



SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Date: August 20, 2002

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

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

Location of Meeting: Old Saybrook

Date of Meeting: August 8, 2002 - 1:00 p.m.

Subject of Meeting: Local Outreach Meeting No. 9

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 3rd 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. Would traffic studies from recent applications help? *Yes, definitely.*
2. Is the study primarily looking at highways from a state standpoint not an interstate? Is it looking to eliminate interchanges to speed traffic through? *Trying to come up with alternatives to manage congestion.*
3. Would ConnDOT/CHA like copy of Town's wetland surveys. *Yes, that would be very helpful.*
4. Can you provide us with a list of what items we can help you with? *Yes.*
5. Every year the Fire Department responds to 50 accidents on I-95. They have a lot of problems getting onto the interstate. On average, they wait 45 minutes for DEP to arrive (if gas is spilled...even only 1 gallon) the highway is totally shut for all this time. The Fire Marshall should have authority to call clean up crews without waiting for the DEP to come to look at it first (when gas or oil or chemicals are spilled on an accident), this can save 45 minutes of traffic build-up.
6. A full interchange at Elm Street is needed. People get off at Route 166 and tie up the town when they have to get off the highway. Devastating effect on community.
7. Considerable resistance to move the ramps at Exit 70. Environment is a #1 issue in this community. Town would like a highway that has no water runoff into any water body.
8. Looking for significant effort to reduce the noise. (never was consulted about speed limit increased to 65).
9. Trees: we care a lot about what this town looks like. Significant effort to increase landscaping.
10. Residents didn't want any illumination. State statutes say that you must first look at reducing speed limit.
11. Mass transit: Residents think they are underserved and are exploited by Amtrak. Amtrak's costs are double Metro North's. In the interim, we would like to see Metro North extended.
12. Frontage roads between the exits: ideas for some proposed east-west connectors. One major problem is the wetlands. Can't work their way through from east to west.

13. Approving subdivisions, which will come close to I-95. What impact would this have on I-95 widening?
14. Shoreline East is not effective. It doesn't run consistently enough. Forced to get on highway, but highway is already backed up. We need Metro North service improved. *The Study will look at improving train service to reduce traffic congestions but getting Amtrak and Metro North together is beyond what we can do.*
15. The TIA has supported the additional lane and significant improvements in mass transit. Need to make a real effort to ensure that there are no major environment impacts.
16. Old Saybrook does have some bus service. But bus service is a loser. You still sit in the traffic.
17. Problems with Amtrak Bridge, reliability of train service could be affected. *Amtrak is looking at fixing the bridge...there is meeting shortly with consultants.*

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