

SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Date: July 5, 2002

Project: I-95 Branford to Rhode Island Feasibility Study

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

Location of Meeting: Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA)
Headquarters in Old Saybrook

Date of Meeting: July 2, 2002, 2:00 P.M.

Subject of Meeting: Local Outreach Meeting No. 3: Local Public Meeting with the CRERPA and member towns (Saybrook, Clinton, Westbrook, Old Lyme)

Summary of Discussions:

I. Summary of Presentation of Project by CTDOT/CHA

- Introduction and overview by Carmen Trotta and Jim Andrini
 - In 1999, CTDOT prepared a Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study that recommended a more detailed study of alternatives and improvements; hence this Study.
 - Project will not only study the main line of I-95 but will also look at feeder roads such as Routes 145, 153, and 161.
 - Project will include looking at alternative systems and ways to mitigate traffic on I-95 such as Rideshare and other intermodal transportation, including AMTRAK and Shoreline East.
 - General mission statement: Identify I-95 Corridor deficiencies and make recommendations for practical, cost efficient improvements to improve or preserve capacity of existing system and meet the needs of the future.
 - The Study will “have some teeth” with an Implementation Phase and will involve stakeholders in prioritizing improvement projects. CTDOT will also identify and implement near-term improvements that have minimum potential for environmental impact or property acquisition and can be implemented in advance of the main improvements.
- Summary of technical aspects of project by Rod Bascom:
 - As Congestion Management Project, the study will look at feasibility and the potential environmental impacts of adding a 3rd lane for 58 miles of I-95.
 - The Scope allows implementation of localized projects concurrently with the Study.
 - Where widening happens to the outside (as is the case with CRERPA towns), it affects every interchange.

- DOT will generate future year 2025 traffic and growth of background traffic and new traffic generation from proposed development. Therefore, we need the towns to provide information on projected growth in their towns.
- Project will include Public Outreach on 3 levels:
 - 1) A Study Advisory Commission established specifically for this project and consisting of local, regional and state stakeholders, including COG/RPA and town representatives and special interest groups (6 meetings to start in August or September)
 - 2) Local Outreach: Meetings with local towns (40 meetings)
 - 3) Public Informational Meetings (6 meetings)
- In addition, we will establish a 1-800 phone line and web page where people may learn more about the project and comment.

II. Questions and Comments *(with ConnDOT or CHA's response in italics)*

- It was stated that Estuary Transit District has a new plan to provide additional bus service from Old Saybrook to Madison to help get cars off highways by allowing people to take the train to Old Saybrook and transfer to other local points of interest by bus.
- What about Sunday southbound peak traffic? *We will model Sunday southbound traffic based on Friday's counts and the existing mainline data.*
- Are we doing an origin and destination Study and/or will we look at I-84 to see if it can/should handle more truck traffic? Because a gridlock on I-84 causes increases in traffic on I-95 (regional through traffic). How will we know what is through traffic? *CTDOT has done license plate studies at Foxwoods Casino to gain a general idea of the origin of the casino trip.*
- The proposed Route 11 project...will its recommended improvements be included in Study? *Yes. CHA will take preferred alternative into consideration.*
- Does Q-Bridge reconstruction affect this Study? *No. But CHA will have benefit of environmental issues studied by that project by virtue of one of its subconsultant's involvement in both projects.*
- Will we look at the potential to expand Metro North to New London? *Yes; at least on long list, then it will be compared and weighed against other alternates (cost-benefit) to determine if it makes short-list.*
- Will modeling take into account non-ridership? *Yes. CHA and its subconsultant, PTG, will look at existing and projected ridership using a refined model.*
- Will the Study look at accidents and congestion caused by scheduling maintenance at peak times such as before long holiday weekends? *Yes, we will look at accident histories and correlate accidents with geometric deficiencies; but maintenance is not part of Scope? E.g. Maintenance problems due to scheduling routine work before holiday weekends should not happen.*
- Can traffic be alleviated if a new casino was built downstream (e.g. in the Bridgeport area)?
- If rail service is improved, how many cars can be taken off I-95?
- CRERPA towns have a lot of commuters who work in New York. How will study determine whether congestion can be alleviated by improving rail service? *We will do model runs of various rail options (modal – splits).*

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- Will Study look at providing full interchanges (where there are half diamonds) not only to improve capacity, but also for emergency responsiveness (e.g. Elm Street is a problem). *Yes. Another way to reduce congestion is to improve geometrics of I-95 interchanges which is a major component of the scope of work.*
- Route 1, westbound is considerably greater than eastbound (because traffic cycles back on I-95) in Old Saybrook creating almost a one-way, circular traffic pattern due to problem interchanges.
- Traffic congestion due to construction projects and accidents is a major problem, what can be done to monitor traffic and notify people about problems? *CTDOT has two incident management or ITS (Intelligent Traffic Systems) projects that are on-going: one at Exit 56 Branford to Route 145 (scheduled for construction in 2003); and the other at Exit 64 to State Line (including I-395 to Route 2). The ITS projects will likely include: closed circuit TV traffic flow monitoring, pavement monitoring, highway advisory radio, and variable message signs. An elaborate fiber optics network will connect the ITS to both Bridgeport (control center operated by State Police) and CTDOT headquarters.*
- Project should consider mitigation of environmental damage (e.g. noise barriers are needed to mitigate traffic noise problems and Oyster River Watershed needs protection to reduce point source discharges.)
- When would major improvements be done? *Within 15 years.*
- Our belief is that traffic on Friday PM peak is comprised of 40% local work trips and 60% through traffic. Where is this data from? *Probably from the 1999 Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study that defined the need for a third lane. This Study brings that data up-to-date and determines actual method and duration of implementation, constraints and opportunities.*
- How much does this Study cost? *\$1.3M*
- Shoreline shuttle goes only from Madison to Old Saybrook stopping at the Connecticut River (doesn't cross). New Estuary Transit District has 14-passenger bus to Old Lyme, wants to hook up with SEAT one day.

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