

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

Date: August 20, 2013

Project Name: Old Saybrook Shore Line East Railroad Station Parking Lot Expansion

Municipality: Old Saybrook

Staff Contact: Mark Alexander

This assessment is being conducted in conformance to the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Environmental Classification Document (ECD) to determine Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) obligations.

Project Description:

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) proposes to expand the parking area for the Old Saybrook Shore Line East Railroad Station on a vacant lot across North Main Street from the existing parking lot and station. Were the entire 12 acres of property available, approximately 800 additional parking spots could have been constructed. This scenario was examined and as required by CEPA, a scoping notice was placed in the *Environmental Monitor* on November 22, 2011. Scoping was required since the CTDOT ECD requires public scoping for any project that involves the construction of new parking lots, garages, or additions thereto, that provide for an increase in capacity of 200 vehicles or more. Since this time, the magnitude of the project has decreased significantly. The current scope of the project includes acquiring only 3.6 acres of the original 12 acre property on which to put 200 parking spaces rather than the 812 spaces from the original proposal/scoping announcement.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) Section 22a-1a-3 Determination of Environmental Significance (Direct/Indirect)

1. *Impact on air and water quality or on ambient noise levels*
 - a) *Air Quality* – No negative impacts are anticipated. Increased opportunity for public transit and increased use of public transit can decrease vehicular emissions that contribute to ozone formation, particulate matter levels and climate change.
 - b) *Water Quality*- No negative impacts are anticipated. CTDOT has taken all comments regarding water quality into account and will employ best management practices (BMPs), including the use of low impact development (LID) where applicable as the project moves forward. CTDOT is currently in the process of testing the soil in the areas planned for infiltration practices to verify soil suitability/limitations since the effectiveness of various LID techniques that rely on infiltration depends on soil types.

- c) *Ambient Noise Levels*- No negative impacts are anticipated.
2. *Impact on a public water supply system or serious effects on groundwater, flooding, erosion, or sedimentation*
 - a) *Water Supply* – No negative impacts are anticipated. The Drinking Water Section of the Department of Public Health has reviewed the project, and has determined that the project is not within a public water supply source water area.
 - b) *Groundwater* – No negative impacts are anticipated; see 1.b above.
 - c) *Flooding* – There are no negative impacts anticipated as the proposed project is not located with the 100-year flood zone.
 - d) *Erosion or Sedimentation*- No negative impacts are anticipated. Stormwater discharges from construction sites where one or more acres are to be disturbed require a permit pursuant to 40 CFR 122.26. The CTDEEP Permitting and Enforcement Division has issued a *General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters Associated with Construction Activities* (DEP-PERD-GP-015) that will cover these discharges. For projects disturbing five or more acres, registration describing the site and construction activity must be submitted to CTDEEP prior to the initiation of construction. For construction projects with a total disturbed area between one and five acres, such as the proposed project, no registration is required as long as the project is reviewed by the town and receives written approval of its erosion and sedimentation control measures and the project adheres to the *Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control*. If no review is conducted by the town or written approval is not provided, the permittee must register with CTDEEP. Because State projects do not require town review and approval, CTDOT must register with CTDEEP in lieu of this requirement.
3. *Effect on natural land resources and formations, including coastal and inland wetlands, and the maintenance of in-stream flows* – No negative impacts are anticipated. Although the original plans suggested that here may be potential wetlands on the project site, field visits by the CTDOT Office of Environmental Planning have shown that there are no wetlands on the project site.
4. *Disruption or alteration of an historic, archaeological, cultural, or recreational building, object, district, site or its surroundings* – The CT State Historic Preservation Office (CTSHPO) requested that a professional archaeological reconnaissance survey be conducted to identify potentially significant archaeological sites or other properties within the parcel limits. An Archaeological Assessment was conducted from May 29 to May 31 2013 to determine archaeological sensitivity. Based on the results on this assessment a Reconnaissance Survey was conducted from June 3 to June 5 2013. No precontact artifacts or sites were identified in the project area, and only a few isolated historic artifacts were identified in the eastern and northern portions of the project area as a result of the survey. Therefore, no negative impacts are anticipated.

5. *Effect on natural communities and upon critical species of animal or plant and their habitats; interference with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species* – The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) performed a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) Review of State Listed Species, and there are no extant populations of Federal or State-listed Endangered, Threatened or Special Concerns Species that may be affected by the project.
6. *Use of pesticides, toxic or hazardous materials or any other substance in such quantities as to create extensive detrimental environmental impact* – No negative impacts are anticipated
7. *Substantial aesthetic or visual effects* - No negative impacts are anticipated.
8. *Consistency with the written and/or mapped policies of the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development and such other plans and policies developed or coordinated by the Office of Policy and Management or other agency* – The proposed project is located an area of the State listed as a Priority Funding Area in the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2013-2018. No negative impacts are anticipated and the project is consistent with the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development.
9. *Disruption or division of an established community or inconsistency with adopted municipal and regional plans* - No negative impacts are anticipated.
10. *Displacement or addition of substantial numbers of people* - No negative impacts are anticipated.
11. *Substantial increase in congestion (traffic, recreational, other)* –No negative impacts are anticipated by the project. The nature of this type of project is such that a decrease in traffic congestion along area roadways can be anticipated since additional and improved access will be provided for the use of mass transit. By promoting the use of mass transit, single occupancy vehicles will be removed from the roadway, resulting in lower vehicle miles travelled, and reductions in traffic congestion.
12. *Substantial increases in the type or rate of energy use as a direct or indirect result of this action - No negative impacts are anticipated.*
13. *The creation of a hazard to human health or safety* - No negative impacts are anticipated.
14. *Any other substantial impact on natural, cultural, recreational or scenic resources* - No negative impacts are anticipated.

Conclusion:

After examining any potential environmental impacts and reviewing all comments received from the various resource agencies as well as the public; CTDOT has concluded that the preparation of an EIE will not be required for the Old Saybrook Shore Line East Railroad Station Parking Expansion project.

Recommendations by various State agencies as a result of the Scoping Process:

As a result of the Scoping Process, the following recommendations were received from CTDEEP:

Appropriate controls, designed to remove sediment and oil or grease typically found in runoff from parking and driving areas, should be included in any stormwater collection system to be installed or upgraded at the site. Non-structural measures to dissipate and treat runoff are strongly encouraged, including infiltration using pervious paving or sheetflow from uncurbed pavement to vegetated swales, water gardens or depression storage areas. A stormwater management treatment train approach is recommended by CTDEEP. Such a system includes a series of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that target the anticipated pollutants of concern.

If a structured collection system is installed and more than 1 acre of pavement drains to a common discharge point, a hydrodynamic separator, incorporating swirl technology, circular screening technology or engineered cylindrical sedimentation technology, is recommended to remove medium to coarse grained sediments and oil or grease. CTDEEP recommends that the treatment system be designed to treat the first inch of stormwater runoff. Upon installation, a maintenance plan should also be implemented to insure continued effectiveness of these control measures.

The use of low impact development (LID) practices for infiltration of stormwater on site is strongly supported by CTDEEP. Water quality and quantity benefits are maximized when multiple techniques are grouped together. Consequently, CTDEEP recommends the utilization of one, or a combination of the following measures:

- The use of pervious pavement or grid pavers, or impervious pavement without curbs or with notched curbs to direct runoff to properly designed and installed infiltration areas,
- The use of vegetated swales, tree box filters. And/or infiltration islands to infiltrate and treat stormwater runoff, and
- The minimization of access road widths and parking lot areas to the maximum extent possible to reduce the area of impervious surface.

Test pits should be dug in areas planned for infiltration practices to verify soil suitability and/or limitations. Planning should insure that areas to be used for infiltration are not compacted during the construction process by vehicles or machinery. The siting of areas of infiltration must also consider any existing soil or groundwater contamination.