



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION I
JOHN F. KENNEDY FEDERAL BUILDING
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203-0001

August 2, 1999

Donald J. West
Federal Highway Administration
628-2 Hebron Avenue, Suite 303
Glastonbury, CT 06033-5007

Mr. Edgar T. Hurlle
Director of Environmental Planning
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Room 2159
P.O. Box 317546
Newington, Connecticut 06131-7546

RECEIVED
AUG 02 1999
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
DIVISION

RE: Final Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation, Interstate Route 95-New Haven Harbor Crossing (Q-Bridge); New Haven/East Haven/Branford/ Madison/Clinton, Connecticut

Dear Mr. West and Mr. Hurlle:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we have reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Section 4(f) Evaluation (FEIS) for the Interstate Route 95-New Haven Harbor Crossing (Q-Bridge) in New Haven, East Haven, Branford, Madison and Clinton, Connecticut.

The goals of the project described in the FEIS remain consistent with those identified in the April 1997 SDEIS. Namely, the project is intended to remedy existing Q-Bridge structural deficiencies or replace it with a new structure; to make operational and safety improvements to I-95; and to make travel delays through the New Haven area reasonable. The FEIS describes a recommended action consisting of a new ten lane bridge over the harbor with inside and outside shoulders (consistent with SDEIS Alternative 5); six travel lanes on I-95 within the existing I-95 right-of-way from Lake Saltonstall to exit 54; and transit and TSM measures. Additionally, the recommended action includes implementation of the No Build option for I-95 between interchange 45 and 47. EPA's comments on the SDEIS on August 8, 1997 called for additional information relative to wetland impact mitigation and air quality. We encouraged the FHWA/CTDOT to adopt an alternative that corrects problems with the Q-Bridge and also results in transit and ridesharing improvements.



Recycled/Recyclable
Printed with Soy/Canola Ink on paper that
contains at least 75% recycled fiber

some of the impacts of these associated widening projects continue to be a concern of the Department. In addition, the Department will look for ConnDOT to make enhancement of coastal access and recreational opportunities at Long Wharf Park an integral part of their future planning, as discussed below.

Coastal Consistency

The Office of Long Island Sound Programs (OLISP) has reviewed the FEIS pursuant to the requirement of Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 22a-100 that proposed state agency actions within the coastal boundary be consistent with applicable goals and policies of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) and incorporate all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts of such actions on water-dependent development opportunities and coastal resources. Based upon this review, OLISP finds the proposed action to be consistent with CCMA water-dependent use policies upon demonstration that proposed property takings will not significantly affect the viability of existing water-dependent uses. The additional information which needs to be provided to make this determination, clarification of the **degree** of potential adverse impacts to affected existing water-dependent uses and options available to mitigate unavoidable water-dependent use impacts, can be deferred to the state coastal permit review process. Coastal resource impacts appear to be avoided where possible or minimized to levels consistent with the policies for affected resources. However, examination of detailed design issues for dredged material disposal and additional investigation of methods to compensate for unavoidable coastal resource impacts, including tidal wetland and intertidal flat impact mitigation, will be required at the time that a state coastal permit application is made to OLISP for the proposed project. Additional clarification of the additional information required during the permit process follows.

In our comments regarding water dependent uses, it was concluded that significant informational deficiencies regarding the effect of required property takings on the viability of existing water-dependent uses precluded a determination that the proposed harbor crossing alternatives were consistent with the CCMA water-dependent use policies and the requirement that proposed state agency actions incorporate all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts to water-dependent uses. Response #4 indicates that additional analysis will occur during the permitting process. OLISP concurs that these issues can be resolved during the state coastal permit review for the proposed action, at which time a more detailed design for the crossing will be available and more precise determination of required property takings can be made.

We would like to reemphasize that, in order to evaluate the consistency of the proposed alternative with the above-referenced CCMA standards, a detailed analysis of the potential impacts to affected water-dependent uses must be conducted and all reasonable measures to fully mitigate such impacts must be identified, including how displaced water-dependent uses will be relocated and replaced or otherwise mitigated. Provision of financial compensation to affected property owners is **not** acceptable mitigation for displacing existing water-dependent uses.

As a point of clarification: although receipt and distribution of petroleum by vessel and on-site product storage at these sites is believed to have existed in the past, no information is provided on current site operations. The FEIS refers to these petroleum dealer facilities as water-dependent uses

The FEIS also notes that a "major retail complex (approximately 1.3 million square feet)" may be built within the project area. However, the FEIS does not contain any discussion of the potential impact of such a large mall on traffic flow or volume for the Q-Bridge project. Nor does it appear that construction of the mall was taken into account in the VMT or trip estimates used in the FEIS. Prior to the completion of the NEPA process, the significance of the construction of a mall in the project area and any impact on the selection of an alternative should be addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the FEIS for the Q Bridge project. We look forward to reviewing the supplemental information provided in response to our comments. Please feel free to contact Timothy Timmermann of EPA's Office of Environmental Review at 617/918-1025 if you wish to discuss these comments further.

Sincerely,



John P. DeVillars
Regional Administrator

Attachment

cc:

Carmine P. Trotta
State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

Susan Lee, Senior Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New England District
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, MA 02254-9149



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
79 ELM STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06106-5127

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
DIVISION

AUG 12 1999

RECEIVED

To: Edgar T. Hurlle - Director of Environmental Planning
DOT - Bureau of Policy & Planning, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

From: David J. Fox - Senior Environmental Analyst *D.J.F.* **Telephone:** (860) 424-4111

Date: July 29, 1999 **E-Mail:** david.fox@po.state.ct.us

Subject: Interstate Route 95, New Haven Harbor Crossing (State Project No. 92-354)

The Department of Environmental Protection has received the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared for the above referenced project, including the responses to our comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This document has been reviewed by the Offices of Environmental Review and Long Island Sound Programs and the Fisheries, Inland Water Resources and Air Planning & Standards Divisions. The following comments, compiled by the Office of Environmental Review, are submitted for your consideration.

Alternatives

In our comments on the DEIS, the Department endorsed alternatives that would minimize single occupant vehicle (SOV) use to the extent practicable and recommended that various forms of transit enhancements be implemented to the greatest extent feasible, whichever alternative was selected. It is disappointing that the Recommended Action maximizes SOV use and includes only a bare minimum number of transit incentives. There is a commitment to construct a commuter rail station at State Street in New Haven. However, there will be no increase in Shore Line East service, improved bus schedules or a number of other features that were originally proposed as part of all alternatives outlined in the DEIS. As a result, the Recommended Action includes less transportation system management strategies than any of the previously proposed alternatives. The wording on page 2-15 describing a number of transit components, "these features are included in the Recommended Action to the extent that they are currently being implemented," accurately summarizes ConnDOT's commitment to mass transit as part of this project: do nothing in addition to what is already being planned or provided.

Cumulative Impacts

In our comments on the DEIS, we noted that the cumulative impacts of future projects on adjacent sections of the I-95 corridor were not considered and that it should at least be acknowledged that widening the Q-Bridge could increase the need to pursue additional widening along I-95, with its attendant impacts and monetary costs. The FEIS, by not proposing any action in the Long Wharf area, actually further segments the project and narrows the scope of impacts considered. We do note that ConnDOT has stated that completion of the proposed improvements is likely to focus attention on the remaining bottlenecks outside project limits. We concur and would like to reemphasize that

some of the impacts of these associated widening projects continue to be a concern of the Department. In addition, the Department will look for ConnDOT to make enhancement of coastal access and recreational opportunities at Long Wharf Park an integral part of their future planning, as discussed below.

Coastal Consistency

The Office of Long Island Sound Programs (OLISP) has reviewed the FEIS pursuant to the requirement of Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 22a-100 that proposed state agency actions within the coastal boundary be consistent with applicable goals and policies of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act (CCMA) and incorporate all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts of such actions on water-dependent development opportunities and coastal resources. Based upon this review, OLISP finds the proposed action to be consistent with CCMA water-dependent use policies upon demonstration that proposed property takings will not significantly affect the viability of existing water-dependent uses. The additional information which needs to be provided to make this determination, clarification of the **degree** of potential adverse impacts to affected existing water-dependent uses and options available to mitigate unavoidable water-dependent use impacts, can be deferred to the state coastal permit review process. Coastal resource impacts appear to be avoided where possible or minimized to levels consistent with the policies for affected resources. However, examination of detailed design issues for dredged material disposal and additional investigation of methods to compensate for unavoidable coastal resource impacts, including tidal wetland and intertidal flat impact mitigation, will be required at the time that a state coastal permit application is made to OLISP for the proposed project. Additional clarification of the additional information required during the permit process follows.

In our comments regarding water dependent uses, it was concluded that significant informational deficiencies regarding the effect of required property takings on the viability of existing water-dependent uses precluded a determination that the proposed harbor crossing alternatives were consistent with the CCMA water-dependent use policies and the requirement that proposed state agency actions incorporate all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts to water-dependent uses. Response #4 indicates that additional analysis will occur during the permitting process. OLISP concurs that these issues can be resolved during the state coastal permit review for the proposed action, at which time a more detailed design for the crossing will be available and more precise determination of required property takings can be made.

We would like to reemphasize that, in order to evaluate the consistency of the proposed alternative with the above-referenced CCMA standards, a detailed analysis of the potential impacts to affected water-dependent uses must be conducted and all reasonable measures to fully mitigate such impacts must be identified, including how displaced water-dependent uses will be relocated and replaced or otherwise mitigated. Provision of financial compensation to affected property owners is **not** acceptable mitigation for displacing existing water-dependent uses.

As a point of clarification: although receipt and distribution of petroleum by vessel and on-site product storage at these sites is believed to have existed in the past, no information is provided on current site operations. The FEIS refers to these petroleum dealer facilities as water-dependent uses

but does not describe existing operations at the sites. An understanding of existing site operations is important because only water-borne receipt and distribution of product from the site is a water-dependent use. Therefore, if takings affect only on-site storage or over-land distribution of petroleum, no adverse impacts to water-dependent uses would result from the proposed takings.

Possible methods to mitigate adverse impacts to water-dependent uses and compensate for unmitigated losses of water-dependent uses at the two petroleum receiving and distribution facilities could be to fund on-site improvements to replace the displaced uses or to relocate displaced water-dependent uses to another appropriate site. If no suitable sites are available, adverse impacts to existing water-dependent use can be mitigated by providing new "out-of-kind" water dependent uses by funding new or enhanced coastal public access opportunities in the project area. Coastal public access is a water-dependent use, as defined by CGS 22a-93(16). Such "mitigation" could be used to satisfy CCMA requirements intended to maintain or enhance water-dependent uses along Connecticut's shoreline, which must be in addition to any financial restitution due to Gulf Oil and New Haven Terminal for property takings.

Our comments on the DEIS highlighted the CCMA policy that "coastal highways and highway improvements including bridges ... where possible enhance but in no case decrease coastal access and recreational opportunities," and noted that, because the Long Wharf/Veterans Park is within the highway project corridor and provides an excellent opportunity to enhance an urban waterfront park area separated from New Haven by Interstate 95, coastal public access and recreation enhancements for this area should be evaluated. Response #7 indicates that the Recommended Action includes no action in the Long Wharf area, which will be the subject of future study. The Department would like to emphasize that, given the scope of the Q Bridge project, off-site enhancement of coastal access and recreational opportunities would normally be considered appropriate and that the Long Wharf area is the best opportunity for such efforts. Given that this stretch of I-95 will undergo future environmental study, opportunities for enhancing coastal access can be deferred. However, ConnDOT should make a commitment to include enhancement of coastal access and recreational opportunities at Long Wharf Park as an integral part of their project scoping and planning to perform additional engineering study and environmental evaluation for I-95 between Canal Dock Road and Interchange 45 (Route 10).

Our comments on water quality pointed out the lack of information provided on the amount of and disposal methods for dredged material generated from pier construction. Response #9 indicates that specific information will be determined during design and permitting. While it is recognized that detailed information is not available during NEPA/CEPA review, it seems that, at a minimum, estimates of dredged material volumes could be provided (for example, the area of harbor bottom impacted and volume of water displaced are reported). In addition, the FEIS refers extensively to the New England River Basins Commission (NERBC) Guidelines as a dredge materials management standard. Specifically, page 4-148 of the FEIS states that "any dredged harbor bottom materials will be disposed of in accordance with NERBC guidelines." ConnDOT should be aware that dredged materials testing parameters and thresholds have changed since 1980. Open water dredge spoils disposal may require that sediments be tested for acute toxicity and bioaccumulation in sensitive, potentially-affected marine species. Because there is no assurance that open-water sediment disposal, even with capping, will be permitted, serious consideration should be given to upland dredge spoils

disposal options. Further, the FEIS refers to sediment test data from the Tomlinson Bridge project as indicative of sediments for the proposed Q Bridge project. Testing of specific sediments to be dredged will be required as part of the state coastal permitting process for this work.

The FEIS reports that tidal wetland loss from the proposed action is minimal (.016 acres) and the area of the former Yale Boat House, to be relocated or demolished pending future study as part of a separate project concerning transportation system improvements in the Long Wharf area, has been identified as being capable of providing greater than 1:1 replacement mitigation for the tidal wetland loss. Details on such mitigation will have to be further evaluated as part of the state coastal permitting process for this project. Similarly, compensation for impacts to intertidal flats will be further explored as part of the state coastal permitting process.

Adverse impacts to coastal resources include degrading visual quality through significant alteration of the natural features of vistas and viewpoints [CGS Sec. 22a-93(15)(F)]. Although the FEIS analyzes the impacts of views of the bridge from various vantage points, discussion of views from the bridge is limited to the visual impacts of proposed noise barriers and removal of the former Yale Boathouse. ConnDOT should consider how existing views of the Harbor and Long Island Sound from the Q Bridge will be affected by construction of a new bridge superstructure. Specifically, bridge railings/side safety rails should be designed to preserve or enhance these views of the Harbor and Sound.

Fisheries

In comments on the DEIS, the Department recommended that "extending the culverts at the Farm River should be avoided." In addressing this issue, Response #21 states that "It is not feasible to replace these existing culverts with arch culverts or span bridges for this project. Such a replacement effort is likely to cause greater impact upon the river and its habitat than would the extension of the existing culverts." However, culvert extension represents a permanent loss of habitat, whereas construction-related impacts (e.g., elevated suspended sediment levels or noise) are short-term effects. The Fisheries Division has recently learned that the existing Farm River culvert at I-95 may be undersized and contributing to flooding problems upstream. During the permit process, ConnDOT should evaluate the hydraulic capacity of the existing twin-box culverts and related factors in determining the adequacy of the existing structures to pass flood waters. If the existing culverts are deemed inadequate, reconstruction should emphasize designs that will lead to restoration of fish habitat (i.e., a span bridge).

In our DEIS comments concerning the harbor crossing, the Department noted that "it is expected that the loss of aquatic habitat associated with many of the proposed alternatives will require some form of mitigation." With regard to the Farm River culvert extension, it was further noted that "culverting may require habitat mitigation." Although the mitigation section of the FEIS (Section 4.0.2) does not include any provisions for mitigating lost habitat, Response #23 indicates that specific mitigation requirements and commitments will be finalized during permit processes. The Fisheries Division would like to emphasize that mitigation should be considered during the permitting process at each location where habitat loss occurs (e.g., culvert extension or bridge pier construction).

According to Table 4.2-8, 38,750 sq. ft. of streambed or waterbody will be impacted, but the net loss will equate to only 3,653 sq. ft. This figure was apparently derived from adding the areas impacted at all locations except the harbor crossing. However, page 4-121 reports that the new crossing structure will displace 803 sq. yd. (1089 sq.ft.) of harbor bottom, a figure that should be added to this total.

In comments on the DEIS, the Department noted that the seasonal restrictions on unconfined dredging that were proposed in the DEIS could be shortened, specifically that the anadromous fish restriction could be shortened from April through September to April through June. Based on Response #24, it appears that the ConnDOT believes that shortening the anadromous fish restriction will provide an additional three month construction window. Because a June through September seasonal restriction is proposed in the DEIS for the protection of Eastern oyster, no such expansion of the overall dredge window should be anticipated. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture and Laboratory Services, which regulates shellfish resources and specific measures to protect the Eastern oyster population, should be consulted.

The Fisheries Division did not conduct a site visit at the unnamed Lake Saltonstall tributary or at the unnamed tributary west of Cherry Hill Road and is unable, at this time, to assess the extent to which proposed activities will adversely affect fisheries resources in those streams. It is generally agreed that 2,320 linear feet of the Lake Saltonstall tributary can be relocated without adversely affecting fisheries resources, since the stream in question is reportedly a man-made channel that parallels the toe of the roadway embankment. There may be opportunity to improve the habitat value of this stream. Therefore, ConnDOT is encouraged to consider plans that are designed to optimize the biological productivity of this stream segment during the permitting process.

Inland Wetlands

For your information, section 4 of Public Act 98-209 amended section 22a-40 of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (IWWA) by establishing an exemption for state agency actions that are also regulated pursuant to sections 22a-28 through 22a-35 or sections 22a-359b through 22a-363f of the CGS, administered by the Office of Long Island Sound Programs. Therefore, any proposed activities within areas under the jurisdiction of OLISP would not require a permit or approval pursuant to the IWWA.

Air Quality

In order to verify the accuracy of the air quality impact analysis for the project, the Department must review the sample input files utilized by the ConnDOT for the Mobile 5B, Part 5 and CAL3QHC models. ConnDOT never supplied these sample input files and the Bureau of Air Management hereby requests the sample input files used in the Mobile 5B, Part 5, and CAL3QHC models.

On July 18, 1997, EPA promulgated new ozone (8-hour ozone standard) and particulate matter (PM_{2.5} Standard) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQSs). The certainty regarding the implementation and enforcement of the new NAAQSs is questionable in light of recent court

decisions. If implementation and enforcement of the 8-hour ozone standard eventually occurs, this action will affect the air quality analysis requirements of transportation planning. Therefore, supplemental air quality analyses may be required to address the new 8-hour ozone standard during the indirect source permit process.

Page 3-68 of the FEIS inaccurately states that "since there are no official designations for attainment status, and since quantitative and approved estimation measures are not currently available, no quantitative analysis of $PM_{2.5}$ is being performed for this project." Lack of designation status does not provide adequate justification to forego $PM_{2.5}$ modeling. In addition, the EPA released Models-3 in 1998. Models-3 possesses the capability to forecast $PM_{2.5}$ area concentrations resulting from the project. For these reasons, the Department may request supplemental analyses to address the new $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS during the indirect source permit process.

Page 3-67 of the FEIS inaccurately implies that the new 8-hour ozone standard supersedes the old ozone standard (1-hour standard). The 1-hour ozone standard continues to apply within Connecticut until the EPA formally redesignates Connecticut (For nonattainment with the 8-hour ozone standard) in the year 2000.

The FEIS contains an incomplete air quality analysis because it fails to consider the air quality impacts associated with construction activity. The FEIS concludes that the project will decrease total emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x). The FEIS based this conclusion solely upon a comparison between the build and no-build scenarios.

However, the FEIS estimates that the project will take over eight years to construct. This construction period is considerably longer than those reported in the DEIS for any of the other alternatives considered. Air pollution emissions associated with roadway construction activities include:

- VOC, NO_x , PM_{10} , and CO emissions associated with construction induced traffic delays;
- diesel fuel combusting construction equipment emissions of NO_x and PM_{10} ; and
- construction activity, such as earthmoving, resulting in PM_{10} emissions.

Connecticut intends to pursue redesignation of the New Haven PM_{10} nonattainment area in the year 2000. Such redesignation requires a State Implementation Plan (SIP) submission evidencing Connecticut's maintenance capability with the PM_{10} NAAQS. Further analysis of potential PM_{10} emissions associated with the project is necessary to ensure that this project will not interfere with the maintenance of the PM_{10} NAAQS. Moreover, Connecticut has taken great strides towards attaining the 1-hour ozone standard. While it is evident that NO_x reductions must occur in upwind states for Connecticut to attain the 1-hour ozone standard, it remains important to account for VOC and NO_x emission increases throughout the State.

Edgar T. Hurlle

- 7 -

July 28, 1999

Due to the prolonged construction period, emissions associated with roadway construction activity may detrimentally affect Connecticut's air quality. Therefore, the Department requests a revision of the air quality analysis contained within the FEIS to account for increased emissions associated with construction activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to again review this project. If there are any questions concerning these comments, please contact me.

cc: Jeff Smith, OPM
Arthur J. Rocque, Jr., DEP/COMM
Peter Aarestad, DEP/FD
Chuck Berger, DEP/TWRD
Martin Booher, DEP/APSD
David Kozak, DEP/OLSIP
Michele Sullivan, DEP/OCE
Steve Tessitore, DEP/TWRD



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

August 6, 1999

Mr. Edgar T. Hurlle
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

RECEIVED
AUG 12 1999
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
DIVISION

Dear Mr. Hurlle:

We have completed our review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Interstate Route 95 - New Haven Harbor Crossing; New Haven/East Haven/Branford/Madison/Clinton, Connecticut. We are responding on behalf of the U.S. Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Generally, we believe our potential concerns have been addressed in this final document, and we have no additional specific comments to add at this time. For future draft NEPA documentation, we encourage you to consider potential public health related issues with environmental topics and to specifically note such issues and mitigation, as appropriate.

For future reference, please note the following error: on page 5-2, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is listed under comments received, and on page 5-3 the National Center for Disease Control (CDC) is listed under no comments received. CDC is part of DHHS and provides EIS review comments on behalf of DHHS.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this FEIS. We would appreciate receiving a copy of any future environmental impact statements which may indicate potential public health impacts and are developed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Sincerely,

Kenneth W. Holt, MSEH
Chemical Demilitarization Branch (F16)
Emergency & Environmental Health Services Division
National Center for Environmental Health

Hog River Music

1800 Albany Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06105-1005
U.S.A.

29 June 1999

RECEIVED

JUL 06 1999

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
DIVISION

James Sullivan
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06131-7546

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

How much longer before transportation planners realize that more roads, more cars are not the answer? We simply can't afford it. We can't afford the cars, the pollution, the irreplaceable fossil fuels, or the damage to the environment.

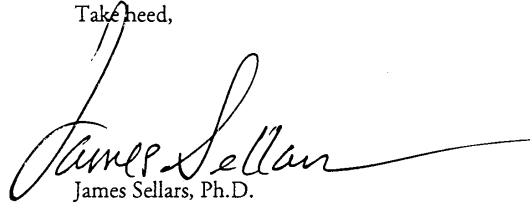
Think how much it costs to run a city like Los Angeles compared with, say, London. Los Angeles depends almost entirely on freeways and automobiles. London and its environs can take advantage of a good mass transit system. Think of what it costs to run Houston, with its drive-in, drive-out workers, (not to mention the air conditioning). Think of that cancer-in-the-desert, Phoenix. Think of Kansas City, of Denver, of Atlanta.

Think of the Long Island Expressway. They finally just had to give up.

We have built, and continue to build, an extravagant, wasteful infrastructure. More, wider, longer roads, bigger bridges, and larger parking lots only add to the problem. Gasoline is almost \$5.00 a gallon in Europe. Much of that is tax, used to support mass transit.

But, sooner or later Americans will have to face The Inevitable Energy Crisis. Gasoline will be \$10.00 a gallon, *without* tax. Then our economy will collapse (recall 1976). Then your enormous, ugly freeways and bridges will look ridiculous, like the work of madmen. What a legacy to leave our children.

Take heed,



James Sellars, Ph.D.

cc: Anthony DaRos
John DeStefano
Toni Gold
Curtis Johnson
Dan Lorimier
Richard Martinez
Carmine Trotta
Thomas Violante

Photographs by Thomas McDonald for the New York Times

The eastbound lanes of the Q Bridge, which carries Interstate 95 over the Quinnipiac River, are packed during a recent afternoon rush hour in New Haven. Below, another view of the bridge.

By REG JOHNSON

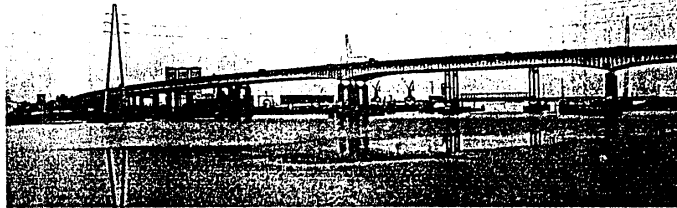
PROJECTS to rebuild and expand bridges originally built decades ago often receive little opposition from residents, who accept the short-term disruptions that the work brings as necessary to smooth traffic flow and sustain economic growth over the long term.

In Bridgeport, the state received only scattered comment when it proposed to expand the I-95 bridge over Bridgeport Harbor and rebuild other nearby bridges and interchanges. Construction on the \$400 million project has been sailing along, and officials say the job will be completed ahead of schedule.

In New Haven, it's another story.

Local residents, environmentalists and some officials are battling the state Department of Transportation over its plan to build a bridge carrying I-95 over the Quinnipiac River. The official name of the bridge is the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge, but most residents know the bridge simply as the Q Bridge.

At least that's what they call it when they are being polite. The bridge has a reputation of being a trouble



spot. It is where two of the state's major highways, I-91 and I-95, come together and on late Friday afternoons and Sunday evenings motorists can inch along bumper to bumper. It was built in the late 1950's with three lanes in each direction and was designed to handle 40,000 vehicles a day. Today, that figure is about 60,000.

"In the summer, on the start of a weekend where people are going to Cape Cod or north you'll have traffic

backed up for miles, even without a breakdown on the bridge," said Carmine Trotta, a planner with the state Department of Transportation. The bridge has virtually no shoulder, so there is no place for a disabled vehicle to pull over. "If something should happen on the bridge, it affects the whole interstate system in this region."

The transportation department plans to tear down the structure and build a new bridge with five lanes in

each direction, with full breakdown lanes, a wider highway on the approaches and a totally new interchange system where I-95 melds with I-91 and Route 34. The project, which would cost an estimated \$900 million, is expected to take 10 years to complete.

So far, the department has received \$4.4 million for the first stage of the project, after getting the green light from local elected officials, such as Mayor John DeStefano.

But grass-roots opposition in the city has been substantial. People have spoken out against the bridge plan at hearings held by the city's Board of Aldermen and hundreds of people have signed petitions opposing the project. Aldermen are being lobbied to pass a resolution opposing the state plan despite the mayor's support for it.

The critics claim the larger bridge is unnecessary and will lead to more commercial development along I-95, especially in the small towns east of New Haven. And they accuse the transportation department of renegeing on a promise made several years ago that the department would abide by the decision of a community group, which included residents, city officials and busi-

Continued on Page 19

Connecticut

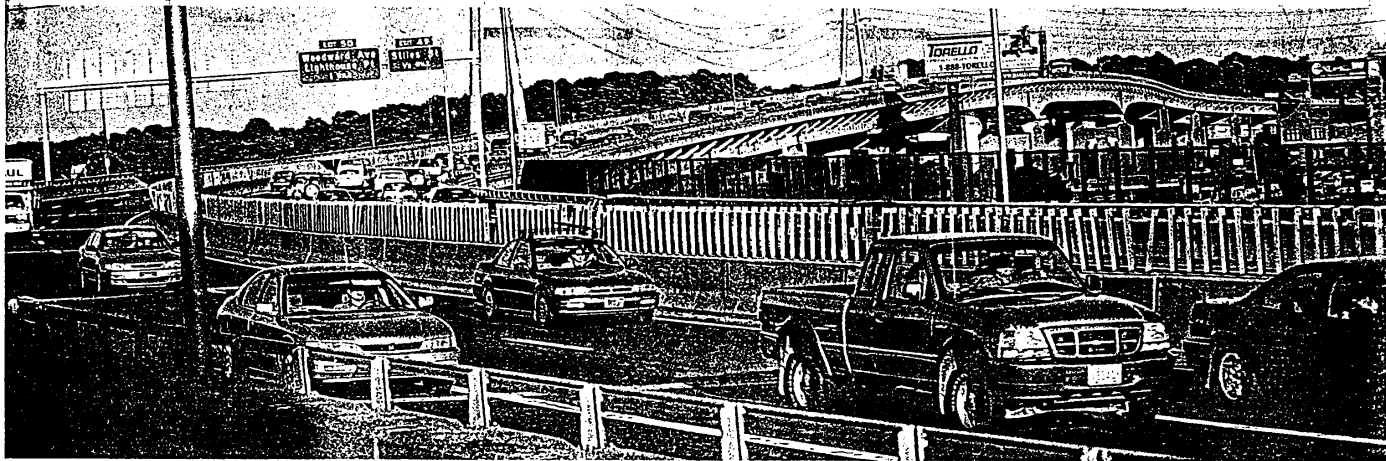
Section **14**

Finally, a Plan to Fix the Big Bottleneck

Good News for Drivers, But Some Want Work Scaled Back on the Q Bridge



Finally, a Plan to Fix the Q Bridge, But Not Everyone Is Happy



The Q Bridge in New Haven, where Interstate 95 and Interstate 91 meet. It was built in the late 1950's with three lanes in each direction and was designed to handle 40,000 vehicles a day. Today, that figure is about 60,000.

Continued From Page 1

ness people, formed to come up with a plan for the bridge.

After a dozen meetings, that group, called a stakeholders group, voted to recommend an eight-lane span, modest improvements to the interchanges, and measures to improve bus and train service to and from New Haven to wean people away from cars.

"The transportation department is just trying to spend all the money they have on concrete and as little money as possible on mass transit," said Dan Lorimier, of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, an organization opposed to the bridge.

To Richard Martinez, director of policy and planning for the transportation department, it's only logical that the new, much larger bridge is needed, together with the other improvements. Vehicle traffic is rising steadily, he said, and there's little indication that people are prepared to leave their cars in favor of mass transit in significant enough numbers to change the trend.

"We expect traffic volume to rise to 85,000 trips a day by the year 2015, and the bridge is needed to handle that," he said.

The department came out with its proposal in January as part of a transportation plan for the New Haven region. The proposal immediately came under fire from environmentalists, local residents, and even many of the elected officials who comprise the South Central Regional Council of Gov-

ernment. Each round of funding for different phases of state transportation projects, was concerned the department hadn't put enough emphasis on expanding mass transit in the overall plan, and held off approval for the first round of funding.

In April, the department came back with several suggestions, including funding for increased parking and rehabilitating train stations to encourage more riders on the Shoreline East line; adding another train station in New Haven, closer to the downtown, and adding bus service in the East Haven area. State officials also said they would consider increased runs of the Shoreline East to reduce waiting times.

The promise of the improvements, totaling \$12 million to \$15 million, together with assurances given by James Sullivan, the head of the transportation department, changed the minds of the council.

The municipal leaders approved money for the first phase of the project: \$4.4 million for widening I-95 to the east of the bridge, running from Woodward Avenue in New Haven to Cedar Street in Branford.

"I have a lot better comfort level that I had two months ago," said Anthony DaRos, Branford's First Selectman, who had been concerned about inadequate plans for bus and train improvements. "It is now a question of: Do we believe the commissioner? I have no reason not to."

But critics, including Curtis Johnson, the staff attorney for the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, were far from satisfied.

Mr. Martinez maintained, however, that the Shoreline East has been very costly to run for the state, despite efforts to increase ridership. "The line carries about 600 people a day," he said. "Each trip is subsidized by \$18 to \$19, and we only get a 10 percent return on fares."

Despite incentive programs such as offering free fares for a month, Mr. Martinez said, there's been little pickup. He said the state is spending \$500,000 a year on the service and could not afford to cut fares and add service to reduce wait times. While the transportation department is open to increasing train and bus service if there is demand, Mr. Martinez said people still seemed to be addicted to their cars.

The 10-year project is expected to cost about \$900 million.

Mr. Johnson said what is most upsetting to people who participated in the Inter Modal Concept Development Committee is that the transportation department had previously pledged to honor the recommendation of the group on the future of the bridge. The group was set up by (Emil Frankel), the former head of the transportation department, to come up with a consensus plan, after a state proposal announced in 1992 for a 10-lane bridge was widely criticized.

The committee weighed various alternatives for the bridge and interchanges, and transportation officials sat in on the meetings. The community group announced its recommendation for the eight-lane bridge in

late 1997. Committee members like Ruti Swanton have been bitter about the department's turnaround.

"I feel like using street language to describe what they have done," said Ms. Swanton, speaking at a hearing of the Board of Aldermen in May. "This goes against the democratic process."

Ms. Swanton and others also complained that transportation officials failed to understand what they think is obvious: building larger roads and bridges just induces more traffic. "Build a bigger bridge, and people will drive over it," she said.

Mr. Sullivan could not be reached for comment.

The department's plan, however, does have the strong support of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce (Thomas Vialante), the executive director of the chamber, said up-to-date infrastructure was needed in the area for economic growth. When companies are considering moving, they look at the quality of infrastructure: roads, airports, bridges.

"This project is necessary for growing the region," he said.

Mayor DeStefano, whose administration is working to recharge New Haven's ailing economy, said he doesn't have any "significant problem" with the plan for the new bridge.

All the same, he said, he and the other regional leaders will be watching the department to make sure it follows through on promises about mass transit. "We're going to hold their feet to the fire," he said.

Mr. Johnson said the department was refusing to make a definite commitment to both increase train service and reduce fares on the Shoreline East. Those goals, as well as cutting bus fares and setting up an bus corridor on I-95, were recommended in the report by the community group, formally

called the Inter Modal Concept Development Committee.

Mr. Johnson said the transit improvements in the committee's plan would take 2,300 vehicles a day off the highway.

The overall plan by the committee, with an eight-lane bridge, mass transit improvements and smaller changes on interchanges, would cost the state \$450 million less than the state plan.

"The state plan costs half a billion more than the I.C.D.C. plan, and by the state's own estimates, the 10-lane bridge will only make the trip to New Haven 45 seconds faster," Mr. Johnson said.

Mr. Johnson said what is most upsetting to people who participated in the Inter Modal Concept Development Committee is that the transportation department had previously pledged to honor the recommendation of the group on the future of the bridge. The group was set up by (Emil Frankel), the former head of the transportation department, to come up with a consensus plan, after a state proposal announced in 1992 for a 10-lane bridge was widely criticized.

The committee weighed various alternatives for the bridge and interchanges, and transportation officials sat in on the meetings. The community group announced its recommendation for the eight-lane bridge in

late 1997. Committee members like Ruti Swanton have been bitter about the department's turnaround.

"I feel like using street language to describe what they have done," said Ms. Swanton, speaking at a hearing of the Board of Aldermen in May. "This goes against the democratic process."

Ms. Swanton and others also complained that transportation officials failed to understand what they think is obvious: building larger roads and bridges just induces more traffic. "Build a bigger bridge, and people will drive over it," she said.

Mr. Sullivan could not be reached for comment.

The department's plan, however, does have the strong support of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce (Thomas Vialante), the executive director of the chamber, said up-to-date infrastructure was needed in the area for economic growth. When companies are considering moving, they look at the quality of infrastructure: roads, airports, bridges.

"This project is necessary for growing the region," he said.

Mayor DeStefano, whose administration is working to recharge New Haven's ailing economy, said he doesn't have any "significant problem" with the plan for the new bridge.

All the same, he said, he and the other regional leaders will be watching the department to make sure it follows through on promises about mass transit. "We're going to hold their feet to the fire," he said.

Mr. Sullivan could not be reached for comment.

The department's plan, however, does have the strong support of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce (Thomas Vialante), the executive director of the chamber, said up-to-date infrastructure was needed in the area for economic growth. When companies are considering moving, they look at the quality of infrastructure: roads, airports, bridges.

"This project is necessary for growing the region," he said.

Mayor DeStefano, whose administration is working to recharge New Haven's ailing economy, said he doesn't have any "significant problem" with the plan for the new bridge.

All the same, he said, he and the other regional leaders will be watching the department to make sure it follows through on promises about mass transit. "We're going to hold their feet to the fire," he said.

Mr. Sullivan could not be reached for comment.

The department's plan, however, does have the strong support of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce (Thomas Vialante), the executive director of the chamber, said up-to-date infrastructure was needed in the area for economic growth. When companies are considering moving, they look at the quality of infrastructure: roads, airports, bridges.

"This project is necessary for growing the region," he said.

Mayor DeStefano, whose administration is working to recharge New Haven's ailing economy, said he doesn't have any "significant problem" with the plan for the new bridge.

All the same, he said, he and the other regional leaders will be watching the department to make sure it follows through on promises about mass transit. "We're going to hold their feet to the fire," he said.

✓

1999 R A Richards
146 Green Meadow Dr
Westbrook, CT 06498-1459

July 18TH, 1999

Dear Sirs,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DATA PACKET REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS SUGGESTED FOR THE PEARL HARBOR "Q" BRIDGE. I DO NOT KNOW WHY I RECEIVED IT, BUT HERE ARE MY COMMENTS. I HAVE DRIVEN I-95 AND THE "Q" BRIDGE SINCE IT WAS BUILT.

EXPAND THE BRIDGE TO FOUR LANES EACH WAY. WHAT YOU WILL DO WITH THE TRAFFIC ON THE WEST SIDE I DO NOT KNOW, NOT BEING AN ENGINEER.

EAST OF THE BRIDGE ENLARGE I-95 EACH WAY TO THREE LANES TO THE BALDWIN BRIDGE OVER THE CONNECTICUT RIVER. "BITE THE BULLET". DO IT NOW!!!

WEST OF THE BRIDGE SHOULD BE THREE LANES ALSO.

EXPAND RAIL TRAFFIC TO OLD SAYBROOK AND NEW HONDON. YES, IT WILL RUN AT A DEFICIT BUT WE HAVE THE MONEY.

REDUCE THE COST OF TRAIN TICKETS TO MAKE IT CHEAP ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE TO USE IT RATHER THAN THEIR CARS

IN EUROPE AND JAPAN TRAINS ARE FREQUENT AND ON TIME, AND RUN AT HUGE NATIONAL DEFICITS, BUT MANY PEOPLE DO NOT EVEN OWN CARS.

Most Sincerely,
R.A. Richards

RECEIVED

JUL 21 1999

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES