

**Statement of Westbrook Council of Beaches at the Public Information Meeting
on July 28, 2015 Concerning the Route 1 Corridor Plan Dated June 2015**

The Westbrook Council of Beaches ("the Council") consists of 17 beach associations, which include approximately 1150 properties and collectively generate approximately 40% of the residential tax revenue for the town, making it one of the largest groups of taxpayers in Westbrook. We, the Council, have developed positions with respect to the Final Boston Post Road [Rte 1] Corridor Plan dated June 2015 (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan").

First, we want to thank all of the people who took the time over the last 3 ½ weeks to meet with Council members to discuss the Plan, including First Selectman Noel Bishop, Administrative Assistant Suzanne Helchowski, Westbrook Town Planner Meg Parulis, RiverCOG Executive Director Sam Gold, RiverCOG Principal Planner Jean Davies, and the Fitzgerald & Halliday President and CEO Susan Vanbenschoten.

We also want to thank the beach associations' Presidents, members, and Delegates to the Council, who organized, attended and led meetings, raised awareness, gave thoughtful input, achieved the removal of the Boardwalk proposal from the Plan, and made it possible for us to achieve consensus on the remaining issues.

We, the Council, make the following statements with respect to the Plan.

1. The Council is opposed to the current Plan because prior to being written there was no input from the Westbrook Council of Beaches and other significant interest groups in Westbrook. Without widespread input from the public, the Plan cannot possibly reflect the concerns of the town's residents, and is inherently flawed. We look forward to working with RiverCOG and Westbrook to improve the Plan.
2. The Council is opposed to the Boardwalk running from Route 1 to Seaside Avenue, and to any parts of the Plan that recommend the acquisition of land, design or construction to facilitate the Boardwalk. (We have been informed that the Boardwalk has been removed from the Plan.)
3. Although the DOT has already narrowed the Route 1 automobile lanes as recommended by the Plan, the Council is opposed to any further narrowing of the lanes, and urges that any future design or construction of bicycle lanes, walkways or other modifications be done only in a way that prioritizes the safety of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.
4. We oppose the inclusion in the Plan of the general objective of increasing tourism in Westbrook, as we think the town should undertake a project resulting in increased tourism only after balancing it against "the need to preserve the quality of life for residents," as required by the 2011 Westbrook Plan of Conservation and

Development (hereinafter referred to as the "POCD") at page 93. The POCD also states on page 93:

While tourism can provide positive effects, it must be managed so as not to negatively impact the quality of life for residents (e.g., traffic, crowd, noise, lights). Standards and regulations must have adequate provisions to ensure that neighborhoods are protected.

Consistent with the POCD, we urge that future consideration of projects that increase traffic onto the beaches should include full input from residents living near the impacted beach, and serious examination of the resulting environmental and social impacts.

5. We oppose the Plan's proposed Gathering Areas, Parking Areas with Access to Beaches, and Pop-Up Retail Zone, i.e. Food Trucks, Street Vendors, etc as they are unsightly and will create traffic congestion. Also, they will create unnecessary competition and loss of revenue for our established local businesses, their owners and their employees, many of whom are Westbrook residents.

6. We oppose the Plan's proposed Right of Way through Private Property to the Town Dock from Route 1.

7. Whenever in the future the town envisions making a right of way through private property, the private property owners' input should be sought prior making the Plan public.

8. We support the beautification and enhanced use of the Town Center as included in the Plan.

9. We are concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the sources of the high level of funding necessary under the plan, and do not support the possibility that Westbrook would be required to provide funds.

10. We support civility and decorum at all meetings.

We would ask that COG, after they have reviewed this statement, and the comments others have made tonight, provide us with correspondence stating the changes they have made based on this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Westbrook Council of Beaches

westbrookcouncilofbeaches.org
Contact : wcoaches@comcast.net