



## SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

**Date:** August 30, 2002

**Project:** **I-95 Branford to Rhode Island Feasibility Study**  
**Connecticut Department of Transportation**

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

**Location of Meeting:** East Lyme

**Date of Meeting:** August 8, 2002 - 11:00 a.m.

**Subject of Meeting:** Local Outreach Meeting – No. 8

### **Project Overview by Jim Andrini of ConnDOT and Rod Bascom of CHA:**

- This is a two year study that is an outgrowth of the 1999 Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study prepared by ConnDOT. The 1999 study identified a lack of capacity and recommended a more detailed study of alternatives and improvements. This Study is a high priority of the Transportation Strategy Board and will look at I-95 from Branford to the Rhode Island state line, including 85 intersections and some of the supporting road network.
- Project will include studying the feasibility and environmental impacts of adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> lane in each direction for 58 miles on I-95 and will also look at alternative systems and ways to mitigate traffic on I-95 such as bus service, Rideshare and other intermodal transportation, including AMTRAK and Shoreline East. The Study includes a sensitivity analysis for Environmental resources, etc.
- Project recommendations will be practical and cost-effective and prioritized by need (ranked by cost/benefit, etc.). The Study includes an Implementation Phase and will involve stakeholders in prioritizing improvement projects. This will allow ConnDOT to identify deficiencies that can be addressed and corrected in the short term. These critical spot improvements can be “fast-tracked”; that is, constructed in advance of major highway improvements if they have minimum potential for environmental impact or property acquisition.
- Project methodology includes conducting traffic counts at 85 intersections for Friday p.m. peak hour. These counts are underway. ConnDOT will then generate future year 2025 traffic and growth of background traffic and new traffic generation from proposed development. (It is important, therefore that the towns provide information on projected growth in their towns). Once we have this projected traffic demand we can assess the capacity of the highway and look at traffic and safety improvements for the entire corridor. The geometrics of each interchange will be analyzed and compared with current standards. We will also gather information about accidents and determine where trouble spots are. Does town has database on accident history?
- Public participation is an important part of the Study. The Study will include Public Outreach on 3 levels:

- 1) A Study Advisory Committee 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 November).
  - 2) Local Outreach: Meetings with local towns (40 meetings) that will be advertised broadly to the public there (hear their questions and comments).
  - 3) Public Informational Meetings (6 meetings)
- In addition, we will establish a 1-800 phone line, web page and Email address where people may learn more about the project and provide comments. The Email will be answered by Jim Andrini; all questions or comments will be answered.
  - The outreach sessions will allow the Study team to learn about the specific conditions, issues and concerns locally and to better understand future traffic demand since we are requesting that Towns provide information relative to growth and land use (e.g. Plans of Development, major proposed developments, etc).

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

1. What is the nature of information we will be looking for towns to provide? *ConnDOT/CHA would like information about the projected growth of the Town of East Lyme, particularly planned projects or future major developments with the potential to affect traffic on or near the highway (e.g. Major Traffic Generators). If available, it would be helpful to obtain town GIS mapping.*
2. How wide is the area of Study? *ConnDOT/CHA is in the process of obtaining digital orthophotos for a 2,000 foot wide swath along the I-95 corridor – 1000 foot on each side as well as 3D information. GIS data from the town was requested. East Lyme has electronic mapping of parcels (Assessor's maps), but not topographical.*
3. The whole area around West Society Road is going to be developed. About 60 residential lots are being developed.
4. What intersections is the consultant counting traffic at for this Study? *Exit 73 at Society Road, the Rocky Neck Connector and Route 156; we are not counting Exit 74 because it was recently counted as part of the Route 11 Study.*
5. Exit 74 is a problem because the Route 11 study looked at the overpass of 161 and went north, we will need to look at Route 161 south.
6. Public is looking for a traffic diversion route around Exit 74. They would like engineered plans provided to them.
7. Will the Study document non-standard interchanges. *Yes.*
8. Sunday afternoons between 3-7 p.m is a problem on I-95. ...why is it backed up to New London? Why isn't Study conducting traffic counts on Sunday's? *We have chosen a summer Fridays as the peak hour and will develop traffic projections based on the 30<sup>th</sup> highest hour. We think that the Friday peak-hour is representative and will provide a good enough count.*
9. Discussion of problems associated with Exit 75:
  - Traffic back-ups.

- People get on the highway at Exit 75 to go to 395 but there is not enough space to merge into the 395 left exit lane. Might be necessary to erect barriers to prohibit access to 395 from Exit 75 on-ramp.
  - Signing for route 395 starts before Exit 74 between Northbound 73 and 74.
  - The Route 11 project addresses all of these problems, but construction of Route 11 may not happen soon enough. This Study may be a good opportunity to correct problems at Exit 75 as a short-term project.
10. East Lyme is in support of Route 11.
  11. We invite State Police to be on Advisory Committee?
  12. Discussion of problems at Exits 71 and 72?
    - Merge them together
    - Industrial parks both sides of Four Mile Road
    - Can't close Route 71 because of those Industrial parks
    - Service road could combine the 2 interchanges
  13. People in East Lyme are getting worried that tourism and new business are not coming to the region because of traffic associated with I-95.
  14. Accident information for East Lyme can be obtained from the State Police.
  15. It would be nice to have a train station in Rocky Neck or Niantic.

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