also don’t think it will block any views. We’ve made it as transparent as possible. We didn’t want it to be imposing. We looked at opportunities, we looked at other, you know, studies where was closed. We even looked at skylights from above, but we didn’t think that it
responded to the sun and we didn’t think that it was as transparent or as spacious as it could be and as we’ve tried to define it as such.

So, yes, we’re asking for a little extra height but we think that it’s justified because it gives the building the meaning that we think -- or it contributes to what we hope the building will be.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Ms. Goss?

MS. GOSS: My concern -- you just said that you didn’t want the building -- you didn’t think the building, the train station would be too imposing, and my concern, which I did mention earlier, is that some -- in the past there have been comments about the imposing light that comes out of the Apple Store at night and the imposing light that comes out of the Chase Bank near the library and I’m seeing the food market that has -- the possible food market with a lot of light and the station with a lot of light. Would light to be imposing?

MR. PRIAL: No. As I mentioned before, light is as carefully designed, as controlled as any of the architectural elements. We will work with a lighting designer. We’ve kind of anticipated those kinds of concerns. The light will be completely internal, it will be reflective, it will not be directed in any way, in
other words, it won’t be shining from the inside to the
outside so what our goal will be is for these elements
that are illuminated to glow so that the light will be
kept within. Because we’re very sensitive. We’ve had
other, you know, we’ve had these concerns in other design
projects where the light cannot come to the outside,
cannot illuminate the night sky, cannot flood or, you
know, go into anyone else’s, you know, windows across the
street. So it will all be very carefully controlled and
kept within.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MR. MACRI: Just -- Mr. Prial?

MR. PRIAL: Sure.

MR. MACRI: Do you have the architectural
drawings on slides?

MR. PRIAL: Yes, we do.

MR. MACRI: Can you bring up drawing A-201?

MR. PRIAL: Sure.

MR. MACRI: Back.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Go back.

MR. PRIAL: Almost there. There you go. One
more. There you go.

MR. MACRI: So the central station, that’s
only about 10 feet taller than the theater?
MR. PRIAL: That's correct. It goes to 50 feet, right. And the theater is at 40, which is within the allowable maximum height.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So that's why they do that, change to 6-205. Because that gives them the 25 percent extra on the height, which is 10 feet.

MR. MACRI: Because I think, actually --

MR. PRIAL: And you'll see it doesn't --

MR. MACRI: -- one of the things that really wasn't well represented in the renderings was actually the theater side of the building itself I think coming up on as you pass by the building on Railroad Avenue in either direction I'm not too sure if that thought of its extra height giving it significance because I would think that, actually, most people would perceive the height as they're moving past it. It would seem that you have the center building of glass, but you still have that wall of building as you pass down Railroad Avenue in both directions. I just wanted to make a point of that, or note of that. Do you have renderings of the -- of the theater side of the building?

MR. PRIAL: No. we don't have those developed yet, no.

MR. MACRI: Thank you.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Alright. So with that if nobody on the Commission has any more questions we’re going to open it to the public for comment. But if you would just keep your comments to the architecture and if you’ve got comments other stuff stay tuned because we’re going to talk about a whole bunch of other things, traffic -- oh.

MR. MACRI: Actually, just something I noticed. Actually, we were talking about the height of the building, what did you say it was? The height of the building?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The theater is 40, the station is 50, the text amendment 6-205 proposes that they be able to do 25 percent extra height for transit.

MR. MACRI: Great. That’s what I’m looking for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Okay. Public, first hand up? Do we need a sign-up sheet Katie?

MS. DELUCA: No. But I think if people could kind of just queue up and --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m going to just ask everybody one thing --

MS. DELUCA: -- and get ready to come up behind.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- try to keep your comments brief, try to stay to 3 minutes. We’ve got the time or.

MS. MARY HALL: Sure. I’ll try.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Huh?

MS. HALL: I’ll try.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m going to say that. Don’t worry. Okay. So my Commission always wants me to say all of these things. Okay. Because it’s 9:30 right now and we’ve got a long way to go still, be brief. And if somebody else has made your point you don’t need to come up and tell us, you could just say they’ve already made my point, but don’t make it again, okay? Just tell us so that we can do this efficiently. I can’t say this to lawyers unfortunately.

(Laughter)

MS. HALL: I was married to one but I’m not.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I hope you told -- no.

MS. HALL: I did, always be short.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Please go ahead Ma’am. And could you identify yourself for the record?

MS. HALL: My name is Mary Hall. I have been the Director --
(Interference on microphone)

MS. HALL: -- I didn’t do it.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, you can’t get too close I think. There you go. There, you’re good.

MS. HALL: Okay. I have been the Director of Greenwich Green and Clean for over 30 years and I spent hours and hours and hours on the --

(Interference on microphone)

MS. HALL: -- the downtown portion of the Plan of Conservation and Development that we are currently replacing, so a lot of this is very familiar. We’re a city who wants to be a village. Unfortunately, if you took a poll of the residents tomorrow probably 90 percent of them would say, could you just lower the station part? I think they will have a problem with it because it doesn’t have to stand out and be the most important part, it just has to be a cohesive unit.

But my other point is I’m thrilled to

pieces that the Ashforth group will not receive a penny from creating green space. That park will help put the waterfront and downtown Greenwich together so that we can utilize them and the Bruce Museum is doing more and we will try to get lights under that bridge because nobody will touch it. It’s somebody else’s job always, but I’m
determined to get lights under there and be able to walk. The greenery, I have to tell you, 26 or 7 years ago when you entered Greenwich from Stamford the weeds on Exit 3 adjacent to the garage were yea high, they were horrible and the rat problem was huge, they were bigger than dogs and I somehow or other, Greenwich Green and Clean convinced the DOT to clear it and since then thank you Ashforth properties, you have kept the grass cut, you have kept it clean. Their record of creating green to make the architecture look better, the architecture ain't gorgeous, but the plantings have been fabulous. And I am very, very concerned with being able now to put trees and greenery adjacent to the platform. I failed before. It's going to happen. We're going to put more green not only in the station but around it. But thank you Ashforths.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you very much Ma'am. Hi. And if you would identify yourself for the record?

MR. DAN QUIGLEY: Hello. Dan Quigley from District 1. Excuse me, I've got a frog in my throat. As someone who lives in District 1 off West Elm Street, and has for 18 years, I grew up off Lake Avenue, I've seen Greenwich from different perspectives. I've seen it from
the mid-country perspective where downtown is sort of this
transient area and now I’ve been in downtown where I
realize it’s actually a community that functions totally
differently if you don’t live there.

This is something that my wife and I have
been talking about for years. When are we going to get a
new train station? How do we do it? How much is it going
to cost? I think we’re presented with an opportunity here
that we’ve really got to make sure we don’t mess up
because we have the Ashforth group here who is willing to
put the risk into this on behalf of their own interests,
but also in the interests of the town and we’re being
given an opportunity to have something that other towns do
not have the resources to have and our town would not be
able to do if it was a public project.

There are other issues involved I know, but
in terms of aesthetics when you come to Greenwich you
expect a certain standard. We don’t have it now and I
think that for the most part the architecture here gives
us something that’s kind of unparalleled and as the
gateway to Connecticut from New York, the best town in
Connecticut, our Gold Coast in my opinion by far, we
deserve something a little bit better than other
communities probably have. They can argue that Greenwich
should have the best train station in the state when you come into the state you should know you’re at the nicest station. I think this accomplishes a lot of that.

You guys can obviously hash out the issues with the cinema, but I want to urge the P&Z Board to not let the trees obscure the forest. This is a great opportunity. Don’t fine-tune this too much. Do not get involved in the minutia of, this is 4 feet too high. This is going to be drop dead awesome when it’s done if we can get this done. And as I said before, there’s other issues involved, they can get worked through. The Town will work through with the Ashforth group.

The one question I have, and that a point I want to make is, the only thing I didn’t see elementally in the design of the glass cube is a place where people can sit and use their laptops and their iPads. This is not supposed to be a transport hub where you kind of just walk through it, that’s what it is now. No one wants to go in Greenwich Train Station, it’s gross. You walk through it to the train, you come out the entrance, that’s it.

This is a place I think where people actually it’ll be a destination. I would take it -- I’d get there 30 minutes early just to grab a bite to eat, sit down, answer e-mails, look at the Internet, and the only
thing I don’t see is maybe a place where people can do
that. So if maybe you guys can mull that over that would
be interesting.

Secondly, I heard a comment before about
obscuring the view of the Town when you come in. I
commuted for 15 years from lower Manhattan, every time I
got to Greenwich the only thing I see is Rolls-Royce,
Bentley, Lexus, that is not the optic that you want when
people get to Greenwich. That’s the optic we kind of want
to avoid, right? This is the superrich town with the
Rolls-Royce dealerships. That’s what you see when you come
in on a train, Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Greenwich Motors,
Lexus. If something can block that out I think it’s
actually an asset and not a negative.

So good luck to you guys. Thank you for all
your hard work. Thank you Daryl and the Ashforth group.
Awesome.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Mr. Pratt
(sic) -- Mr. Quigley. Thank you. Ms. Pratt? Identify
yourself?

MS. JOAN STUART PRATT: Hi. Joan Stuart
Pratt, also District 1. My question -- I have a question
and a comment. My question is, do you think all of the
existing trees on Railroad Avenue are going to be cut
down? I can’t imagine Mr. Malkin approving that and I’m hoping -- I know there’s some analogies made to the train station, which is absolutely a fabulous design and I like it, I’ve been commuting since 1983 and lived in Greenwich for 52 years, I would like to see if you could keep the trees -- if there’s any way of keeping our existing trees and making the sidewalk not as wide and maybe some more greenery on the sidewalk like parts of Greenwich Avenue have grass on the sidewalk. I’d like to see less concrete. I like the park a lot. I was hoping for a little bit more greenery, more grass.

And with respect to the building, I would like to get the answer about the trees, but my other comment --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We’ll work on the trees for you, okay?

MS. PRATT: -- perfect.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MS. PRATT: That within the building, to Dan’s point, having seating and I -- as someone who -- I’m a three-year -- I’m someone who needs a three-year-old to show me how to use my phone I would like to see train schedules and at least like in the Stamford station how they’re up on the board where you can see what the trains
are. If there’s not going to be people in there, I’d like
to see people, but if that’s not going to happen we
definitely need train schedules and have them refilled.

And I was just wondering, with the height
of the building is there any ability in your design that
you could somehow create maybe a center platform or
something where you could go up or on the south side, like
a balcony where you could go up and actually see the water
view? I think that would be a really cool thing to be able
to see if you could create something in the middle.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I swear, I do know her
from the Junior League, but I did not give her the idea. I
said the same thing this morning.

MS. PRATT: Oh, did you really? And
speaking of the Junior League, that’s funny, I’m an active
Junior League member, I’d be curious to know within the --
hopefully within the main train station, I understand it’s
a passageway to get to the food court and the theater, I
think it would be a wonderful idea if there was a wall or
a section of a wall that could be attributed to local
stuff going on in Greenwich such as Junior League events
that we might want to promote something, or if the Bruce
Museum wants to promote something, or the United Way wants
to, we have so many wonderful organizations in town.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Ms. Pratt.

MS. PRATT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Sir? And if you would identify yourself?

MR. JEAN-PIERRE GEANET: Yes. Jean-Pierre Geanet, also District 1. And I really appreciate the time to be able to speak to the Board, and of course the applicant here. I think he’s done a very nice job and he’s got a great team. The architect has done a wonderful, wonderful work as well.

I do want to comment on the height of the building. I think it’s appropriate, in my opinion. I have an engineering and a planning background and I am a developer, so I just want to disclose that so that -- my thoughts are it’s a great plan. I think it needs more work in terms of the master plan itself. I think the circulation and the pedestrian access needs work also. I think escalators should be considered. There is an aging population, as we all know, and having the stairs that are there today now certainly don’t work. They don’t function well and they don’t serve the elderly populations that we’re all moving into.

And I thought that the icon concept and the Gateway, if you will, to Greenwich is a very important
planning tool and I think it does need to be celebrated
and emphasized as, you have arrived to Greenwich. And we
are a very distinctive town and we deserve to really have
a distinctive element and a piece of architecture that we
can be proud of for years to come. If we’re planning this
for 50 years I think you make no small plan. I want to
encourage the Board to realize that this is a very
important opportunity and I don’t want it to be missed.
You have this applicant willing to pay 47 -- or bring in
$47,000,000 to improve the area. I still think though when
I do the per square foot prices with all due respect
that’s, let’s see, you said 25,000 square foot, the
theater? And you probably have another 20,000 square feet
of retail space? That’s about $1,000 a square foot.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Geanet, they can’t
answer your questions. You can only address us when you’re
speaking.

MR. GEANET: Oh, I’m sorry. But I do think
even more should be spent and I encourage the Board to be
bold here and not nickel and dime the developer over 10
feet. I think it does need to be high and it is consistent
with the fabric of Greenwich Avenue and downtown. And this
is really the anchor, it is the anchor, it’s the bottom of
the Avenue.
I agree with Mr. Levy that the circulation to drop off needs work, and again, the pedestrian access moving up and down needs a lot more thinking. The park, does that want to be on an anchor on a corner or not? We don’t know that. I think that that might want to be looked at a little bit deeper as a planning solution. So I’m not quite sure that that’s where it wants to be.

Finally, with respect to the architecture, here is the thing about cinemas and theaters. They turn their back on the community. They’re completely internal. There are no windows, there’s no street appeal, it’s just a brick wall. It’s very unattractive and it’s not safe at night and I think there should be more thought to that as well. And maybe the good Board has the sense to say, maybe we need to be flexible on the FAR requirements here. It is on top of the train station. It doesn’t need more parking. So maybe an increase in FAR in exchange for more money being spent downtown should be considered by the Board. Why not? This is the one in a lifetime opportunity. None of the Board members sitting up here today will be here 50 years I presume, maybe Katie might, she’s probably the only one.

MS. DELUCA: I hope so. I hope so.

(Laughter)
MR. GEANET: So I do want to emphasize to the Board, please be flexible. Understand that this is a unique opportunity. We should not have a theater on the first level, it should be the second story, give them more height. Put retail down. Look at what’s going down toward Railroad Avenue, it’s a brick wall. Go to Port Chester, it’s there. What a mistake they made on the water to put the theater in a downtown destination. What were they thinking? I encourage you, the Board, have courage, do not allow a theater on a ground floor, period. Give them another height, give him more FAR, he’ll be happy to take it and let him dump more money into downtown Greenwich and make it a better place to be. It will be a fantastic hub, transportation hub. Give him more FAR, let him be more creative. Have his architect go to work and improve the streetscape because it’s not working in my opinion. Thank you so much for your time.

MR. MACRI: Mr. Geanet? Mr. Geanet?

MR. GEANET: Yes?

MR. MACRI: The theater is on the second floor.

MR. GEANET: Pardon?

MR. MACRI: The theater is on the second floor.
MR. GEANET: It’s a brick wall at grade and all you’re looking at is a brick wall. There’s no people fabric, there’s no streetscape.

MR. MACRI: Yeah. I think we pointed that out before. Thank you.

MR. GEANET: And so the curb appeal is very critical and important.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you very much.

MR. LEVY: I think those were good comments.

MR. GEANET: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Sir, if you would identify yourself?

MR. DEAN GAMANOS: Dean Gamanos, District 7. Thank you, by the way, for putting this together. Great opportunity and I want to echo the sentiment that a project this important should receive a lot of attention. I think a lot of great work has been done. A very impressive presentation. Thank you for sharing the research with us.

I do have a couple of comments on the architecture and I think there’s some brilliant strokes here, some of it a bit futuristic. But my main concern is, it’s a little disparate. You know, I’m not in favor of
what’s there now, but it does have a certain unity to it and here I see a mammoth brick theater on the right, I see a glass cube in the middle which is not at all of the same elements to the right, and then the string of stores is a different level altogether. It just I think needs a little more balance and unity.

And I think there was some drawings by the architect of the Town -- the aerial view of the Town and, you know, unity with what’s up on -- where the new store is, where the old Post Office was, and the historic buildings around there I don’t sense a connection to the rest of the Town. There was talk about the theater, which looks very large, and I, you know, if we could support that theater, fine, but it does I think look like a big block to the side of the station and maybe it could be scaled down a little bit.

Frankly, I went to the Majestic Theater in Stamford where they have these super soft lounge chairs, I sank into it, I said, this is -- this is just too much for me. Maybe the millennials like those movie theater chairs, but they’re not for me, and maybe a little more research could go into whether we need that kind of work here. But a good first step. I think we should keep the project going, look at some alternatives, and thank you for your
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Mr. Gamanos. Ma'am?

MS. RENEE KETCHUM: Good evening. My name is Renee Ketchum and I’d like to speak with two hats on a couple of architectural points. I am President of the Alliance Francaise of Greenwich that started 16 years ago, focus on French cinema, which is been in Greenwich for the past five years. We bring 6,000 people to a five-day festival, three of which are celebrated at Bowtie Cinemas. I work very, very closely with Bowtie. It’s an extraordinary festival of newly released films that brings a very international focal fund community to an already international community. Focus on French cinema has made Greenwich a destination for some of the best films, the newest films never before seen in the United States, so I’m thrilled with this incredible effort and I’m embracing celebrating what the Ashforths have come up with in terms of this design. Greenwich needs a movie theater. It needs a movie theater that is modern where you can sit in these big chairs, you can watch the films. I see 150 films a year with the Selection Committee. You can enjoy the best of French language cinema, have a glass of wine, mingle with your friends. I think it’s fabulous.
I especially like the access from the train station. With Greenwich being the gateway to New England, the gateway to this incredible international community that is Greenwich how wonderful is it to get off the train, you walk into Bowtie, and there you are in France, or Haiti or North -- or any focal fund country. I'm thrilled with the design. Just to me any town that doesn't have a very active cinema is a very, very sad place and this new cinema will allow not only us, but I see Ginger Stickel in back of me talking about GIFF, to celebrate the best of all film from around the world to have ongoing cinema throughout and bring people together in the town of Greenwich. Thank you very much to the Ashforths and to this committee and to everyone who spoke tonight. I think it's brilliant.

Secondly, I've lived in Greenwich for 40 years. I am the parent of millennials, one of whom is just moving out to this area, to see this kind of design, this new kind of innovation that is going to bring young people out from New York, have been buying real estate in Greenwich is to me fabulous. So thank you to everyone, but especially thank you to the Ashforths and the designers, architects, for this really innovative design. I really celebrate it. Thank you.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Ma’am.

MS. GINGER STICKEL: Good evening. I’m Ginger Stickel and I am the Executive Director of Greenwich International Film Festival, as well as a resident of Greenwich. And first, I’d just like to say thank you to the Ashforths and to the Town of Greenwich for your consideration of this project. I’ve lived in Greenwich almost 15 years and my husband commutes to the City five days a week. My children and I go into the City quite often on the weekends using the train and, frankly, Greenwich Plaza it’s the first impression many people have coming and leaving Greenwich. So I think the modernization of that building and structure is incredibly important for Greenwich going forward.

As Executive Director of GIFF, as we call the film festival, I’m here to speak in support of this project from the founders and our major supporters of the film festival. Just a little background. We’ve hosted a world-class film Festival in Greenwich for the past five years. We attract about 10,000 people through film premieres, educational panels, speaking events, networking receptions, and it’s created a tremendous amount of benefit for the Town of Greenwich, 1.5 billion positive media impressions with coverage in all kinds of news
outlets, many of which talk to the importance of having a film festival and an active arts and cultural community in Greenwich as a reason to come to Greenwich, to live in Greenwich.

And we survey our audience every year after our festival and every year we get negative feedback about the theater because it is not state-of-the-art. It is, you know, as they mentioned earlier there haven’t been as many improvements done to it because, truly, the plans they’ve outlined would be amazing, to enrich the experience, offer more of a luxury experience viewing the films. We attract many distinguished speakers and filmmakers. Bowtie Theater is the only theater in Greenwich that offers DCP capability, which you need to screen these high-quality films.

Greenwich International Film Festival has partnered with a number of organizations that have benefited from the theater and would tremendously benefit from the new plans. We’ve hosted fundraisers for them, special screening events, we’ve partnered with the YWCA of Greenwich, the Breast Cancer Alliance, with the Alzheimer’s Association of Connecticut, the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich, and many other organizations. And all of these events have taken place in the theater so I
realize, you know, it may not be the most attractive side of the building, but it’s a very important piece and you really cannot scale it down. You know, to have a theater and a civic space like this I do feel like the plans are very thoughtful and considerate of it.

So anyway, we are very much in support of this and I’m happy to speak off-line or answer any questions. But thank you to everyone who’s been involved in this project.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you very much.

Wow.

MR. ERNST SHERMER: Sorry. My name is Ernst Shermer, Cos Cob, District 8. I want to first thank the P&Z Commission. I know you do lots of work and so much and it’s not often really recognized, so thank you for everything you do. I highly, obviously, commend the applicant. It’s the top of economic activity and development that’s so badly needed in Town and I think it’s a bit an exceptional one therefore I would also ask the P&Z, you know, to really try to wear a very supportive hat.

What I’m missing architecturally about this whole thing so far is usually when I go to a major train station, and I’ve been to train stations on three
continents, the first thing is, where am I? Where is my
guest tourist information? Where is my special assistance
if I’ve got a problem, where would I go? I think we need
to change our frame of thinking here. This is not a cattle
transportation into Manhattan and out, this is a new whole
area where this is kind of -- where the community gathers,
where things are happening. This is not quick transit in
and out.

I would encourage the architect to look
around again. You didn’t really have a lot of Greenwich
people in your pictures. I was missing people that carry
luggage. I was missing strollers, families, we have lots
of pets in town. I was missing people, you know, finding
lockers. For instance, if we have out-of-town guests one
of the things that’s so badly needed at any train station
is, where can I safely deposit my luggage if I want to
take a stroll around the Avenue or if I want to, you know,
take advantage of the beautiful sites and so on? I would
encourage more interaction cooperation with like CTA, the
bus, if I need to go to Greenwich Hospital, if I’m going
to take the Captain Island Ferry, so let’s please work
together. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Mr. Shermer.

MS. SUZANNE LEO: Hi friends. Good to see
you again. I'm Suzanne Leo, I'm Managing Director of the Bruce Museum. Our name has been mentioned more than once in this presentation and so I thought it would behoove me to come up here and address you directly about these plans.

As this body well knows the Bruce Museum is expanding and we are doing that with this view that the new Bruce project would be an opportunity to develop downtown Greenwich as sort of a cultural center. I think that's been touched on a little bit, but it's important to recognize that we see the proposed rail station as an opportunity to really support our vision by providing the connectivity, and for lack of a better term, kinetic energy that will help bring people down the Avenue. We talked about that a little bit, but for the Bruce Museum that's a really pivotal idea. You start at the top of the Avenue with its very vibrant galleries, you get about halfway down to the Greenwich Arts Council, its sort of an intermarry space that provides a lot of arts programming. The new rail station would then enable this sort of opening up to the Bruce Museum, which is currently interrupted as we've mentioned, by the aging train station, the railroad trestle that's really sort of attractive, the dark I-95 overpass.
And Katie, good job on getting information on how to do a public art project in that space. I know that something that you and I talked about for six years. So let’s get it done in our lifetime. I like it.

This project’s proposed park and pedestrian-friendly environment, the park again was referenced at the corner of Steamboat and Railroad, that sort of environment would help connect these seemingly disparate sections of Town. It would unify them. And it would really sort of grant access to the Bruce Museum which feel so separate from the rest of downtown Greenwich right now.

The new station will draw visitors to the Bruce Museum as well. We see this as an opportunity to put up some new signage, the much needed signage to train passengers, new directional signage that alerts potential visitors to our location, sort of insight some wonder, what is this Bruce Museum for new visitors, and to provide easier access to the museum. Over a third of our employees take the train every day and many of our visitors come via train. I don’t have specifics, but I’m happy to get them for you.

I think it’s really unique and commendable that the Ashforth Group is working to integrate the new
Bruce plans with the station plans to develop a shared vision and I don’t know that that’s ever really been done here before to this extent, to have a public/private partnership work with another public/private partnership to create a unified vision and that’s something that’s really unique and I think, as I said, should be noted and is commendable. So I think to echo what a gentleman from District 1 said, Greenwich is really a world-class community and it deserves world-class amenities and the Bruce Museum is really excited to support this project and work cooperatively on it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Ma’am. Sure.

MR. JAMES RITMON: My name is James Ritmon. Growing up in town people knew me as Jimmy, so I kind of go by both. So you want just to talk about the architecture, correct?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: That was the idea, but as you saw, people got off topic and I have a feeling the next speaker is not going to necessarily be architectural. (Laughter)

MR. RITMON: Well, from an architectural standpoint I would like to commend everybody who is involved with the project on the applicant’s side. I think so often there’s criticism of people that come up before
you and it is clear the time and the thought and the care
that has gone into this project. Somebody commented about
the cost, I don’t know the cost, but that sounds like an
awful lot of money for a family, a developer to bring into
this town and I believe that looking at this project the
open space, I mean, most developers wouldn’t plan -- come
to you with a first draw with open space and it’s clear
that they care about what that looks like for the town for
people that show up in the town.

Then the retail is beautiful. The new
station is beautiful. The movie theater is thought out
about what people want today and going forward for the
future. So I think the architecture is incredible.

If I can continue just as people have gone?
I want to thank you all for your time because I’ve sat on
different boards and have given time to community
organizations and I know what that does and so thank you
for your dedication and what you do for the town. Growing
up in town the town is changed. People sometimes don’t
want change, but I think change is inevitable and this
change is clearly good for the town. 17 years ago I moved
back to town and started working for a commercial real
estate company, Newmark Knight Frank, and as such we do a
lot of the local real estate in the town. I would say
about 60 percent, humbly, on the commercial side for
office and retail space in town. We have given the
statistics I think, and advised behind the scenes for both
Katie and for both Mr. Tesei about real estate.

We also get to travel around the country
and we see a lot of the projects around the country and
have represented a lot of the firms, a lot of retail firms
mostly around the country, so we get to see a lot of the
retail projects, the important ones around the country and
we examine a lot of the best towns and cities around the
country, so from that standpoint I look at this and I can
tell because we've seen incredible projects and you can
tell when a developer really cares about something versus
whether they're just looking for a return on investment.
And there's clear care in this project. So I'd like to
commend the applicants for that.

People like to say that Greenwich has a
problem with retail. I don't think that. I think this
actually will create better retail cause the retail that
you have now will extend the Avenue and it will create it
going on to Railroad, which right now the retail on
Railroad is service, but it's not -- it's not driven. This
will make it be and I think across the street will then
improve because of what this developer is looking to do.
So despite my involvement in real estate I do not come here as -- I do not profit from this, I do not work for the Ashforths, we are not working on this project, I come here as a resident. Of my 43 years on earth 31 have been as a resident here and I care about this town tremendously. I’m a huge Yankees fan, I gave up Yankee tickets tonight to be here, so you could say that after my parents, my wife, and my kids, the town of Greenwich is number two, and so I really do think that this is an incredible project for the town.

To improve the train station the retail parking is something that should be a common goal of the Town and the residents. I think every real estate development in some respect is a public and private partnership, this one clearly is. And when Mr. Harvey was talking about what the downtown was or what train travel was in 1970 it made me -- I wasn’t alive, but it made me think about what -- what the downtown was. And what -- if you think about where more people coming into the town now what they see today if you look at the pictures of what is there in comparison of what they’ve proposed this is now such a better way to show off Greenwich. And if you think about the big difference in what the town was you didn’t have -- most of the people who lived in the town were
probably commuting into New York City or commuting somewhere else. The big transformation in the downtown over those past 50 years has been the -- really this start to it was these office buildings and it’s grown the downtown and it’s created a very diverse business community in our town and our downtown.

So now you have more people that are able to come here and more people that will be able to stay here and work to give their time as opposed to commuting in and out of the City two or three hours to boards, to charities, to coaching their children’s -- so it’s amazing thing the transformation that this development started with 50 years ago and this thing continues in that.

So in short, I think this is a beautiful design. I think it’s a big, big win for the Town of Greenwich, for the residents, and for the future and I thank you for your time. I thank them for their time and effort in this and I hope that you will look fondly upon this -- favorably upon this application. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Sir. Mr. Tesei?

MR. PETER Tesei: Good evening Madam Chairman and members of the Commission. I speak to you tonight really with three different perspectives. One as
the Town's chief elected official, and the other as a 50-year resident of the town and also as a parent of children being raised in Greenwich. So the first perspective as the Town's chief elected official one has to look at is in the context of the broader community and several years ago I gave a speech to the Chamber of Commerce on the state of the Town and in talking about what we're looking at toward the future in terms of development and having come out of the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development I said something to the effect of, we're not Stamford, we're not Darien, we're Greenwich. And I believe that Greenwich is a community of neighborhoods. We pride ourselves on that fact. I spoke to that earlier today before the Historical Society as they look for accreditation and looking at what their role is in relation to the Town and its history.

When we look at downtown it is our urban area. It has, yes, residential, but it is our economic driver and when you look at Greenwich Plaza and you look at the train station and the accompanying buildings in close proximity to 95 and the rail line you realize that is the engine that pumps life into the community from a business and commerce point of view. So this particular current facility has met its useful life at 50 years of age. It is certainly showing the affects and I think the
proposal before you takes into consideration many design elements that appeal to present and future -- future generations and I think that’s something I hope you would look kindly upon, recognizing that your job is to make sure that it incorporates into the size and scale of the community, getting back to, we’re not Stamford, we’re not Darien, we’re Greenwich.

I want to also bring you to the point about the functionality and we were hearing from the gentleman from DOT who had metrics. One of the things as he was speaking that I thought of is the fact you may be aware of, there’s been a change in use of many of our commercial office spaces. What was built in 1980, 1990, maybe 1970s, accommodates far more people today than it did back then and that’s due to the change in the nature of businesses and finance, trading floors and so forth. So when you think about trying to reconcile the data points I’m much more of a practical person so I just know from my campaigning for this job I’ve been down on the train platform and I see the people coming off the train and I see younger people dressed in attire more suited to that environment of trading floors, casual, earbuds in, and they’re passing to those offices across the way or up Greenwich Avenue or on the corollary streets. So I think
you have to really take into consideration through your
own efforts perhaps, data what’s taken place in those
buildings and FAR and the number of people. And also,
James, who’s here, who’s on my Economic Advisory
Committee, he’s also shared some of this evolution with us
as we talk about vacancy and who’s going in and going out.

So that’s one element. The other is
accessibility and I’m sorry he was not able to stay, but
Alan Gunsburg (phonetic), who chairs the Disability
Advisory Committee under our office wanted to speak
tonight about the importance of the ADA compliance. I
believe we’re now approaching, what, 30 years since that
was enacted? And he, himself, worked with another resident
to establish this committee because that other resident,
who is now deceased, had a very unfortunate set of
circumstances where she was essentially trapped on the
platform coming in from a show in New York because the
elevator wasn’t working and that gave way to her rallying
cry to address ADA throughout the Town. Her name was Carol
Kinnea (phonetic). And Alan wanted to make it clear
tonight that this is a proposal he supports and one that
fully addresses ADA, which is something that a community
like Greenwich should -- should be in compliance with.

Finally, I think it’s important to note the
role that Greenwich Plaza, Inc. and the Ashforth family have played in this town. These are -- this is a known entity to us. These are Greenwich residents. These are people who are deeply vested in the Greenwich community through many generations with documented philanthropy and heritage who have given back to the Town and I think that is important in the overall value proposition in assessing the benefits to the Town, protecting the interests of the Town, while providing them the response to go forward because they care about the community. This is not some outside developer just looking to make a quick profit, these are people who have shown and demonstrated they care about the community.

So as you look at this and as you look at what they’re proposing and the professionals they’ve brought I’m sure that you will do your due diligence, a hard job, one we’re thankful for that you signed up to do, very thankful, and hope that over the time that we can have a transformative redevelopment that serves the Town not just for 10 years, 20 years, but for the next 50 years. And recognizing, finally, that you’re not just the Planning and Zoning Commission you really are the economic development arm of the Town by virtue of your ability to grant approvals for land use and I believe Greenwich Plaza
has -- has and remains the largest single property tax payer in the Town and so I think that fact is relevant to what’s done here and how it’s done. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you very much Sir. Ms. Fasiliotis and you’ll probably have to still give your name to the Court Reporter.

MS. KAREN FASILIOTIS: Yeah, I will. I always hate following Peter by the way. My name is Karen Fasiliotis. I am on the BET, but I’m speaking as an individual tonight.

Just to correct the record, Frank Prial, he referred to downtown, the downtown area in the 70s as being seedy. As a person who worked at one of the pizza places down there I can tell you that we had the Food Mart, we had Quinn’s Market, we still have St. Moritz who has survived all these years, and it’s true we had a couple of bars and that’s I think where the reputation came from, but it wasn’t really seedy.

I’m also one of the few in town I think they can remember what Greenwich was like before the Ashforths build the train station. I actually remember as a young kid bounding across the tracks as the diesels came in, putting a penny on the track and watching them smush it and then getting them after that. When the Ashforths
build the building in ’72, actually, the two buildings and
the train station, there was a lot of debate back then and
a lot of people didn’t like it, but it became part of our
fabric and it’s now what is.

I’m not one that’s supporting this current
design only because I think that the charm of Greenwich is
not glass facades with lighted interiors. I’m not a fan,
for example, of the Apple building or the Chase Bank. I
think that we can design better. We can design a structure
that will speak to us, but it will not be a New York City
type of building, it will be a Greenwich type building.

I’ve heard a lot tonight about Grand
Central and how we want it to be like Grand Central, I
don’t particularly care for that type of architecture in
Greenwich. It’s great in New York, I don’t think it’s
great here.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You mean the Beaux
Arts?

MS. FASILIOTIS: Right. I also am a fan of
the pocket park, but I think there needs to be more green
and less pavement. If it’s going to be a park let’s make
it a park. The food thing on the corner that anchors the
corner I’m a little skeptical about in this area only
because they’ve tried it in Port Chester at the Tarry
Market, for example, and it didn’t really work because it’s closed now. So I’m not really sure if that really would work here.

So while I’m excited that we’re going to revitalize the area I think that we need to put a little bit more thought into the structures, how it will look. We aren’t New York, we are a New England town, I’d like to see more of that charm going forward.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Thank you Ma’am. Sir?

MR. JOE MASHER: Good evening. My name is Joe Masher, and I’m the Chief Operating Officer of Bowtie Cinemas and we would, frankly, love to be --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You’re not going to comment on the architecture, or you?

MR. MASHER: -- I am about the theater, that’s exactly why I’m here.

(Laughter)

MR. MASHER: We would love to be a part of this project. We have a great relationship with the Ashforth Company. If it was not for the Ashforth Company that current theater would not be there right now and Greenwich would not having a movie theater. So it’s a relationship that we’ve had with them that we’ve had since we’ve acquired that theater in 2006 from the Crown
organization that has really led us here.

Bowtie Cinemas is a four generation family-owned company whose owners live here in Greenwich. It’s still owned by the same family that started it in 1900. I’ve been the Chief Operating Officer now for going on 16 years. What we’re asking for is a 25,000 square foot boutique theater that we really think will fit in with the character of Greenwich. We don’t build cookie-cutter theaters. You know, the one that’s there now we inherited, I actually happen to love it, I love that big auditorium. I’ll be sad to see it go, but we’re actually, you know, we don’t build cookie-cutter theaters. We tailor each theater to the town that we’re building in.

We are currently right now going through a wave of renovations giving people the modern movie amenities that they like, luxury reclining chairs that people can reserve ahead of time, a variety of food options, and we tailor the menus to different towns. For instance, in downtown Stamford when we launch our food and beverage operation at the Majestic Theater on Summer Street this fall we’ll have brunch, so we’ll have movie brunch with egg sandwiches and mimosas, etcetera. In Greenwich I’m picturing lobster rolls and, you know, some kind of really like more upscale seafood pasta kind of --
kind of amenities that we’d have there and upscale beverage options as well more so than we have currently in our Norwalk theaters.

However, if you’ve not been to our Norwalk theaters or to the one on Summer Street yet I encourage you to do that and test it out and see. It’s really revolutionized movie going throughout the United States and we’d really like to bring that to Greenwich. The current theater now with three screens cannot adequately serve the community. It does not offer modern amenities. It really got crushed when Port Chester opened. The theater has been struggling. It is not bringing people en masse downtown to support the restaurants and retail that it should and that the new one would. So we are asking for a 25,000 foot box. We would love to continue our relationship with both film festivals and, you know, thank you for being here to support the theater project as well. And, yeah, that’s all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The question that we asked today, how long ago did we try to do the Arts Center, 10 years ago?

MS. DELUCA: Something like that, yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: About 10 years ago

Greenwich tried to do some sort of performing arts center
and it didn’t take off because of lease issues. Is it all possible for a movie theater to have a dual life and have a stage that could also accommodate the performing arts in this space that you’re creating? Is that at all possible or is it not practical?

MR. MASHER: If you want to give me 50,000 feet and a second floor, sure. At 25,000 feet it would be very difficult. But what we do -- what we will offer in this theater, I already have an agreement with National Cinemedia to bring the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts here so we’ll have live Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. We’ll have a birthday party facility where parents can rent for children, you know, to have a children’s birthday party and a movie. The auditoriums will be available for rent in the mornings for business meetings, etcetera. But in order to the stage and everything I think you need an auditorium with 3 to 400, 500 seats to be successful.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: If it was, say, 100 or 200, if you could combine the 200 seaters that you have, somehow if you had a wall that moved and had a stage, that doesn’t work?

MR. MASHER: Probably not with soundproofing.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It’s just that our
dream of having a performing arts center just goes farther away and this is a perfect location because you could take the train in from anywhere.

MR. MASHER: Well, this is something new to me. I haven’t heard this idea before.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I just tossed it out. No, I mean, it was just something that -- I’ve always been sad that we don’t have that opportunity here, but it’s not feasible given the design of what works. Okay.

MS. DELUCA: Does Bowtie have any performing arts centers?

MR. MASHER: No.

MS. DELUCA: No. so you’re strictly movies?

MR. MASHER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MR. MASHER: Yeah. In order to be competitive and to remain competitive against Port Chester we really need to do --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Six screens.

MR. MASHER: -- you know, six screens, yeah, to be able to offer a variety of product to keep people in town and keep people going to the restaurants.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. I’m thinking about things. I think Greenwich Ballet doesn’t have a
stage it can use in town for example at all, you know?

MR. Masher: Yeah. We can put the portable one in front, sure.

Chairperson Alban: That's -- and that's not -- that's not a huge space need and I think that you could accommodate when we do have a big -- anyway, I just wanted to ask --

MR. Masher: Well, we can think about it.

Chairperson Alban: -- because that dream, that pipe dream goes further each time. But thank you very much. Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Masher about the theater? Six screens seems optimal to you with two of the theaters being --

MR. Masher: Six to seven, yeah.

Chairperson Alban: -- okay.

MR. Masher: With 546 seats.

Chairperson Alban: Okay. 546, yeah. Got that.

MR. Masher: That's it.

Chairperson Alban: Okay.

MR. Masher: Yes, 546, that's the current -- that's what we're asking for.

Chairperson Alban: That's what you're asking.
MR. MASHER: Which is 108 less than the current theater has.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. Yeah. And -- well, as long as you're here I'm going to go into the weeds for 2 seconds --

MR. MASHER: Please.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- because you may not come back. Right now theoretically the approval that was given long ago for this theater is that you wouldn't have any showings during the day for anybody but children. Now, I know that's not the case, I think the whole world knows.

MR. MASHER: Right.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Is continuing that makes sense to you? Because I don't even understand how that condition happened. It's not like a 5-year-old is going to not need to be in a car that gets parked when they go to the movies.

MR. MASHER: Or be in school.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: But if they go at a 2:30 matinee or whenever they get out of school Mom's going to park the car and go in with them.

MR. MASHER: Well, we play whatever's available, whatever comes out from Hollywood. And what we try to do with his three screen theater in order to keep
it competitive is to play the best independent product we can find and also the best family product.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m asking you a different question. Does it make sense to continue this restriction that in theory only children can go in the daytime?

MR. MASHER: I don’t know of any other restriction anywhere else where that would --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MR. MASHER: -- so, no, is my answer.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The applicant has kindly offered that it would continue if we can work our way to resolving the parking. It seems that a theater is better business if you can use it during the day --

MR. MASHER: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- especially when you’ve got the film festival that is during the day. So in theory it was a prohibited activity, but it doesn’t make sense to me that we continue prohibiting you having daytime use.

MR. MASHER: Now, we’re limited to --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: To me. I haven’t polled the rest of the Commission, but as I read it I had never known you had that restriction.
MR. MASHER: -- yeah. It was, you know, you’re limited to what Hollywood has and there are oftentimes where there aren’t family movies that are in the marketplace. You know, come fall they start, you know, with horror and independent film and things like that and upscale commercial, so you really don’t get a lot of family stuff again until Christmas.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I also know a lot of people who they like going to them, they’re retired and they want to go with all of the girlfriends to a movie in the afternoon and that’s kind of what the film festivals do as well. Okay. I just wanted to validate that with you. It didn’t make sense to me. It seems like it limits the business.

MR. MASHER: I’ve never seen it anywhere else in any other theater we operate, or any other theater in the nation.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Alright. So we would -- I see that Ms. Cronin (phonetic) has taken note of the questions.

MR. MASHER: Alright. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Alright. Thank you very much Sir.

MS. DELUCA: Ms. Alban, if I may? Did
anybody lose a wallet? It was, I think, in that back corner.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Just open it up and see who’s it is.

FEMALE VOICE: See who’s it is.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We know you’re not going to steal the money Katie.

MS. DELUCA: Oh, it’s Karen’s. It’s Karen’s.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, no, you can’t look, you’re a lawyer.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Cohen?

MR. COHEN: If I may it back to architecture for a moment?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yes Sir.

MR. COHEN: We’re finished with our architecture presentation. But the reason that we’re here before you on a preliminary basis is to get feedback. So we’ve gotten feedback from the Commissioners, we’ve gotten feedback from the public. As you noted, Michelle is taking notes like crazy and we do have comments that we will take into consideration before we come back to you.
But it might be a good idea before we go too far down one path or another if we also were able to get the input of the ARC and so I think I would ask if we could get this referred to ARC sooner rather than later.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Absolutely. Right?

MS. DELUCA: Right.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I -- the one comment I have about the architecture is I'm struggling to reconcile what we have heard tonight with what we heard for the POCD. The POCD input sounded more like what Ms. Fasilitis, if she's still here, the overwhelming comment was to retain community character, no tall, no super modern, we got that over and over and over again. The commentary we've heard tonight has been very different, so I don't know how to reconcile that, what that means, if that's representative of how the Town will respond or not. I wonder if we shouldn't try to get our own information. Because we want to build something that the Town is going to love and be glad that got done. And I think we're here in that case to respond to what the community wants the most and all we heard, New England village character. In fact, I've heard this when the Selectmen have interviewed us for staying on the Commission that that's what the message that they get as well.
That being the case, we have to explore it before we really gave you feedback. And I’m not even -- I think go ahead and talk to ARC, but we have to somehow figure out what the Town is looking for.

MR. COHEN: Sure. That’s ultimately going to be your job. ARC, as we know, is advisory only. But I would assume that in addition to the comments you’ve heard tonight and from your own members that you’d want that input as well. And we certainly do before we go off in one direction or another.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Right.

MR. COHEN: So we’ll do that before we come back to you and we’ll take into consideration the comments we’ve heard tonight.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So on the architecture I hear that people love the idea of something that is surprising, that has great light, that that seems to have resonance. And a lot of the stuff that we’ve talked about tonight seems to be working for people. Then the only question is what about the streetscape and this polarity we’re hearing?

MR. COHEN: Yeah. We heard that tonight.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: A little bit. We heard it -- we have a book of feedback that’s this thick from
the community sessions and everybody wanted New England village character, which isn’t what we’re talking about tonight. I just want to head in a direction that the community is satisfied with.

MR. COHEN: I’m sure you do. And I’m sure you don’t want to see a Disneyland kind of approach of cutesy little low scale buildings.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No. Absolutely. You’re absolutely right.

MR. COHEN: So that’s one of the reasons we brought in a firm like Beyer Blinder and Belle because they’re capable of thinking new things with some older materials. But in any event we will go to ARC before we get back to you. But before we sit down I have the impression that you’d like to hear from John Canning about the drop off/pick up situation and he’s prepared to talk about that and to answer any other questions you have.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Does anybody want to break a first for 5 minutes?

MR. COHEN: I do, desperately.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: 5 minutes? 10 minutes?

10 minutes.

MR. LEVY: 5.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: 5, okay. Make it 5.
I’ve been overruled. 5 minutes.

(Off the record)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Hello Mr. Canning.
MR. JOHN CANNING: Good evening Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. So I was just telling the rest of the Commission what I told you earlier that there was a mixup and I did not receive your traffic study. So I’m flying blind here --

MR. CANNING: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- much to my chagrin.
MR. CANNING: Okay. No problem.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Canning, would you identify yourself and proceed please?

MR. CANNING: For the record, John Canning with Kimley-Horn. Good evening Madam Chair, members of the Commission. I’m very glad that we’re finally having this discussion. There’s been a lot of work that went into this. It’s a starting point for us and I know as I go through the presentation that we will have many comments. The applicant really wanted to present something that they could deliver on and there may be issues that we will add to. We’ll have to discuss how we would have to move the
So basically with that we did conduct a traditional traffic impact study where we studied the four intersections that are surrounding the development, Railroad and Arch, Arch and Horseneck, and the Greenwich Plaza drop off, Greenwich Plaza and Steamboat, and then Bruce Park, Greenwich Avenue and Railroad Avenue. We also looked at the drop off areas and I just wanted to point out that, obviously, you know it’s busy down there. A lot of the day because you’ve got people going for the early train, many people coming into Greenwich to work, many people leaving from work, then you’ve got people coming home on the train.

The Town is in the process of implementing an adaptive traffic signal system, which basically is a real-time traffic signal, it counts how many cars go through, and when there’s a little lull it’ll adjust the timings a little bit and when there’s a rush it will lengthen them a little bit. Based on discussions with your DPW it’s expected that this will improve traffic operating conditions at the intersections. I’m not promising that all of your problems will go away.

Next slide there please? Thank you. So we looked at the potential trip generation of this project.
For the most part, it’s relatively neutral. The train station is a little bit bigger, but it’s basically we’re not adding capacity or frequency to the service, we don’t anticipate a significant increase in traffic associated with the station itself. It’s our hope that it will be as much a meeting place as a traffic generator. I’ve been through Grand Central Station hundreds of times, I don’t think I’ve ever gone there once just to see the station. I’ve gone there -- I’ll tell somebody, I’ll meet you there, and then we go somewhere. So it’s that kind of, you know, community place that we expect it will be.

The theater, as we said, is getting bigger in volume, but it’s revenue generators are basically, you know, food and beverage, and reserving seats and all of that sort of stuff.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And it has less seats.

MR. CANNING: It has less seats. And so when you have a blockbuster you’re not going to have 650 people there. So that’s kind of a slight reduction. On the retail we noticed that there’s 3,000 square feet in the basement but we didn’t count for existing conditions, so it’s a net increase of 3,000. It’s a modest increase. So overall, the net increase in traffic associated with the project is relatively modest.
Can we go to the next slide, Bill, please?

and we did a comparison of the delays and changes in level
of service. By the way, did the other Commissioners get it
as well, or are you the only one that --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Did anybody get the

traffic study?

MR. CANNING: I see a lot of no’s. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. We didn’t even

realize that we already had it till we got the comments

from BETA in the afternoon.

MR. CANNING: And I didn’t know there were

comments, so we’re --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So we’re square.

MR. CANNING: -- yeah.

MS. DELUCA: That fights a preliminary.

MR. CANNING: Okay.

(Laughter)

MR. CANNING: So I’m sure I’ll be back and

you’ll have comments or questions on the traffic study.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’ll be ready for you.

MR. CANNING: Basically we’ve looked at the

changes in level of service and in the morning there’s,

you know, it’s very modest, a few tenths of a second up or
down. In the afternoon when the retail is there it’s
slightly bigger. I think the largest increase -- it was mostly red there, but it’s a few tenths of a second. And then in the evening when the theater is actually -- most of the theater is actually later on in the evening, but you have some in the afternoon for the late matinees and because people come down from the Greenwich uptown and they go through all of the intersections and in and out of Greenwich Plaza because we’re reducing the size of the cinema you get a slight reduction in delays associated with that. But it’s really not all that meaningful.

Next slide please Bill? What’s more important really is how this facility, how the train station, the drop off and the pick up areas are going to function, how they function now, and how they’re going to function in the future.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I think that’s -- you’re on.

MR. CANNING: And is a combination of a number of things. Right now you’ve got Railroad Avenue, you’ve got the existing parking, red is just regular parking, blue is ADA accessible parking, you’ve got the existing drop off area here, which is basically enough for two cars on the north side and it’s even blocked in by parking. So if you drive along and you want to come in
here it’s not even that easy to get in. On the south side
you’ve got something similar. You’ve got the -- we’ve
actually got, you know, a taxi parking area. So you guys
will remember probably 20 years ago when you go through
LaGuardia or Kennedy the taxis used to all wait there and
eventually it became such a mess they said, okay, we’re
going to have a special taxi waiting area. You guys can
wait over here and we’ll let some of you in.

So the idea that your front door is
basically 10 spaces that are reserved and full of taxis
doesn’t make a lot of sense and I’m not sure how long
taxi will be around anyway and if they are around will
they function more similar to the Ride-Hail and Rideshare
and they’ll have apps so you can app a taxi just like you
can app Uber.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. So one of the
questions on that is it all sounds very good --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- except, have you
tried to pick up somebody at Kennedy anytime recently?

MR. CANNING: Yeah actually.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And all of the Ubers
are all over the place looking for a place to wait?

MR. CANNING: Yeah. I’m one of them, yeah.
So I’m not Uber, but I --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: All of the Ubers are all over the place and then the cops keep circulating because all of the Ubers are parked --

MR. CANNING: -- yeah, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- that’s what’s going to happen. That’s the picture of the future, isn’t it?

MR. CANNING: Right.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. So how do you accommodate that so taxis go away?

MR. CANNING: So we’re going to -- we’re going to work through this a little bit and then tonight --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MR. CANNING: -- and probably at the next meeting. So I’ve got, actually, if you can go to the next slide, Bill, please? So this is just a blowup so you can see it a little better, the existing and the proposed on the north side. I mentioned the two drop offs and the parking and the ADA parking. So what we’re proposing at this stage basically is to double the size of the drop off here and also to open up this area because this is the driveway. So now if I’m driving and I want to pick somebody up I can pull in here rather than try to come in
and jimmie my way in here. So there’s a little more room
on that side and, you know, it’s something we’re going to
talk about a little bit. And I know I’ve heard comments
about increased sidewalk and pedestrian accessibility.

Next side, which is on the -- oh, this is
just a photograph, a graphical representation. This is
what you’ve got today, it’s basically two spaces, and then
there’s parking from there down. If you look at a visual
representation of what we’ve proposed, so you increase the
drop off area back so there’s four spaces and then this is
where the driveway to the upper garage will be.

And the next slide looking from the -- oh,
I guess we lost a slide. Don’t worry about it. So this is
the south side. Today, basically you’ve got the 10 taxi
spaces, you’ve got four ADA spaces, these are drop off
spaces and they’re signs on them now, if you leave your
vehicle you’ll be towed. And then you’ve got no place for
shuttles and you’ve got a little bit of parking on both
sides and it’s very narrow. It’s actually 19 feet from the
curb to the verge here and it’s about 10 feet from when
the taxis are parked. So what we’ve proposed to do is,
first of all, we recognize that shuttles are a big part of
Greenwich now and we expect it will continue to be so we
wanted to provide a shuttle area so you can get them out
of the travel lane and not be backing everything up. To do that we’ve taken the ADA spaces and we’ve moved them over to this area, which is also flat and can accommodate them, and then we provided a drop off area next to them so you can just pull up here and we’ve widened this by about 5 feet, so we’ve got 14 feet now, 4 or 5 feet, so that you’ll be able to pass by the drop off a lane and pass by the shuttles. If you either have already picked somebody up or dropped somebody off, if you’re parked here, or if you’re coming out of this space or going into this space here.

What else have we got? I’ve got one more slide I think. Oh, that’s just kind of -- I never finished this one. I was kind of in a rush today. So basically what I was putting together is just showing you how the parking is here. Usually the shuttles are in here and I’ll have to come back to you because I ran out of time on that one. Sorry.

So from a parking perspective basically to provide a second point of access to the lower level garage we have to reduce a few spaces and to provide sightlines. So we’re losing five spaces on the street, but we’re increasing this parking lot from 36 to 45, so that’s 9 --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: That’s the parking lot
under the movie theater, the new --

MR. CANNING: -- that is the parking lot immediately under the movie theater. It’s accessed from street level up 26 feet. And the lower-level parking, which will be for employees only, is accessed at street level from 18 feet, it’s 14 spaces, so there’ll be a net increase between on street and off street spaces of, I guess, 23 minus 5 is 18 spaces.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- are those -- are these charts in your study?

MR. CANNING: They’re in the plans, I believe, that were submitted. And this table is in -- is in the study. I think I added this on this.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m not recognizing this chart. I must have it. Okay.

MR. CANNING: So my goal here tonight is to listen to you guys, tell me what you see for this area, because everything is a trade-off and I’m going to have to work with you and DPW --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Could you make sure we have this chart? Because it’s just not resonating --

MR. CANNING: -- of course.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- because I know that tonight was the first time I heard the -- I saw the 550
seats, up to.

MR. CANNING: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So this is just a handy chart. Just if you could make sure we do have it somewhere? Because I kind of don’t remember it.

MR. CANNING: Absolutely. And again, as somebody mentioned earlier, this was sort of a placeholder, somebody said it’s up to, it’s now 546.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah, yeah. We got that. Yeah, yeah. We got that.

MR. CANNING: Okay. And I’ll make sure you get that.

FEMALE VOICE: Is it in your --

MR. CANNING: No, just remind me. Remind -- I don’t want to forget. Just to write it down.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: He says it’s in the plans, but I just don’t remember seeing it.

MR. CANNING: No, no. I thought -- I thought you were talking about this. This is in --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, no. I meant that cute little table.

MR. CANNING: -- the table -- this is Table 4 from the traffic study and I think I added this on the bottom.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Alright. That’s what I was interested in is about table.

MR. CANNING: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It’s just a little different layout than what we have in the narrative I believe. Okay.

MR. CANNING: So that’s the presentation.

MR. LEVY: The second level of parking, how did -- why do you -- how did you come up with 42? Was there -- what is that linked to?

MR. CANNING: Basically it’s the number of spaces -- it’s the number of spaces we can fit in from here to here and we’re leaving a little bit of a gap at the --

MR. LEVY: Were you thinking that, you know, you were going to have some -- you were going to use it for -- you’re going to have so much retail, you’re going to have so much --

MR. CANNING: Well, so here -- we’re currently existing nonconforming, we don’t have enough parking. Parking is something people are always looking for.

MR. LEVY: -- so -- so are -- is this going to be used -- is it like municipal parking or is it for
tenants and for customers?

    MR. CANNING: So the intent is this -- this will be retail parking for employees. I would suspect that, and maybe I’m speaking a little out of turn here, if you’ve got 10 employees and you’ve got 4 spaces that are not used at all I suspect that somebody might -- who else works in the neighborhood might be able to get a space there, but the bottom line is it’ll be employees in the area either on the property or very close by. And this is for the customers of the tenants of the non-cinema space. The cinema space has an arrangement to park on Level A of the Greenwich Plaza on the other side of the tracks.

    MR. LEVY: So how do you regulate people going in and out then?

    MR. CANNING: Pretty much the same as you do in --

    CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It’s that, you know, it’s got the arm.

    MR. CANNING: -- as it is right now or in any private parking lot, you know, the parking is for this store and if you park here and you’re not supposed to park here you may be towed.

    MS. DELUCA: But how do you know if you’re going to the cinema that you’re not allowed to park there?
I mean, the natural feeling would be, you’re going upstairs, you park here.

MR. CANNING: Well, it’s kind of the way it is now. I mean, how do you know --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You can’t get out now.

MS. DELUCA: No, but if -- well, because the theater is on the other side so, I mean, the inclination is to go in the commuter lot and then walk up because that’s closest.

MR. CANNING: Right.

MS. DELUCA: I mean, people are going to go to the point of least resistance.

MR. CANNING: Well, I mean, we’ll look into it a little more but the operation is -- the only difference between the operation of this and the operation of what’s there today is that the cinema is at a different location.

MS. DELUCA: Would this be available for the cinema at night or all the stores will be open at night also?

MR. CANNING: Well, in theory if the stores are open at night and they have customers it will be for the customers of the stores. If the stores are closed I don’t see why the landlord wouldn’t let the cinema patrons
park there.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Because the arm comes up right now at night on that parking lot.

MR. CANNING: Right. So that’s a decision I guess management will have to make.

MS. GOSS: I park in Arch Street lot. There’s a nice a lot right there.

MS. DELUCA: Will this -- is this going to be paid parking or is this free parking?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: They haven’t thought about it yet. Okay. Don’t worry about it. So --

MS. DELUCA: Well, it’s an important -- just for -- because this is, you know, just talking about the amenity of the Town.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- it would be free -- it would have to be free for the retail stores, which it is now.

MS. DELUCA: Well, that’s what I’m saying. Because people -- location is number one, let me go to the closest, and number two is, well, not if I’m going to have to pay five dollars for it.

MR. CANNING: Right.

MS. DELUCA: Then I’ll go get into some other Town -- I’ll go to the Lexus lot, or I’ll go to
MR. CANNING: Understood. That’s a good point. Yeah. That’s a good point.

MS. DELUCA: So I think we do need to know what --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. No, I’m not -- I’m just saying they haven’t gotten there yet.

MS. DELUCA: -- yep.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So along those lines, in 1967 I think it was --

MR. CANNING: Yeah. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- the Town said, we want 356 spaces --

MR. CANNING: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- that’s what you have to do for us.

MR. CANNING: 356? Not 355?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I think it was 356.

MS. GOSS: It was 356.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: 356 I think is the number.

MR. CANNING: You mean the --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: For the agreement way back when.
MR. CANNING: -- right. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: From what we heard tonight the ridership composition has changed a great deal. So the Town probably just pulled that number out of the air, maybe, but what I don’t know how to get to in this is really how much parking -- is the parking really deficient today? I’m not clear that it is because from the description we got earlier there were a lot of people that are riding in and don’t have cars and so they’re using the amenities, potentially. Now the DOT can give us numbers on ridership. And one of the reasons we’ve been asking a little bit about that is, I’m not sure we’ve -- we really don’t know if the number of -- what’s going to happen to the number of parked cars at the station as I hear people talking about discretionary riders, non-commuting riders who aren’t going to park and ride anymore. So it might create a different demand.

I don’t know, Katie, how we address that since --

MR. CANNING: There’s two elements of parking.

COURT REPORTER: Mr. Canning, I think the microphone is off.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- the light is on.
COURT REPORTER: There's a switch --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, the little red light is on in the back.
COURT REPORTER: -- no, there's an on/off switch on this -- not on the back, on the body of the microphone.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I don't think it -- oh.
MR. CANNING: Thank you.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: How did you do that?
Okay.
MR. CANNING: There's two elements to parking, right?
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.
MR. CANNING: Element number one is what your code requires --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.
MR. CANNING: -- and so whatever that is from whatever it was, that's what we have to comply with.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Our code doesn't actually require station parking. We don't have a definition for station demand you see.
MR. CANNING: That may be true, yeah. It may be true.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And therefore, to the
extent we could get to that it might turn out that we have lots of parking available in the existing garage because -

MR. CANNING: Well, we can get you those numbers.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- so just -- that's a question. Because if we're only looking at the retail and we're not looking at the ridership -- at how the ridership may have shifted we're missing the whole picture.

MR. CANNING: Um-hmm. Yes.

MS. DELUCA: And also, who gets to request the parking passes? Because I understood the other day that you don’t have to be a Town resident in order to request a parking --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Did you know that?

MALE VOICE: Isn't there a waiting list?

MS. DELUCA: And there's like a three --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Years and years and years.

MS. DELUCA: -- a three or four year waiting list at all that. But I think what happens is people hold onto it and they’re not -- because it's so valuable.

MR. CANNING: So I have heard that.
HEARING RE: GREENWICH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 30, 2019

1 MS. DELUCA: Yeah.
2 MR. CANNING: Alright? But if it’s that valuable then that suggests --
3 CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We just have to get our arms around it.
4 MR. CANNING: -- we do have those numbers though. We can get you those numbers.
5 MS. DELUCA: Well, the idea, you know, it’s worth it for me to go into the -- I only go into the City once a month, it’s worth it for me to hold onto my parking pass because it’s convenient. And that’s not my story, but that’s a story.
6 CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Those people may not actually be there.
7 MR. HARVEY: Right. Well, on A level they do track the usage.
8 CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: A level is?
9 MR. HARVEY: The commuter lot.
10 CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Thank you.
11 MR. HARVEY: So they will -- they will track that and then they’re giving out cards based on the usage because they have no control down there the last thing the want to have happen is someone coming in not able to find a spot who’s got a pass. So in effect they

POST REPORTING SERVICE
HAMDEN, CT (800) 262-4102
end up having by definition to undersell the number that
they -- you always have a flow, you give up more cards
than you have spaces and then you track and you see how
it's -- but you always -- they always want to make sure
there's a number of vacant spaces so they're not having
someone who can't find a space. If you -- once you start
managing the garage in a different way you'd be able to
really maximize it. In our opinion, it's not fully
maximized.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: That's what -- that's
what I suspected. That's kind of where we're --

MR. HARVEY: It's not right now.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- going with this.

MR. HARVEY: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: That frees up that you
may not be under parked at all because that garage may not
be fully utilized so you may have plenty of parking. So
when we're talking about it being currently nonconforming
--

MR. HARVEY: Well, you do see empty spaces
down there for the reasons I was talking about in terms of
how they have to manage it. But there is a big wait list,
so for that that would fill up if you gave out cards --
not cards --

POST REPORTING SERVICE
HAMDEN, CT (800) 262-4102
MR. LOWE: But if the commutation numbers are -- if the number of commuters is decreasing --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Exactly.

MR. LOWE: -- and you gave out these percentages then that would suggest that this alleged over demand for parking --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Is for the discretionary people.

MR. LOWE: -- yeah.

MR. HARVEY: Over time. But the way it is right now those spaces are gold and it’s not just commuters, it’s people who are on the list for their discretionary use of the train and they still want to be able to park there and it’s cheap. There’s a real opportunity, I think, on that level which could help -- it helps the theaters, it helps the use of restaurants at lunch time. At some point we’re happy to show the Commission how we’re doing the parking, which Katie is aware, on our upper levels for the tenants and how --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Oh, yeah. But we won’t -- that’ll just make us sad because we won’t have the ability to enforce -- to get anybody to do that and then we’ll just be sad that it’s not efficient. So maybe Katie can --
MR. HARVEY: -- well, okay. Well, then yeah, if you don’t want to be sad then don’t look at the difference.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- Katie can’t -- yeah, okay. I mean, if we could get --

MR. HARVEY: I hadn’t heard that argument before, but okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- well, we don’t have the power. So the thing to do is to get your system to be seen by somebody who has the power to implement it. Oh, look at who’s in the audience.

MR. HARVEY: I just happened to pick out someone in the audience. But we have discussed this with him I think over time. This is a very sensitive area, people that have passes that don’t want anybody talking about making any change there.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, I understand that.

MR. HARVEY: But to your point, to maximize the use of that and to make it safer the modern parking techniques, like the ones we’re using on the upper floors could make a big difference in what you’re talking about.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I mean, there was a way that --

MR. HARVEY: But I’m scared to touch it
because it’s a third rail.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- I understand. Okay.

Got it.

MR. LEVY: Katie, did you say that there’s a possibility that non-residents of Greenwich are able to get parking passes?

MS. DELUCA: I thought that someone had told me that the other day. So I’m asking the question. Is that true?

MR. HARVEY: What’s that?

MS. DELUCA: That non-residents can apply for a parking pass in that lower level?

MR. HARVEY: Oh, no, I don’t think so. No, you have to be a Greenwich resident.

MS. DELUCA: Is there -- is there approximately --

MR. HARVEY: For the lower level. I thought you were talking about the lot up on the north side. If a customer comes in they can use that lot --

MS. DELUCA: Oh, yeah. No, no. Anyone can use that one.

MR. HARVEY: -- and they get a voucher and they get out.

MS. DELUCA: No, I’m talking about getting
MR. HARVEY: Underneath, yeah, you’ve got to be a Greenwich resident. We have no control over that. We share in the revenues, the net revenues of it, but we have no involvement in the way that it’s run or how many cards are given out or what the charges are. We’d love to be able to help on doing that at some point, but it is a real third rail for people who currently hold those passes now. Probably someone up here has a pass I imagine.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Well, he goes to work.

MR. HARVEY: Oh, there we go, Peter. So you’re going to have to be careful.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Alright. I just raised it because from when you guys were talking about the DOT stuff that kind of shift means you don’t have the parking demand.

MR. HARVEY: Yeah. No, that’s right.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MR. CANNING: So I have been advised, and I think it’s correct that the discussion of commutation and how it was decreasing, most of it was relative, right? So the absolute number may not have been going down, but the proportion was.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.
MR. CANNING: Although, I thought he said that for the first six months of this year for the first time ever they saw a miniscule decrease in ridership. But, you know, one swallow does not a summer make.

MR. HARVEY: But that's a big factor and thanks for making that is that the percentage is only going down because the other part is going up, or the whole denominator is going up.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Which means that the south side of the station becomes critical in terms of the circulation effectiveness.

MR. HARVEY: Yes. Very important and that's why it's a big effort. We're going to move that barrier back, that ventilation for our electrical vault and so forth, that is a huge move but we think we have enough room in our parking -- our visitor parking lot to be able to move that back enough to create that flow through and by getting the taxi stand out of there with the taxis, but people are upset about, we concluded it was better to have better drop off and pick up control over there then have a taxi office of there. The taxis can still come and pick up people there, but they don't have to have their offices there and holding, you know, 10 cabs. The taxis are adjusting to it.
I was going to throw one other quick factor before you, which the -- and this lady, the millennials, now they use cars and the theater and so forth, Joe Masher was just saying that millennials go to twice as many movies a week as the national average and so -- but they also often Uber back and forth to the movie, especially if they’re going to have a cocktail or something. But in terms of planning for the millennials the fact that they go to the movies twice as much as the national average is a really interesting factor. And they tend to come -- being dropped off.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: What is equally interesting to me, because I spent a lot of time there on the south end of Stamford, is that the trams that they -- it’s BLT, that BLT did for them to get to work aren’t being used for them to get to work, they use them to go out at night and that’s what the big driver is. So they get home and they take the tram and they go out and then they -- so they don’t have to drink and drive. So it’s a very different use than -- so that’s been the huge demand for it. It’s an interesting thing because that’s not why BLT did it, it was to get them to work.

MR. HARVEY: Yeah. And it’s for getting home after drinking.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Apparently that’s not the heaviest use. And that’s anecdotal, just to think about as we increase our shuttle use, because it comes back to the point you were making about accommodating the shuttles that are coming into the station on the south side and taking people to the offices and that’s the concern about if that increases are we doing enough to accommodate the circulation. And when we see your whole thing we’ll ask you more questions.

MR. CANNING: Okay.

MR. MACRI: Mr. Canning, can we talk about Railroad Avenue for second?

MR. CANNING: Yes, of course.

MR. MACRI: Go back to that slide? Yep. So we have queuing right now for two cars --

MR. CANNING: Correct.

MR. MACRI: -- then we’re going to get queuing for four cars --

MR. CANNING: That’s correct.

MR. MACRI: -- okay. But nothing on the opposite side of Railroad Avenue has been addressed. From my understanding, actually, listening to everybody here tonight that this is an opportunity, this is something that we should really be talking and thinking about. I
think, actually, this came up in our briefing yesterday and I think, actually, we heard a lot tonight that the opportunity here is, actually, to really take a look at how the station, this building, interfaces with the street

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: -- and how people approach this, use it, pass through it, that kind of thing.

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: Again, getting back to that opportunity. Right now, and I’m sure you’ve witnessed it, how at peak times this is a real mess on both sides of the street.

MR. CANNING: Um-hmm.

MR. MACRI: I think we have to do a lot more to address both sides of the street. I don’t believe, actually, an extension of the pick up to 80 feet, or adding two more cars is sufficient. I think we’re talking about shuttle buses on the south side of the station, but not the north side of the station. I think this is a very complex situation that needs to be addressed and we can’t just say, okay, we’re coming from one side and we’re dropping off from the south side of Railroad Avenue, because as you know, people drop off on the north side of Railroad Avenue,
MR. CANNING: Correct.

MR. MACRI: Yes, the property owner, you know, it doesn’t extend to the north side, but I think that’s where we, as a town, working with the property owner need to come to some kind of partnership on this to understand for the next 50 years we’re going to resolve this problem that, actually, I think everybody really wants to have, a lot of people passing through this station.

MR. CANNING: I think we’re all on the same page. Sort of to bring the elephant into the room, so to speak --

MR. MACRI: Please.

MR. CANNING: -- we’ve got parking here. I know that parking is very, very valuable for merchants and it’s very, very valuable for municipalities to support their economic growth. But you also have an opportunity for a shuttle drop off on that side. The problem is, how much parking do you need? How much shuttle access do you need? And how much parking are you required to provide? So those are the questions. I don’t have answers tonight and I think we need to have some sort of a dialogue so that we can figure out what the priorities are because, you’re
right, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the developer and for the town to come up with a plan that’s going to -- we’ll all be proud of and that will serve the community and the developer for the next 50 years.

MR. MACRI: I think the other thing that I heard is there’s Ubers, there’s shuttles, Lyft, driverless cars, those kind of things. But we still have vehicles, private, public, shared, whatever, coming to this site. We don’t see any change to that in the future, vehicles will always be here, and I think that really needs to be accommodated and I think we need to start working on some kind of a true balance here between what we -- what we require for parking and what actually would make better, logical sense for safety in the streets.

I think, actually, even on the south side you’ve got two lanes. Actually, if we could go to that slide? Because there’s something I don’t understand and maybe you can clarify for me. In between the two lanes there is a safety zone, I think it’s called?

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: Is that raised? Painted? What is that?

MR. CANNING: That’s painted.

MR. MACRI: Okay.
MR. CANNING: And the idea is to keep the cars that are passing far enough away from the cars that are dropping off or picking up so that if somebody gets out of the passenger side of the car and opens the door you won’t have --

MR. MACRI: You’re not stepping into the cars whizzing by.

MR. CANNING: -- exactly. Exactly.

MR. MACRI: It’s interesting because, actually, as I see that it makes sense, but then again I’m thinking, what’s the reality of it? Okay. I’m just dropping somebody off there’s, you know, a couple of people in the queue there, I’m just going to pull up into that bypass lane and stop, let them out, and keep going. You know, is it going to, actually, just because it’s an open area is it just going to naturally fail?

The ADA parking that you’ve shown here --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: -- the parallel parking --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: -- that’s for use of the train? Is it part of the Plaza parking? How does that fit in?

MR. CANNING: So there’s four spaces there now and until a few years ago, because I Googled an old
photograph, there was nothing on these spaces other than an ADA sign and these spaces had a sign that says, drop off -- or said, drop off only, if you’re not in your vehicle it’ll be towed, something to that effect. Ryan, you went out and took a photograph and now these spaces also have the same notice that if you leave your vehicle it will be towed. So honestly, I don’t know whether it’s a parking space or not a parking space.

The bottom line is, whatever it is for the disabled we’re going to put it back so that it functions exactly the same way.

MR. MACRI: Those particular spaces are for people traveling on the train or for -- they’re just there?

MR. CANNING: Well, they’re there.

MR. MACRI: For whoever shows up to use them?

MR. CANNING: They’re there, yes. One would presume -- I presumed that they were for the train because they’re right next to the train station. But if I was -- if for some reason I wanted to go into this office building and there was a space there and I had a tag I don’t see why I wouldn’t be allowed to park there.

MR. MACRI: Okay.
MR. LEVY: Then why does it need to be next to the train station?

MR. CANNING: I agree with you. It seems -- it seems like they are for the train.

MR. LEVY: I don’t think you’re allowed to park there if you’re going into the City or going up to New Haven.

MR. CANNING: So, as I say, I looked --

MR. LEVY: I don’t understand --

MR. CANNING: -- they’re not metered.

MS. DELUCA: I think it’s for pick up.

MR. LEVY: -- I would imagine it’s for pick up, but why would you need --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Well, we can find out.

MALE VOICE: There’s 12 spaces.

MR. CANNING: So they’re now -- they’re now signed as ADA drop off spaces. A few years ago they were just ADA spaces.

MR. MACRI: One more thing to add to the list and we’ll kind of figure that out.

MR. CANNING: Yes.

MR. LEVY: I understand what it is --

MR. MACRI: You know, maybe a different location?
MR. LEVY: -- I never questioned it until now.

MS. DELUCA: Until he found his prime parking space.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Don’t go park there tomorrow.

MS. DELUCA: Right.

MR. LOWE: I’m sure there are laws about it.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. So --

MS. GOSS: I have something.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- Ms. Goss?

MS. GOSS: There’s another parking -- some people will be coming down Greenwich Avenue and cross Railroad Avenue and cross onto Steamboat and want to drop people off right at that little pocket park --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MS. GOSS: -- and especially if there’s a nice set of steps going up that way.

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MS. GOSS: But I guess they just shouldn’t, I mean, there’s no lane, there can’t be because there’s not space for a lane. Have you thought about, I mean --

MR. CANNING: So we looked at it and the
road, Steamboat right at Railroad Avenue is wider, but immediately it starts to get narrower. So there's really not enough room to have a drop off area there and have cars go by, but people do it because, you know, it's convenient if there's nobody immediately behind, so get out quick sort of thing. Go ahead. Yes?

MR. LOWE: The depiction of the park I believe, doesn't it bow out a little bit? Do you have it?

MR. CANNING: Bill, can you -- it's back I presume, right? Keep going back until we get to the park please? There's a nice aerial view near the start.

MR. MACRI: One more.

MR. CANNING: It'll go one more.

MR. MACRI: There you go.

MR. CANNING: Yeah. So this is what I'm talking about, right? That's the existing curb and it's a little bit wider here, but it starts to get narrower.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I've stood there a million times.

MR. LOWE: Right. But you filled -- you filled that in with what I'm calling this bowed out section where it might be a logical --

MR. LEVY: Along Railroad. There.

MR. LOWE: -- right.
MR. LEVY: Along Railroad you’re talking about?

MR. CANNING: The curb — the curb is exactly as it is.

MR. LOWE: It is?

MR. CANNING: Yeah. What we’ve done is put program in the internal area, but the curb is --

MR. LEVY: To me it looked -- I agree, it looks like you’ve bumped out the curb in front of Railroad.

MR. CANNING: -- I don’t think so. Can you go back? I’m pretty -- because I know I parked here and it goes -- no, that’s not really a good picture.

MR. LEVY: That doesn’t help you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Well, we have the aerial -- we have aerials. Hold on. We have that one aerial.

MALE VOICE: Keep going. One more. I can’t really see it, there’s a tree in the way.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No. We have that -- we have a GIS -- do we have --

MR. LEVY: That should show it.

MR. CANNING: So that’s it there. There’s a tree, cut the tree down and we’ll see it.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- It’s a blue sheet, it’s in color.

MR. LEVY: It’s not that important to remove it.

MR. CANNING: We’ll look into it. So the question really was, is the bow out there?

MR. LEVY: Yeah.

MR. CANNING: Yeah.

MR. LOWE: Well, the original issue is, is there -- there’ll be a tendency to want to drop somebody off there and is there space, is there sufficient -- isn’t that -- Ms. Goss, is that what you were --

MR. LEVY: Right now people, you’re right, people do like dropping off.

MR. CANNING: Right.

MR. LEVY: And they will drop off there probably.

MR. CANNING: So the concern I would have, right? Is if you put in -- if you formalize it or make it acceptable to drop off there then lots of people are going to say, let’s do it, and then you’re going to have them backing up into the intersection. So somebody will say, well, I’ll just wait for this guy to go, and the guy behind him waits and now you have people sort of half in
the intersection.

MR. LOWE: Mr. Levy is suggesting it’s going to happen.

MR. LEVY: Yeah, I mean, well, I do it all the time.

(Laughter)

MR. CANNING: So -- so my point is that if it’s not -- if it’s not acceptable in the norm, right? People would do it, but they’ll only do it when they think they can get away with it because it’s not causing a problem. If you make it a formal drop off that’s too small people say, well, I’m entitled to do it and now I don’t care if they’re somebody behind me.

MR. LEVY: Go a little bit beyond that. I just want to know -- I know my sensibility is I don’t want to create a problem so I’m not going to do it if it’s busy.

MR. CANNING: Right. Yeah.

MR. LEVY: But should it be discouraged? I mean, should you even narrow it? I’m just wondering what --

MR. CANNING: Yeah. We could -- yeah, that’s a good suggestion. I think that’s a good suggestion.
MS. GOSS: Make the pocket park larger.

MR. CANNING: Okay. The one thing I’ll have to do is I’ll have to do a truck turning template just to make sure I can get trucks around the corner. But it will probably only affect a corner and I’ll be able to -- if you can, Bill, can you, I’m sorry, to where we were before which was the -- that was it. Sorry. Close to it. Keep -- I’m not sure, but keep going. We’ll get there.

MR. MACRI: Go back.

MR. CANNING: No. That’s it. So what we might end up doing is we’ll take this around the radius around to here and then we can go straight from there.

MR. LOWE: But cut it off out front.

MR. CANNING: Yes. So the idea is that it’ll be -- it’s narrower here and people won’t do it so you won’t have a problem develop here. That’s what you’re suggesting, right, Mr. Levy?

MR. LEVY: I think so. That’s what I’m --

MR. CANNING: Yeah. Well, so that would go hand-in-hand with providing more safer or capacity drop off on both sides of Railroad Avenue and on Greenwich Plaza on the south side because you obviously don’t want to take away something without giving something back.

MR. LEVY: -- right. But if you have an
entrance there how do people --

MR. CANNING: To the train station?

MR. LEVY: -- yeah. I mean --

MR. CANNING: Well, the way it works now, lots of people park here and they just walk up and walk up here, or if you live up in this area you walk down and you walk --

MR. LEVY: -- I’m just wondering if there’s some other place that you can create on Railroad Avenue there which allows people to just kind of go in and out quickly and some kind of boardwalk or something.

MR. CANNING: -- so that was something that -- and I think I had mentioned earlier that we’ll have to see what sort of trade-off there is for the need for all of these parking spaces and perhaps a more drop off area.

MR. LEVY: If you have that, I mean time I think -- I don’t think that -- to my sense I don’t think that bulge exists and that --

MR. CANNING: So I think -- I think it does.

MR. LEVY: -- I’m wondering if that --

MR. CANNING: And I’ll tell you -- I’ll tell you why, because --

MR. LEVY: -- it looks more dramatic here.
MR. CANNING: -- yes, I agree. I agree. But I did park my car here, it’s not a spot, but I have a small car, so I said -- I’m kind of like you, I’m doing the sort of stuff I shouldn’t --

MR. LEVY: Yeah.

MR. CANNING: -- so I parked it -- because I wanted to take a photograph, so I parked my car in here and I noticed that it bulged -- I know it bulges out there.

MR. LEVY: Oh, okay.

MR. CANNING: It’s probably exaggerated because of the perspective. But we’ll both go have a look at it and see how big it is.

MR. LEVY: Okay.

MR. HARDMAN: Peter, Nick’s got it on Google Earth. It does bulge.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It does bulge, yeah.

MR. CANNING: So other traffic transportation issues that we want to try and incorporate into this?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m flying blind.

MR. CANNING: Okay. Well, I’ll come back.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No. The other thing is we can let staff know.
MR. MACRI: But I think that, like you said, it's that -- it's the balance between what's parked on the street, what's parked down below --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: -- how does the pick up and drop off work efficiently, safely --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

MR. MACRI: -- in this Town it's kind of a weird thing, they say safety in the streets you've got to think of your life no matter what it is and I think, actually, here is a good example. Drop off, oh, I've got to go in the opposite direction. Then it's, now I'm looking at a U-turn in the middle of Railroad Avenue. Probably a few times a day just like, I've got to go -- I'm pointing in the wrong direction kind of thing.

MR. CANNING: Yes.

MR. MACRI: It's almost like you want to kind of create a drop off/pick up that can't be deviated from, you know, and just kind of force them into it to keep -- to keep them safe.

MR. CANNING: I hear you, right?

MR. MACRI: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You know human nature.

MR. CANNING: I know human nature and I
know what we’ve been able to accomplish in the schools because when we do it in the schools you have real estate, right? The challenge here is both -- is real estate and competing resource needs. But we’ll work through it and we’ll get to a good solution.

MR. MACRI: You’re aware we’ve got some BETA comments that came back?

MR. CANNING: Yeah. I haven’t seen them, but I’m aware.

MR. MACRI: Okay. And I think, actually, there was Engineering -- our engineers?

MS. DELUCA: Right.

MR. MACRI: Okay.

MS. DELUCA: And Sewer and Conservation.

MR. MACRI: Okay. Anything else?

MS. GOSS: I have just one other comment while we’re doing this. If you’re in the -- if you’re in -- if you’re underneath the Ashforth building and you instead of -- and you’re trying to get from the commuter lot under the Ashforth building --

MR. CANNING: Yeah.

MS. GOSS: -- under the Greenwich Plaza building and you try to walk on Arch Street --

MR. CANNING: Yes.
MS. GOSS: -- you feel like you’re going to
die because you can’t get through those intersections
without being run over. I mean, it’s -- it’s like running
-- it’s frightening. But you won’t -- people just won’t
walk that way.

MR. CANNING: Bill, can you --

MALE VOICE: Arch Street is in the center?

MR. CANNING: -- Arch Street, but the
aerial I think.

MS. GOSS: The west side.

MR. CANNING: Yes. Yes. What was that? So
if you park in the parking underneath these buildings,
this is --

MS. GOSS: If you walk out the left side --
walk out the left side --

MR. CANNING: -- I’m not sure where you
come out from the parking here.

MS. DELUCA: On Arch.

MALE VOICE: Right there.

MR. CANNING: There?

MALE VOICE: Yeah.

MR. CANNING: Okay. So this is a sidewalk?

MS. GOSS: And you try to get from there to
the train station --
MR. CANNING: Right.

MS. GOSS: -- it’s --

MR. CANNING: So we’ll have to look at this crosswalk to see what’s there.

MS. GOSS: -- it’s fairly awful.

MR. CANNING: Okay. And so -- and then from here -- so there is a bit of a sidewalk up here I believe. Mr. Macri, you’ve got your Google opened there, right?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yes he does.

MR. CANNING: Commissioner Macri, sorry.

MR. MACRI: What did you want to see?

MR. CANNING: See if there’s a sidewalk on the north side of Greenwich Plaza leading up from Arch Street --

MR. LEVY: Yes, there’s a sidewalk.

MS. GOSS: But, no, it’s going -- if you want to cross up to it, go up to Railroad Avenue.

MR. CANNING: Oh, if you want to go to Railroad -- well, so you’ll have to cross here and then --

MS. GOSS: Yeah. Cross that right -- that crosswalk right there where your arrow is, it’s very difficult.

MR. CANNING: Right. Right. So I’ll --

MS. GOSS: It’s treacherous.
MR. CANNING: -- I will have a look at that.

MR. MACRI: Yes. Actually, going up the hill it’s on the north side.

MR. CANNING: Right. It’s not very wide, but it’s --

MR. MACRI: Yeah. It’s there, but it’s very narrow.

MR. CANNING: -- okay. Thank you Commissioner Goss.

MR. MACRI: One quick question. Are there bike racks on the north side?

MR. CANNING: Oh, on the north side --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: They’re doing lots of bike racks.

MR. CANNING: -- no. We can look into that.

MR. MACRI: Okay.

MR. LEVY: But also, going -- going downhill to Steamboat there isn’t -- there isn’t much of a sidewalk there either. People --

MR. CANNING: Here or here?

MR. LEVY: -- but, you know, people are walking in the street all the time there. I think there’s something, but it’s not adequate for when you have a train
getting out and then you have --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: A train, yeah.

MR. LEVY: -- people going --

MR. MACRI: Same situation.

MR. CANNING: Same situation.

MR. MACRI: 3 feet wide along the wall on the north side.

MR. CANNING: Yeah. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And in fact, one of the BETA comments you’ll see --

MR. LEVY: -- I don’t know what to do about that.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- Mr. Canning --

MR. CANNING: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- one of the BETA comments is to look at widening all of the sidewalks --

MR. CANNING: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- to accommodate when a train disgorges.

MR. CANNING: Nice word.

MR. MACRI: Let me write that down.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It came to mind.

MR. LEVY: I’d like to make a comment
again. I think --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. Mr. Levy’s has
been making sketches, so here goes.

MR. CANNING: Okay.

MR. LEVY: -- at the train station I’m just
wondering if you can’t be a little bit more bold about
drop off and carving out some space in front of the train
station so there’s a real drop off that is out of the
traffic, so you actually turn off of the road into a drop
off lane in front of the train station?

MR. CANNING: I understand exactly what
you’re saying. I will look at it.

MR. LEVY: And the other side of it could
be the shuttle dropped off.

MR. CANNING: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So what BETA’s comment
was that’s worth noting, you don’t need this anymore,
right? The proposed improvements to drop off/pick up
functionality are definitely modest.

MR. CANNING: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: However, I’m not sure
what other options there could be to improve vehicular
circulation given the existing constraints on the site.
And then the only comment is, she’s looking to know what
issues we run into at present with the situation we have. We could probably tell BETA that. I think we have some experts on the Commission, on the problems with drop off and pick up. We have at least two long-term commuters. Three long-term commuters? Oh, no, you didn’t use Greenwich. Okay.

MR. LEVY: And just to emphasize it, I don’t know if there is an alternative to drop off, if there was something else that could be done so you wouldn’t need a drop off area.

MS. DELUCA: A jump seat.

MR. LEVY: Yes.

(Laughter)

MR. LEVY: But, you know, say, if it could be on the other side of the street or something like that somehow. But it would be nice to have a better traffic pattern there so that it -- so that at least the morning commute is not snarled. It really gets snarled and it’s, you know, the Arch Street light there is very congested in the morning and it’s -- so that takes a little time. And then when you turn and to drop off it takes time and anything that we can do to make it work better would be just terrific. So I just hope that you can come up with something.
MR. CANNING: So just -- the key elements
that I’m hearing, I’ve taken notes, but the key elements
that I’m hearing are --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Functionality.

MR. CANNING: -- functionality, but I mean, it relates to the need for more drop off, the need for shuttle drop off, the need for drop off on both sides of Railroad Avenue, the need for wider sidewalks on the north side of Greenwich Plaza so that when the train does let out you could have -- it’s not like a penguin single file walk down the sidewalk and when they go on the street. Those are the key elements I’m hearing.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The goal is to make -- to make the station, the new station a user-friendly experience. The first goal is it is a transport center first, so it’s to make the transit user friendly. And then we do the look and what kind of hub it is and what amenities it has and all of that. But the first thing is the efficient movement of people, goal one, that is what it is. And that was what we said when we opened tonight was that those were the top priorities and for us the first thing is, hey, this is, as people said, a great opportunity to turn this into a site that is welcoming because it’s not a hassle to arrive and leave.
MR. CANNING: So I’m going to have to ask for somebody to give me an interpretation --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Of what I just said?
Oh, I’m sorry.
MR. CANNING: -- no, no, no, not of what you said at all. So the parking spaces that are on Railroad Avenue on this south side belong -- are on property that is owned by the Ashforth Company, right?
We’re providing, I think I said 18 more parking spaces, right?
MS. DELUCA: Right.
MR. CANNING: So if we took half of that 18 and said, let’s take 9 spaces off of Railroad Avenue to put in a drop off and pick up --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We’re going to lose retail parking, is that where you’re going?
MR. CANNING: -- well, we’re going to -- my client is not going to be too happy because his tenets are not going to be too happy --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Exactly.
MR. CANNING: -- in the retail -- there he is, he’s like, that’s not a grin, that’s like a --
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. So -- but --
MR. MACRI: Mr. Canning --
MR. MACRI: -- Mr. Canning, you have to keep going -- you’re kind of going in the right direction. But what is it -- what is it -- what needs to be compromised to create --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Right. To make it work.

MR. MACRI: -- a more efficient drop off/pick up situation?

MR. CANNING: Right. Right.

MR. MACRI: As you’re looking at it and going through the design --

MR. CANNING: Yes.

MR. MACRI: -- if I get rid of these spaces here this will actually be better for the pick up/drop off over here --

MR. CANNING: Right. Right.

MR. MACRI: -- that kind of thing. And I think it’s something, actually, because we’re at the beginning of this taking a look at that and seeing where it is.

MR. CANNING: Right.

MR. MACRI: Is it something that we can compromise on? Is it really going to affect tenant parking and that kind of stuff, or is the other --
MR. CANNING: That's a conversation we will have, yes.

MR. MACRI: -- or are the other benefits we've been talking about --

MR. CANNING: Right. Right.

MR. MACRI: -- public benefit is actually makes it -- the pick up and drop off that much smoother.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: So if you come back to us with optimized -- I think we've got to be able to have that conversation then. What would we lose in terms of tenant parking --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- of the businesses --

MR. CANNING: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- if we optimized the pick up/drop off and then --

MR. CANNING: Then we have the --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- we have that conversation about what works best for the property owner and the tenants and what works best for people to find that it's a user-friendly experience and we try to find the happy compromise.

MR. CANNING: -- exactly.

MR. HARVEY: I just was going to say, in
agreement John, I think it’s largely the street parking is
the problem and you can’t turn in. One thought is, which
we’re doing more in transit-oriented districts and
thinking of the different uses is maybe, I was going to
suggest it to John, maybe there’s a way in that morning
area time when people are dropping off the commuters,
before stores are even open and retail tenants don’t care,
then maybe then you could have some signage or something
where you could provide the parking so that it was pure
drop off --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It’s a thought.

MR. HARVEY: -- then when the commuters
were through and that rush hour was over before the stores
have opened that we open that up for --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: But that’s not
happening now so -- Peter is describing it being very
messy in the morning.

MR. HARVEY: -- no, I know, but also you
are allowed to park there in the morning, so maybe you --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Oh, okay.

MR. HARVEY: -- maybe you could prevent
parking there --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: You can’t park -- like
in the City, you can’t park -- no parking until 9:00 a.m.
MR. HARVEY: -- something like that.

MS. DELUCA: Is that parking garage big enough that you could go in and around?

MR. LEVY: But that would be a very good idea.

MS. DELUCA: The store parking garage, that you could -- that you could do some sort of, like, circular drop off in there?

MR. CANNING: No.

MS. DELUCA: It’s not big enough?

MR. HARVEY: But you understand what I’m saying?

MR. MACRI: It’s a --

MR. CANNING: Well, no, you don’t. It’s a great issue. It’s not wide enough to turn around in it and because you’ve got the grade and the parking underneath once you go in you’re no longer at street level, you can’t come out.

MS. DELUCA: Well, could you -- could you fit, I mean, you must know from your reports how many people do the drop off now?

MR. CANNING: We did some surveys of drop off activity.

MR. LOWE: That’s what I was going to ask
is, do we have an understanding of the volume? If you knew
what the volume was that would dictate how many spaces you
were going to need for drop off. And if people -- my
experience down there is people go in and people are
always late and people exit the car quickly and the person
that dropped them there wants to get out of there.

MR. CANNING: Gone, yeah.

MR. LOWE: So the flow should be relatively
rapid and we should have an understanding of just exactly
what the volume is per minute or per whatever it is.

MR. CANNING: Yeah.

MR. LOWE: And that should dictate what the
need is.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Well, it’s like the
school thing. I mean, Mr. Canning knows how the schools
work. Pick up takes longer than drop off.

MR. CANNING: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The teacher, boom, the
kid is out and they pull them out of the car, pick up is a
whole different -- but -- so --

MR. MACRI: But it happens -- and happens
at the same time on both sides, pick up and drop off. So
you could get people picking up --

MR. CANNING: You’re right, yeah.
MR. MACRI: -- the system fails. It doesn’t really matter.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- so -- and it’s -- we know we have to balance with the retail. I mean, we understand that it has to balance with the retail because it’s got to be a good business for the property owner.

MR. CANNING: Right.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: But at the same time --

MR. CANNING: It’s got to work for you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- no, and it should also be a benefit --

MR. CANNING: It should work for everybody.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- to the property owner to have the station be a, wow, Greenwich is such an easy station, let’s go there.

MR. CANNING: Right. Actually, I worked on a project in Harrison and it’s right at the train station, it’s a retail, and what we proposed there for a drop off area is there’s no parking from 7:00 to 9:00 and there’s no parking from I think it’s 4:00 to 7:00, but all other hours you can park there.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: But then -- so the tenants are -- okay. So that might work. Okay. Alright. So play with that. I mean, tell us what works.
MR. LEVY: One other suggestion. There’s no -- there’s stairs at three corners of the platforms, but the fourth corner there’s no stairs I think.

MS. GOSS: The southeast corner. The south corner at Arch --

MR. LEVY: Right?

MR. MACRI: At the Bruce, the Bruce side.

MS. GOSS: -- at Steamboat I meant.

MR. LEVY: Is there -- is there --

MR. MACRI: Right. There is one there, and one there --

MR. HARVEY: Stairs there and no stairs there.

MR. LEVY: -- no stairs there, right? So is that -- there must be a reason why there’s no stair there, but I was just wondering if that’s a good idea.

MR. HARVEY: (Indiscernible, too far from mic.).

MR. CANNING: Well, you could, I mean, you could walk -- when we widened the sidewalk out you could walk up the sidewalk. We’re proposing to put a sidewalk in here.

MR. LEVY: But I’m thinking that if you could alleviate some of that traffic if there were stairs
at that end of the platform going down such the same way
as you have the other three corners. I really don’t know
why it wasn’t done there.

MR. CANNING: So we’ll have -- I’m not sure
what the MTA’s restrictions will be on stairs and their
bridge abutments, but we can certainly have a look and see
what it looks like.

MS. GOSS: While you’re looking at that
area where you just were pointing on the -- right there,
that slope is dangerous because if you’re walking from --
if you’re exiting the train and you have to walk over to
Steamboat right there if you’re having -- if you’re trying
to walk down that you have any kind of a heel on your
shoe, especially in winter --

MR. CANNING: Yeah.

MS. GOSS: -- it’s treacherous.

MR. CANNING: Because of the slope?
MS. GOSS: Because of the slope. So they
need a rail or something to hold onto.

MR. CANNING: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay? Everybody good?

MS. DELUCA: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay. Everybody good.

MR. CANNING: Thank you very much.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Mr. Cohen? I have a last architectural question. You may know, you guys didn’t -- couldn’t comment this morning. Is there a way that you can have a sightline through the south end’s little park with the red sculpture into the Sound from the station if you were up high enough in the station?

MR. LOWE: From the north side.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: If you’re in the station, in the proposed station, and you were standing on the roof of the proposed station would you be able to see the Long Island Sound? Would there be a nice view of Long Island Sound?

MR. COHEN: Well, nicer than --

MR. CANNING: You’d be looking through the buildings. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Well, you’d be looking through the buildings over the red sculpture --

MR. COHEN: -- on the roof.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- and you would have a clear sightline.

MR. COHEN: Sounds like it. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: There’s trees that block it we believe, but --

MS. DELUCA: Could you fly a drone and see
what that would look like?

MR. COHEN: No.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- could you just go stand on the roof?

MALE VOICE: (Indiscernible, too far from mic.).

MS. DELUCA: Maybe. It depends what the drone looks like.

MS. GOSS: Build the building higher.

MR. COHEN: What is the conclusion of your question?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: The answer -- so the question I’m asking is, wow, you have this opportunity to have an observation level.

MS. GOSS: A bar, yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: In the station.

MS. DELUCA: A station bar.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It doesn’t have to be on top of the roof.

MR. COHEN: You know, in light of the fact Ms. Alban that you’ve raised this before we’re going to take a real hard look at the views through that and on top of the station building.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I wouldn’t stand on top
of the station.

MR. COHEN: You wouldn’t?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No. I would not do that if I were you.

MALE VOICE: 10 more feet.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No. No.

MR. COHEN: That’s a relief.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Where is the application going to go if you fall off the roof?

MR. COHEN: We’ll take a look at the sightlines.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: I’m just wondering because it seems like we might have an opportunity to capture a view of the Sound that people would really enjoy at it would make a superb amenity, a draw for people. It’s just a crazy thought. I know -- the Performing Arts Center didn’t fly, so --

MS. DELUCA: And then a rooftop garden over the movie theater?

MR. COHEN: Rooftop garden over --

MS. DELUCA: On top of the movie theater?

MR. CANNING: Oh, you mean a green roof?

MR. COHEN: -- on top?

MS. DELUCA: Well, on the other side. Oh,
is it all green roof over there?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. Yeah, it’s mostly

green roof. Do you see it?

MS. DELUCA: Yeah, right.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: It’s mostly green roof.

Okay. So that was just the last question. So Mr. Cohen, we
didn’t ask you at all about the text amendment tonight and

that was --

MR. COHEN: Would you like me to talk about

it?

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- not really.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Because --

MR. COHEN: That’s probably why you didn’t

ask me.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- because our sense of

the meeting this morning, my sense of everybody’s -- what

the comments were was, let’s kind of nail down what works

and then let’s -- let’s figure out the regulation that

needs to go in place to make it happen because we’ve got -

- 

MR. COHEN: I agree.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- something that’s

good. I see your proposed regulation, your text amendments
right now as placeholders. You want extra height for the
station. You want to be able to --

MR. COHEN: We want to be able to build the

--

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- you’ve got the FAR
problem on the south side.

MR. COHEN: -- on the south side, correct.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And it’s kind of
quirky. So is there a way that we could just grab the
whole -- make it work and just have -- that’s why we were
talking about maybe thinking about an overlay zone or
something that’s just straightforward and says, yep, this
is the downtown train station overlay zone and this is
what it’s allowed to do.

MR. COHEN: Yeah. We had a conversation in
the past with Katie about a TOD overlay zone.

MS. DELUCA: Did Katie -- okay.

MR. COHEN: And we, I think, came to the
conclusion after those discussions that a more direct way
of handling it without creating too many precedents in
town would be to seek a couple of kind of --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Tiny changes.

MR. COHEN: -- discrete text amendments.

And these text amendments, really as you say Ms. Alban,
are really for the purpose of allowing us to build that
south station the way you see it --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Got it.
MR. COHEN: -- and the cinema the way you
see it.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: But as I said, as we
were talking this morning, we have so many examples in our
regulations of all of these quirky little things --

MR. COHEN: Yeah, I know.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- so that some project
could work that the transit-oriented -- the
transportation-oriented development the snag was that we
wouldn’t want to do it in Cos Cob, Riverside and Old
Greenwich. What about if it was just the downtown? A hub.

MR. COHEN: Well, it is limited to the GB
zone.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: No, I mean, if we just
did an overlay that would only be allowed in the downtown
or something. I mean, there’s got to be a way we can make
it cleaner.

MR. COHEN: We’ll look at that and we will
look at the many suggestions we’ve heard tonight about
architectural issues and traffic circulation issues and
we’ll get the comments from ARC after we see them. And
when we’re ready with a hopefully satisfactory response to
everything we’ve heard tonight we’ll come back to you.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: And I think people,
just as my general sense, there’s even people who didn’t
like -- who sent e-mails that they didn’t like the
building because they don’t like modern. They do -- they
do love the park. It seems the park is a good -- a concept
that’s getting real traction. That’s my sense. That people
do like the idea, it seems to resonate across the board.

So that one I think is -- it’s working.

MS. DELUCA: The platform for the art has
worked too.

MR. COHEN: You mean you like the park and
nothing else?

MS. DELUCA: If you just do a bigger park.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Well, it’s what’s
consistent so far in the feedback. You always try to get
to the win you have.

MR. COHEN: We’ll be back with some
changes, hopefully addressing some or all of the comments
you’ve heard tonight.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Okay.

MR. COHEN: Thanks very much for scheduling
this for tonight by the way.
MR. MACRI: Just the text amendment as I’m reading it here says, non-residential zones. So that’s any business zone that’s actually adjoining State of Connecticut railroad right-of-way. So I think, actually, staff gave us 47 different properties that this could qualify with.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: There. Yeah, that’s just downtown. But then the next question I asked Patrick was, what about the other train stations? And I think you guys might have -- I think I copied everybody on that question and the answer is, every other train station in town that has at least one non-residential abutting it apparently. So it’s still a little -- it would be nicer to do it simple -- simply.

MR. COHEN: We heard some of those comments during this morning’s briefing in terms of tightening up the language and we certainly can do that.

MS. DELUCA: Remind me again when the next Selectmen’s meeting is? Is it in a couple of weeks?

MR. COHEN: I think it’s August the 8th and then the next one is the 21st or something like that. There’s two in August.

MR. LOWE: They usually do it every two weeks.
MR. COHEN: Yeah.

MS. DELUCA: I think certainly for at least another -- at least another one we’re going to have to do -- add another meeting.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We don’t have anything else to do.

MS. DELUCA: Do you see what I mean? The just -- that it’s just -- because we’ve done sort of the benefits side, now we need to do the other side.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Yeah. I mean, to have --

MS. DELUCA: I think it’s a big enough issue that --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: -- it’s -- it’s good that we’re not -- if we’re not rushed with 10 other agenda items when we’re talking to you guys.

MR. COHEN: Good.

MS. DELUCA: -- so we need to come up -- because we’ve got two dates already in September so we’ll have to come up with --

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: A third date in September.

MS. DELUCA: -- yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: We knew that. But that
happens to us most years.

MS. DELUCA: Right. Right. This is true.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: One last question for Mr. Levy. Go ahead.

MR. LEVY: You’re not proposing any residential and I understand there’s a noise issue and things like that can be dealt with somewhat. But was there any -- was there -- was there a consideration -- was there any consideration for residential, or was that something that you just don’t think it’s practical there?

MR. COHEN: We talked about it Mr. Levy, but really, we felt -- everybody felt after thinking about it a while that there was really no good opportunity at this location. That this is really a commercial location, transportation location, and cinema, and it just -- it just didn’t go.

MS. DELUCA: Would you be constructing the building, however, in such a way that 30 years down the road, or whatever, that you could build something on top of it?


MS. DELUCA: Well, look what Port Chester is doing, they’re going to eight stories.

CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Let’s not go there.
MR. COHEN: Eight stories?
MS. DELUCA: No, they've approved it.
That's their new zoning regs.
MR. COHEN: Wow.
MS. DELUCA: Plus, eight plus.
MR. COHEN: Do you foresee that possibility Katie?
MS. DELUCA: No. No.
MR. COHEN: No.
(Laughter)
MR. COHEN: Thanks again.
MS. DELUCA: I wasn't thinking.
CHAIRPERSON ALBAN: Dead body. Thank you everybody.
MALE VOICE: Thank you.
(Whereupon, the hearing adjourned at 11:45 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

I, Paul Landman, a Notary Public in and for the State of Connecticut, and President of Post Reporting Service, Inc., do hereby certify and attest that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing record is a correct and verbatim transcription of the audio recording made of the proceeding hereinto set forth.

I further certify that neither the audio operator nor I are attorney or counsel for, nor directly related to or employed by any of the parties to the action and/or proceeding in which this action is taken; and further, that neither the audio operator nor I are a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties, thereto, or financially interested in any way in the outcome of this action or proceeding.

In witness, whereof I have hereunto set my hand and do so attest to the above, 8th day of August, 2019.

Paul Landman
President

Post Reporting Service
1-800-262-4102