

# REPORT OF MEETING



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**Date:** January 17, 2003

**Project:** **I-95 Branford to Rhode Island Feasibility Study**

**State Project No.:** 170-2295  
**CHA Project No.:** 11530

**Location of Meeting:** 5 Crow Hill Road, Uncasville Connecticut

**Date of Meeting:** December 11, 2002; 11:00 A.M.

**Subject of Meeting:** **Local Outreach Meeting No. 16: Mohegan Tribe**

**In Attendance:** Chuck Bunnell, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Mohegan Tribe  
Jim Andrini - ConnDOT  
Carmine Trotta - ConnDOT  
Rod Bascom - Clough Harbour & Associates LLP (CHA)  
Vanessa Heaton - CHA

**Submitted By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Rodney A. Bascom- CHA

## Summary of Discussions:

### **I. Introductions**

### **II. Summary of Presentation of Project by ConnDOT / CHA**

- Introduction and overview of the study given by Jim Andrini.
- In 1999, ConnDOT prepared the Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study that recommended a more detailed study of alternates and improvements; hence this Study.
- Bonds issued under the authority of the June 2001 Special Legislation which created the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) are funding this work.
- Project overview - approach and public participation process which will include Public Information meetings. These meetings will be held in each of three main areas of this project:
  - Branford to Baldwin Bridge
  - Baldwin Bridge to Gold Star Bridge
  - Gold Star Bridge to Connecticut / Rhode Island border

- Environmental assessment will not be carried out at document grade level. It will be a first cut “sensitivity analysis” only.
- ConnDOT/CHA provided attendees with hand-outs:
  1. Draft Project Schedule dated 6/19/02
  2. Study Area Map
  3. Selected slides from Advisory Committee Presentation
  4. Copies of ConnDOT’s 1999 Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study

## Questions and Comments

Responses (ConnDOT or CHA / Local Participant)

1. The Mohegan Tribe has had a good relationship with the DOT. There is a perception by the Tribes that both casinos are getting blamed for a lot of the traffic. They would like to cooperate as necessary with the DOT for this study. Any improvements to I-95 would be in the Mohegan Tribe’s best interest.
2. When will the improvement recommendations be made? *By June 2004 at the latest.*
3. Chuck Bunnell was on the original Transportation Strategy Board.
4. The Mohegan Tribe feels that the idea of a double-decker highway solution is not logical.
5. *ConnDOT feels that by diverting traffic, the construction of Route 11 would lessen traffic demands now placed on Rte 85 and Rte 9 if it was completed to I-95.*
6. Who will benefit most from the construction of Route 11? *A complete Route 11 freeway connection to I-95 would decrease congestion on parallel arterials, particularly Routes 85 and 9 in the summer months. It could also help in matters of homeland security, should a need to move people and / or equipment into or out of southeastern Connecticut in a short amount of time arise.*
7. *Are there specific areas from which Mohegan’s business primarily comes from?* About 18% of business comes from New York.
8. *How does the Mohegan Tribe view I-395?* I-395 is fine as far as the Mohegan Tribe is concerned. Mohegan tries to keep visitors on I-395 when giving directions to their complex.
9. Is ConnDOT considering providing a freeway to freeway (ramps) connection from I-95 SB to I-395 NB? This improvement would greatly improve access to the Mohegan complex. *Current plans with or without the construction of Route 11 do not include this connection. The reason is that ConnDOT has not forecast a large amount of traffic that would use the connection, and formidable geometric restrictions would likely preclude it, or escalate costs such that it would not be considered a viable or practical option.*
10. There are no improvement alternatives or ideas that the Mohegans find ineffective. The I-95 South to I-395 North connector would be the best, but as just discussed, it is not feasible.

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11. *Are there any developable properties in the area which may be used in the near future that will affect the study?* There will be some growth and development, especially on the other side of the river (Norwich Hospital Site). There is a plan for residential units, as well as a golf course, possibly some light manufacturing units currently under consideration.
12. *Would this development generate a large amount of traffic in your opinion?* Yes and there would be a large impact on the Route 2A Bridge as well. Anyone who would develop that land would not want to pay for the bridge expansion.
13. *Would we be able to have access to more detailed information about Mohegan's patrons, i.e. where visitors are coming from, what kind of transportation they use, what times are the most busy, when deliveries are made, etc.?* Yes. Chuck will provide information that they have.
14. *As far as alternate transportation, do you have any input?* There was talk of wheeled trolleys; they are neither cost effective nor realistic. Not many people would use them. A ferry is important – for patrons from Long Island and Manhattan. Manhattanites spend \$3-4 compared to other patron's spending \$1. Mohegan would like to especially facilitate these patrons. There is the Mohegan Rail on this side of the river; however it is much too slow for efficient transport. It travels at speeds up to 15 m.p.h.; taking about 45 minutes to travel from New London to Mohegan Sun. It would also be much too expensive to upgrade.
15. *Do you have any information pertaining to your employees that you would be able to share?* There are about 10,000 employees here, and approximately 11,000 at Foxwoods. At Mohegan, there are employee parking lots, and the employees are then bused over. There are also approximately 16,000 parking spots for patrons.
16. Chuck Bunnell should be on the mailing list, and would be more than happy to provide any information possible which would be helpful to the study, as any improvements would ultimately be beneficial to the Mohegan Tribe.
17. It was agreed upon that any minutes written as related to this meeting would be presented to the Mohegan Tribe first for concurrence before circulating or public posting. Chuck Bunnell would be the contact person at the Mohegan.