



Connecticut Department of Transportation  
 2800 Berlin Turnpike, P.O. Box 317546  
 Newington, CT 06111

**PARSONS**  
 330 Roberts Street, Suite 401  
 East Hartford, CT 06108

## Report of Meeting

STATE PROJECT NOS: 0079-0240, 0079-0245, 0079-0246 I-91 / I-691 / Route 15 Interchange Improvements  
 DATE/TIME OF MEETING: October 08, 2020, 7:00pm – 9:00pm  
 LOCATION OF MEETING: Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting  
 SUBJECT OF MEETING: Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) Public Scoping Meeting

### IN ATTENDANCE

Susan Libatique	CTDOT	Sajjad Alam	Parsons
Pinith Mar	CTDOT	Keith Hall	Parsons
Sebastian Cannamela	CTDOT	Tony Margiotta	GM2
Kevin Fleming	CTDOT	Colleen Jost	GM2
Robert Moore	CTDOT	14 Attendees via YouTube	
		22 Attendees via Teams	

### PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

#### 1. There was a presentation by the Project Team followed by a Question and Answer Session

- Stakeholders were able to attend the meeting live via YouTube, Microsoft Teams, or listening by phone.
- A pdf copy of the presentation is included as an attachment

#### 2. Live Question and Answer Session

Stakeholders submitted questions via e-mail, telephone, or live through the Teams Q&A window and the comments were addressed verbally.

It was noted and reiterated throughout the live session that Project information and plans can be found on the Project website, as well as the phone number and email address to contact the Project Team. Attendees were also encouraged to fill out a survey.

- Question from MS Teams: We live on Metacomet Dr. and the highway is directly behind us. This reconfiguration of I-691 will drastically increase the noise level we will have to deal with. Over the years, vegetation has been removed that has buffered us from the noise. Again, this planned project will adversely affect our noise level beyond present conditions. I would like to see a barrier put up to buffer the added noise to decrease the hardship on our part.
  - Parsons responded verbally with visual aids: The project is presently in the Preliminary Engineering phase, and the Department has conducted preliminary field measurements and noise receptors modeling at various locations within the project limits for a noise impact assessment.
    - Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.
- Question from MS Teams: When does the project start?

- Parsons responded verbally with visual aids: The first Project is anticipated to be State Project Number (SPN) 79-245: I-691 Eastbound (EB) to I-91 Northbound (NB) Improvements. The Design Approval is anticipated to be February 2022 followed by the Procurement phase in February 2022 with the construction anticipated to start in the Fall of 2022. The other two projects, SPN 79-240 and SPN 79-246, the Southbound (SB) and NB Improvements Projects, the construction is anticipated to start in April 2025 and completed in December 2028.
- The Department noted that it has received several comments via phone and e-mail related to previous tree clearing and noise from the highway.
  - Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.
- **Question from MS Teams: Will there be any Right of Way impacts to the project?**
  - GM2 responded verbally with visual aids: The Department's goal is to avoid and minimize any impacts due to the proposed improvements. During the Preliminary Design a Public Informational Meeting will be held to present more defined impacts. At this time, based on the Preliminary Engineering findings there are two potential Right of Way impacts anticipated:
    - 956 E. Main St, N/F Community Economic Development – potential impact generally located along the southeasterly corner of the property and associated with the proposed off ramp to I-91 SB. Impacts to the existing building or parking are not anticipated.
    - 120 Barr Road, N/F Quintero and associated with the proposed Route 15 NB ramp and drainage.

During the Preliminary Design Phase, the use of retaining walls will be further evaluated to potentially minimize any impacts. As noted above, a Public Informational Meeting will be held during Preliminary Design where more defined impacts will be presented.
- **Question from MS Teams: Please go over the potential wetland and watercourse impacts.**
  - GM2 responded verbally with visual aids: The existing wetlands within project limits were delineated and flagged by a Connecticut Certified Soil Scientist which included a review of the National Wetland Inventory, CT DEEP Hydric Soils and Inland Wetland soils logs, and direct observation and soil auguring in the field. There are 12 separate areas of delineated wetlands mostly associated with the upland areas of the Willow Brook and Spoonshop Brook Basin. The wetland types vary and include riverine floodplains, forested wetlands, scrub shrub and emergent marsh through this corridor. The Department's approach to design and construction adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas is to avoid, minimize, and mitigate if unavoidable. Minimization of impacts will include use of retaining walls where practical to minimize filling within wetlands. The design is in the Preliminary Engineering phase which has identified some potential impacts. The largest potential impact is associated with the proposed off-ramp from Route 15 to I-91 SB, located in the infield area of the existing E. Main St. on-ramps between the on-ramps and I-91. There are also some additional smaller impacts throughout the project limits which are being further evaluated.
- **Question from MS Teams: The left exit on I-691 EB to I-91 NB provides safety concerns**  
**Question from MS Teams: Can you comment on the safety concerns regarding the I-691EB left exit to I-91 NB as slow-moving traffic on I-691EB needs to shift from the slow right lanes to the higher speed left lanes?**
  - Parsons responded verbally with visual aids: The reconfiguration of this exit will include two exit lanes on the left and one through-lane that will continue to Route 66. This will facilitate the channelization of traffic, minimize weaving and improve safety. The Department has performed

*a safety assessment of this exit and our studies show that the channelization and widening of the exit and single lane for traffic continuing to Route 66 will address those concerns*

- **Question from MS Teams:** Can we meet with someone in person before October 23 to review the maps in order to make sure we fully understand the physical impact (e.g. ROW, taking of a piece of a property, etc.) on a specific property.
  - *CTDOT responded verbally: The Department requested the attendee to submit an e-mail to the Department with contact information in order to follow up after the meeting. Meeting in person may be difficult with the current environment, but there are other forms of communication available to discuss the project. The Department also stated that this is the beginning of the Preliminary Design phase and there will be stakeholder meetings and an additional public informational meeting.*
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** Has funding been secured for the project?
  - *CTDOT responded verbally: The Department has a 5-year capital plan which includes this subject project. The Design phase is currently funded with State funds and it is anticipated that the Construction phase will be use both Federal and State funds. However, these projects are all subject to available funding.*
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** Residents of the Windingbrook Townhouse Association have found at least 10 residences where the level today exceeds the threshold 66dB. Can you please enumerate what measures are available to reduce this noise, as well as provide a visual buffer? What exactly are the criteria for feasibility of mitigation measures?
  - *Parsons responded verbally with visual aids: The project is presently in the Preliminary Engineering phase, and the Department has conducted preliminary field measurements and noise receptors modeling at various locations within the project limits for noise impact assessment.
    - *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.**
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** Will ITS infrastructure be added in this area (CCTV, DMS)?
  - *CTDOT responded verbally: Currently, the Department is in the process of constructing a new IMS system and that system will be coordinated with this design. This project is in the early stages of design and there will be another formal public information meeting at the approximate 30% design stage where additional public feedback is welcome.*
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** The fill line shown on the North Side of the I-91 SB/I-691 WB Ramp indicates that further vegetation removal will take place adjacent to the Windingbrook Townhouses. Will this vegetation be replaced? How does the department address privacy issues? Historically our property has had no view of the highway.
  - *Parsons responded verbally with visual aids: During the design, the Department will make every effort possible to minimize adverse the impact to the environment. Please note that all impacts within this area will be within the highway right of way. The Department will review opportunities and constraints for the revegetation of the Right of Way during the Design phase. These locations will vary based on topography, safety and wetland resources.*
  - *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*

- **Question from MS Teams:** The added capacity (2 lanes) to the I-91 SB exit ramp to I-691 WB and widening to 2 lanes for the ramp to I-691 WB from I-91 and Route 15 NB seems to create more issues when merging with I-691 WB traffic.
  - *GM2 responded verbally with visual aids:* Exit 18 will be widened to two lanes for added capacity required based on future volumes. Route 66 will be reduced to one lane due to capacity requirements. It was previously discussed that the exit from Route 15 NB will be widened to two lanes and will merge with two lanes from I-691 WB. The merging will require widening a few thousand feet of I-691 WB to just east of the Broad Street bridge in order to provide the weaving distance required. The distance from the merge to Broad St, will be adequate for the additional capacity that is proposed for both Exit 18 (from I-91 SB) and the exit from I-91 and Route 15 NB to I-691 WB.
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** It appears that all the projects involved will be performed via the conventional design-bid-build method in lieu of design-build. Is this the Department's intent?
  - *CTDOT responded verbally:* It is anticipated that the first project will be SPN 79-245: I-691 EB to I-91 NB Improvements and it is anticipated to be advertised as a Design-Build project. The remaining two projects SPN 79-240 and SPN 79-246 are anticipated to be released as formal Design-Bid-Build projects at this time. This will continue to be evaluated during Preliminary Design and subject to revision.
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** What is the cost of all 3 projects?
  - *Parsons responded verbally:* These projects are presently in the Preliminary Engineering phase. At this time, the estimated cost for SPN 79-240 is \$145 million, SPN 79-245 is \$45 million, and SPN 79-246 is \$110 million.
  
- **Question by phone:** Construction dates - please repost if possible.
  - *Parsons responded verbally with visual aids:* For SPN 79-245 I-691 EB to I-91 NB – the design approval is anticipated to be approved in February 2022 with construction anticipated to start in Fall 2022 and completion in early 2025. The other two projects, SPN 79-240 and SPN 79-246, are anticipated to start construction in April 2025 and be completed in December 2028.
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** I-91 by Metacomet is posted at 50 MPH. Will the posted speed be increased with the upgrade? Will safety be improved?
  - *Parsons responded verbally with visual aids:* The highway design speed for I-91, both northbound and southbound will be 65 MPH (please note the actual Posted Speed will be 55 MPH). The purpose and need of the project is to reduce congestion and improve safety. The proposed improvements will reduce congestion and may reduce vehicular crashes such as rear end crashes. The ramp interchange reconfigurations are designed to improve operations and reduce weaving and may reduce related vehicular crashes such as sideswipes. The project includes several roadside safety improvements such as upgrading guiderail, median barrier, illumination and signing to current design standards.
  
- **Question from MS Teams:** Is the project going to be done on State land or is property going to be taken over?
  - *GM2 responded verbally with visual aids:* The project is going to be primarily confined to the I-91, I-691, and Route 15 corridor. As previously mentioned, the potential impacts anticipated are

located at 956 E. Main St. property and 120 Barr Rd. property. The design is currently at the Preliminary Engineering level and these impacts will be further refined in Preliminary Design.

- **Question from MS Teams:** Will there be any issues for emergency personnel to access through construction activities?

*Parsons responded verbally:* All emergency operations will be coordinated through the Contractor and the Cities. At this point, the Department does not anticipate any major concerns but there will be ongoing coordination throughout the design phase and construction.

- **Question from MS Teams:** Any improvements for pedestrians/bicyclists included?

- *GM2 responded verbally with visual aids:* Department policy is to comply with Complete Streets in accordance with the General Statutes. The policy considers the needs of all users of all abilities, specifically pedestrians and bicyclists in our planning, programming, design, and construction activities. The proposed improvements are primarily confined to the I-91, I-691, Route 15 corridor however there are some local roads that will be impacted by the design, particularly the Paddock Avenue bridge. The Department will coordinate with City and local stakeholders regarding incorporating any ped and bike considerations that would be required. The Department did complete a Bike and Pedestrian Assessment Form which will help guide future improvements in terms of the needs for bike and ped features for the overall corridor.

- **Question from MS Teams:** Will there be any lane closures?

- *Parsons responded verbally with visual aids:* The Department does not anticipate any lane closures at this time however a full traffic analysis will be performed during the Preliminary Design phase to evaluate the limits of operations. This will determine whether a lane closure is required during off-peak hours. Some existing ramps may not have adequate width for paving operations and may require temporary closures. We do not anticipate any long-term lane closures.

### 3. Additional Questions

- **Question from MS Teams:** We live on Converse Ave and the I-691 EB Exit 8 off-ramp is directly behind us. With the construction of Yale Acres properties, there has been an increase the noise level. We would like to see a barrier put up to buffer the added noise, especially in light of tonight's presentation.

- *This question came during the live Q&A and was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*

- *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*

- **Question from Voicemail:** I live at Metacomet Dr. I'm calling in reference to project 240, the exit ramp from I-91/I-691. I live in unit number XXX which is right here where the exit ramp is. I don't see any reason for making it double wide. To me, I've never seen it backed up unless there is an accident on I-691. When they cut down all the trees, the noise is even louder. I'm only within a matter of a couple hundred feet from the exit ramp. Is there anything that someone can do, if they are going to do anything, is put up some sort of a privacy fence to help keep the sound down? It would really be appreciated. Thank you very much.

- *This question was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*

- *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*

- **Question from Email:** I live on Metacomet Drive in the Windingbrook condo units. I live in a unit that is within 200 feet of the exit ramp. I have a number of issues with this expansion. I have lived here for over two years. I have NEVER seen the traffic backed up except if there is an accident on I-691 west. I see no need whatsoever to add a second lane to the exit ramp. Adding a second lane will create more accidents in my opinion. I see the way people drive now, I can't imagine what they will do with a second lane. When they cut down all the trees and bushes the noise level is even louder than before. I can virtually sit on my sofa and see the traffic on I-91 north and south, and obviously the exit ramp that goes from I-91 to I-691 west. The noise level is over the top of the spectrum allowed at times. I am in the process of ordering new windows to help keep the level of noise down in my home. Please do something with a wall or extra trees, anything that would help with the noise would be appreciated. Thank you,
  - *This question was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*
  - *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*
  
- **Question from Email:** I live in Windingbrook Condominium complex in Meriden, CT, which is adjacent to the proposed I-691 and I-91 highway project. Recently, and I assume in preparation for this project, DOT removed trees and understory between the highway and Windingbrook Condominium property. This has removed both any sound insulation from the traffic noise and any visual barrier to the highway. At some places in the complex, it is now as if the highway was running right through our back yards, making it impossible to use decks and outside spaces, and extremely unsightly. The proposed expansion of the highway can only make this situation worse, impacting both homeowners' ability to enjoy their property, and potentially, our property values as well. Windingbrook is recognized as one of the premier condominium complexes in Meriden and our board works very hard to ensure that the landscaping and atmosphere of the complex maintains a high level of beauty and utilization. The proposed project puts that into jeopardy. While I understand the need for the expansion, I would respectfully request that the DOT include noise abatement measures – preferably a concrete wall - along the Windingbrook property line where it abuts with the highway. Please advise what mitigations the DOT will take to mitigate the negative noise and visual impacts of this project on our property. Thank you.
  - *This question was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*
  - *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*
  
- **Question from Email:** I am currently a resident living in the Windingbrook condo complex adjacent to the newly proposed widening of the Exit 18 ramp from I-91 SB onto I-691 WB. My question is: Will there be some kind of a noise/privacy wall added between this new ramp construction and our complex. Last winter when a large swath of trees and vegetation were cut down along that border of our property the noise level increased by about 30% and for the first time in 30 years I could now see the signs and cars on the highway. I and my neighbors are concerned that this widening will only increase both these issues for our little community. Please confirm whether this will indeed be taken into consideration for this project, and if not, how we may pursue addressing this concern further. Thank you for your kind attention and consideration.
  - *This question was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*
  - *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*
  
- **Question from Email:** Good evening, I own and reside in the Winding Brook Townhouses complex, on Metacomet Drive in Meriden. My end unit is very close in proximity to I-691. I have been living in this unit for approximately 15 years, and I have noticed a steady increase in traffic over time, which has resulted

in increased traffic noise as well as vibrations to my unit. If I am sitting outside on my deck, at times conversation has to be interrupted until the noise diminishes. It is quite a nuisance. As noted in the project report, the peak hour volumes for I-691 are projected to rise. I am quite concerned about this increase in traffic volume and the additional noise and vibrations that will result. The vibrations presently heard and felt are more extreme when large tractor trailers and other heavy trucks travel that highway. Often times items in my china cabinet and on my fireplace mantel are joggled by those vibrations. Obviously, the noise and vibrations are unpleasant, as well as a detriment to the value of my unit. I respectfully request when considering this project that a study on the traffic noise as well as the vibrations caused by the volume of traffic be undertaken so that mitigation measures can be required as part of this plan. I have in the recent past also filed my concern with the Department to request that noise barriers be installed to reduce the traffic volume heard and vibrations felt. I appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

- *This question was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*
- *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*
- **Question from Email:** Good afternoon, as a newer owner at Windingbrook, I as well as many of our other residents, take pride in our community complex. As you may or may not know many of our units back up right to the I-91/I-691 west ramp that you are planning to expand. The noise level already is quite loud as much of the vegetation was removed last winter. Unfortunately, we do not have any sound barrier and my fear is that the noise level will become unbearable with these changes. I would ask that you consider addressing the noise level before proceeding with the project. Some type of sound guard would be a beneficial asset to this project or in the least assist with the cost of soundproofing windows and units that about this area. I believe the latter would be a larger expense and I am sure there are walls that can be added at a lesser cost to mitigate the sound. Thank you.
  - *This question was addressed by the general response to noise complaints in this area.*
  - *Please see Additional Response provided under Item 4, Noise.*

#### 4. Additional Responses

- **Noise**

The project is presently in the Preliminary Engineering phase, and the Department has conducted preliminary field measurements and noise receptors modeling at various locations within the project limits for noise impact assessment. The assessment will be performed in accordance with the Department's "Highway Traffic Noise Abatement Policy for Projects Funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)" and FHWA's noise regulations contained in 23 CFR 772.

A noise study and technical report will be prepared and analyzed during the Preliminary and Final Design phases to determine and evaluate the potential noise impacts and noise abatement measures. When traffic noise impacts are identified as part of a Noise Study, noise abatement measures shall be considered and evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness. Feasibility considers acoustical and engineering factors. Reasonableness considers social, economic, and environmental factors. The specific criteria is contained within the Department's Noise Policy.

Individuals may petition for noise barriers. However, all decisions regarding noise abatement are determined based on the Noise Study. If noise abatement is determined to be warranted based on the feasibility and reasonable criteria mentioned above, the neighborhoods benefited will be solicited to verify acceptability.

This project will include technical specifications regarding noise pollution beyond the allowable decibel, stating that the Contractor shall take measures to minimize the noise caused by its construction operations, including but not limited to noise generated by equipment used for drilling, pile-driving, blasting, excavation or hauling.

During the preliminary design phase the Department will evaluate the existing conditions to determine the feasibility of installing selected vegetation within the project limits.

**5. Action Items**

- Consultant to provide Report of Meeting with responses to comments
- Department to update website with recording of live meeting

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
GM2 Associates

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parsons

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments:

- PDF of Presentation

Copy

- Attendees