CEPA PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

WHITNEY HOUSE DEMOLITION

JULY 25, 2023

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UCONN
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

PRESENTATION/CEPA TEAM

Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.

Diane Mas, PhD, REHS/RS – CEPA Specialist

Alex Maxwell, PhD, Resilience Planner

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WEBINAR "TECH CHECK"

Submit **comments** via the **chat window** by writing your **name**, **address**, and **comment**

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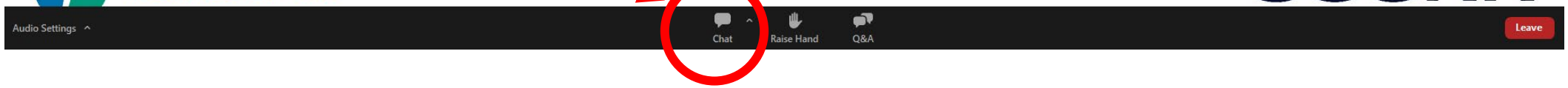

PRESENTATION AGENDA

- Public Scoping Process
- Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA)
- Project Overview & Schedule
- Public Comments

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PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

- **Provide basic information** on the project (Proposed Action)
- Occurs at the **early stage of project**
- Provide a **forum for agency and public input**
  - Range of alternatives
  - Environmental impacts that should be considered for study
- **Solicit written comments** to be addressed (via public meeting, email, mail, or fax) in the CEPA process

WHAT IS CEPA?

- **Connecticut Environmental Policy Act** (CEPA)
- **Identify and evaluate the impacts of proposed state actions** that may significantly affect the environment
- Allow for **public input**

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CEPA RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Natural

- Water quality (incl. surface water and groundwater)
- Flooding, in-stream flows, erosion or sedimentation
- Natural communities, critical plant and animal species
- Resident or migratory fish or wildlife species
- Air quality
- Ambient noise levels
- Existing land resources and landscapes (incl. coastal and inland wetlands)
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Changing climate (incl. resilience)

Socioeconomic

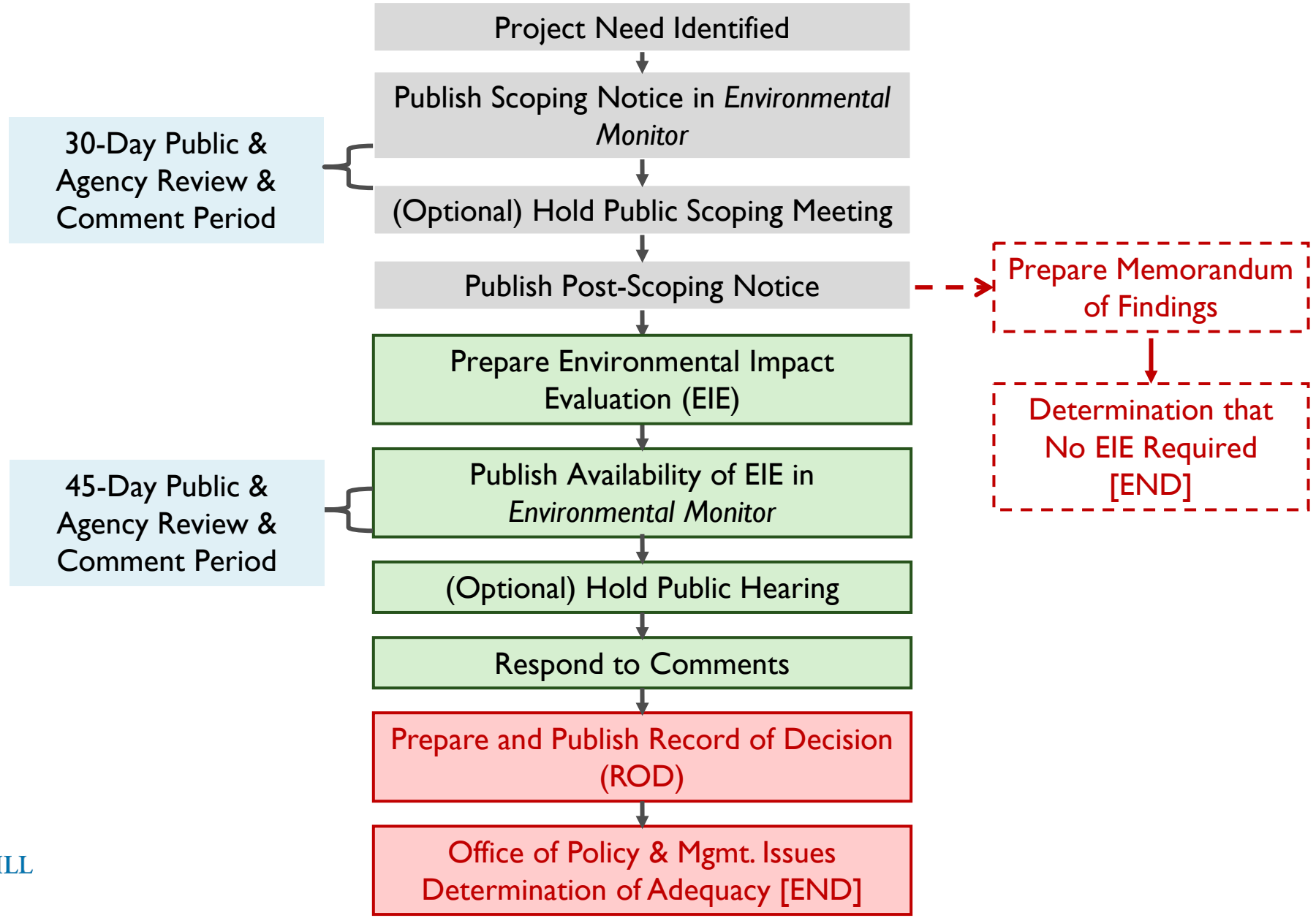
- **Historic, archeological, cultural, or recreational building or site**
- **Aesthetic or visual effects**
- State, regional, and municipal plans
- Existing housing, communities
- Population
- **Human health and safety**
- Other natural, cultural, recreational, or scenic resources

Physical

- Public water supply system
- **Pesticides, toxic or hazardous materials**
- Congestion (traffic, recreational, other)
- Energy use
- Agricultural resources
- **Existing/proposed utilities/infrastructure**

Bold indicates resources most relevant to this Proposed Action

CEPA PROCESS MAP & TIMELINE



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WHITNEY HOUSE DEMOLITION

PROJECT LOCATION ON CAMPUS

- Whitney House
  - Built **1802 -1807**
  - One of the oldest structures on campus
  - **Contributing resource** to the University of Connecticut Historic District

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **The Proposed Action**
  - **Removal** of the building
    - Decommission existing utilities
    - Remediate hazardous and regulated materials
    - Demolish building
  - **Restore** project site

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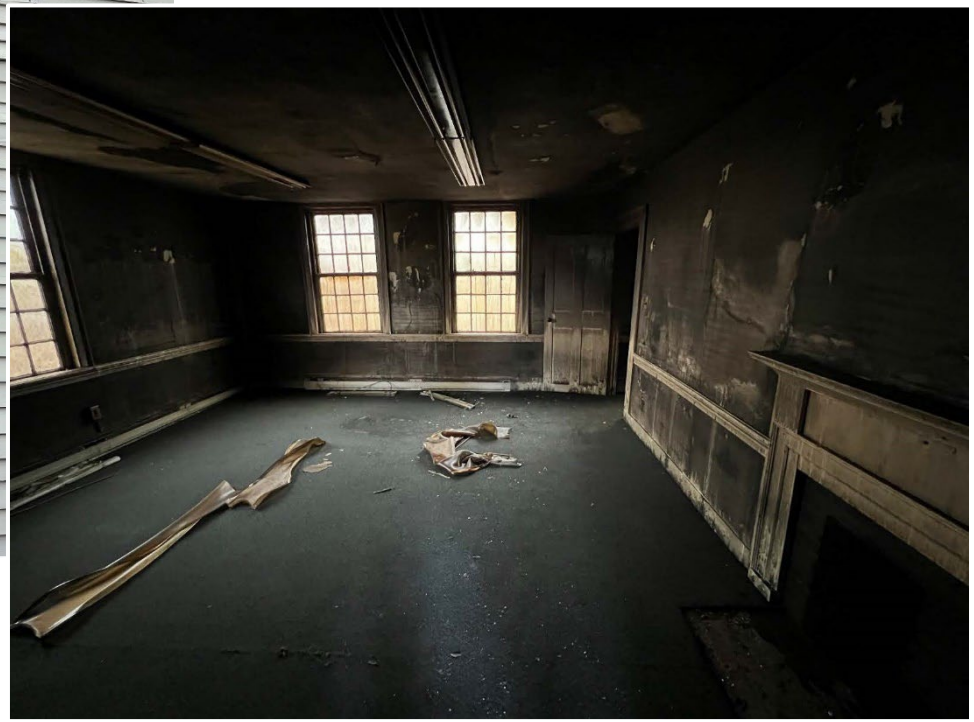
PURPOSE AND NEED

- **<u>Purpose</u>: Eliminate present hazards** and liabilities associated with the existing structure and site
- **<u>Need</u>**: Vacated without a useful purpose since 2004 and **damaged by fire, smoke, and water** in January 2023, Whitney House is **unsafe for occupancy**



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ALTERNATIVES OVERVIEW

No Action

- House is currently an unsafe liability risk
- Will increasingly deteriorate with no action
- Mold, mildew growth/moisture damage will accelerate

Repair/Restore Building

- Loose hazardous materials are problematic construction conditions
- Structural damage makes areas challenging to restore
- Smoke damage is extensive throughout the house and beyond areas of obvious structural damage
- Coordination required on mitigation measures due to the building being a historic resource
- Funding limitations make timely repairs challenging

Salvage/Relocate Building

- HAZMAT and chain of custody may make this a liability for all parties
- Complete architectural salvage of entire structure would be time consuming and remediation intensive
- Damage to structure and location limits feasibility of relocating
- Requires resolution of potential legal issues

Remove Building & Restore Site

- Most timely means to mitigate the safety and other risks associated with the damaged structure
- Coordination required on mitigation measures due to the building being a historic resource
- Potential salvage of key building elements (where feasible)

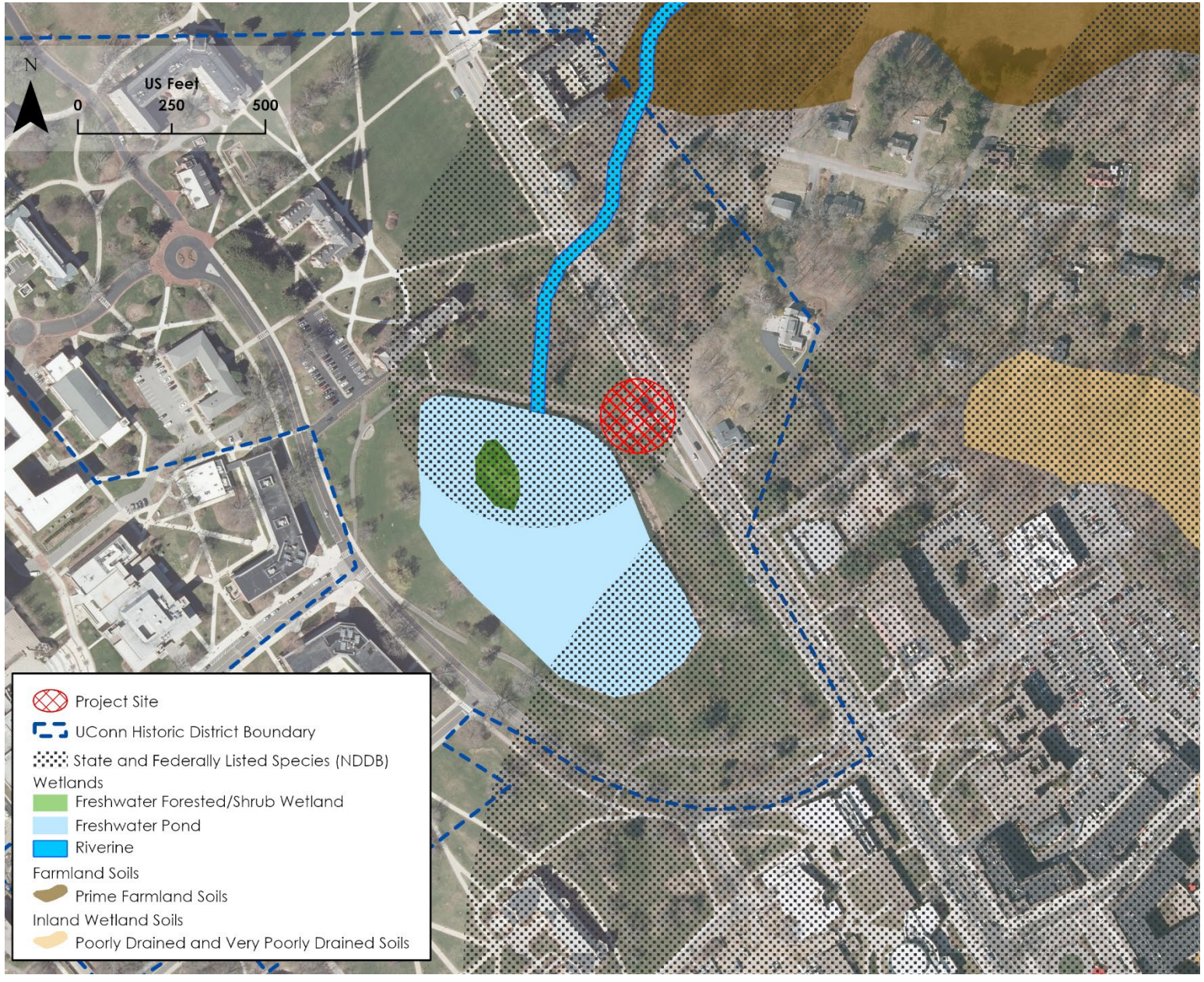
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE – REMOVE BUILDING & RESTORE SITE

- **Removal** of the building
  - Decommission existing utilities
  - Remediate hazardous and regulated materials
  - Demolish building
- **Restore** project site
  - Grade/infill basement
  - Reestablish lawn and plantings
  - Restore services and/or remediate soil as needed
- **Mitigation** of Adverse Effect on Historic District
  - Pending coordination with SHPO
  - Potential salvage of key building elements (where feasible)
  - Potential commemoration of site

RESOURCES NOT PRESENT AT THE PROJECT AREA

- No FEMA flood zones
- No aquifer protection areas
- No tidal wetlands/coastal areas
- No farmland soils

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT



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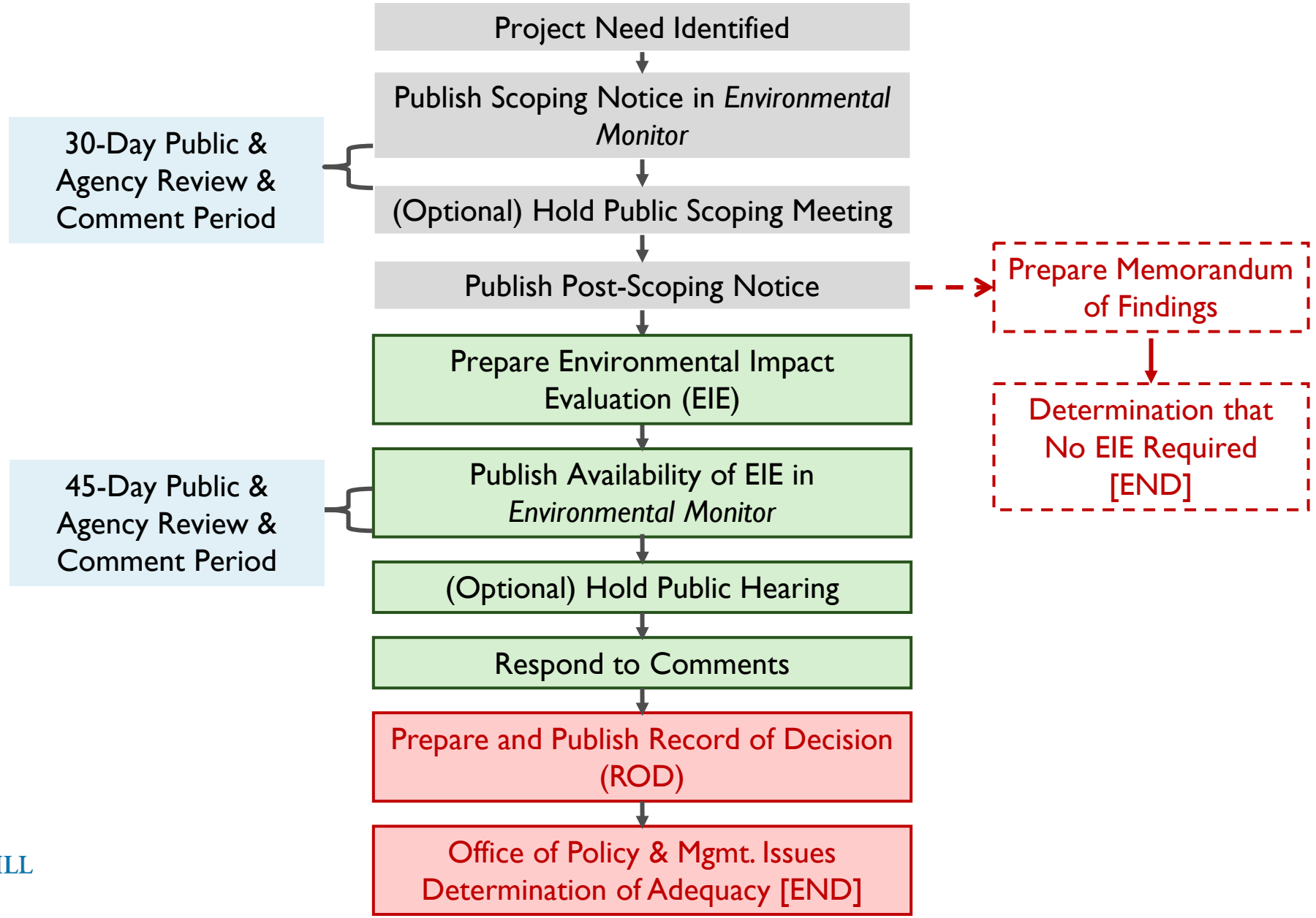
POTENTIAL EFFECTS

- Potential **beneficial effects**:
  - No long-term, energy-related **greenhouse gas emissions**
  - **Removal of hazards** to human health and safety (e.g., asbestos, structurally unsound building)
  - Conversion of impermeable surface to **permeable landscape** resulting in reduced stormwater
- Potential **adverse effects**:
  - Demolition of a **contributing resource** to the UConn Historic District
  - Possible disturbance of **archaeological resources**

NEXT STEPS

CEPA PROCESS MAP & TIMELINE



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SCHEDULE MILESTONES

Milestone	Tentative Date
Published Scoping Notice in *Environmental Monitor*	July 3, 2023
Public Scoping Meeting	July 25, 2023
End of Public Comment Period	August 4, 2023
Post Scoping Notice	Late Summer 2023
Planned Start of Work	Early 2024

COMMENTS

- **Written comments** accepted **tonight** via the **Chat**
  - State **name, address, and your comment(s)**
- May also **submit written comments (email preferred)** to:

  Name: **James Libby**, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB
  Address: 3 Discovery Drive, U-6038, Storrs, CT 06269
  Fax: (860) 486-3117
  E-mail: **james.libby@uconn.edu**
- End of **Comment Period**: August 4, 2023
- **Additional information** regarding the meeting, as well as a link to a recording of the meeting, will be posted at: https://updc.uconn.edu/whitney-house/
- **Recording** will be posted by COB Thursday, July 27, 2023