

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

Date: May 4, 2021

Project Name: Ramp Widening I-95 NB Exit 27A / CTDOT Project Number 15-382

Municipality: Bridgeport

Staff Contact: Kevin Fleming

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:

A study along the corridor of I-95 west of New Haven investigated the feasibility of constructing an additional through lane in each direction from Greenwich to Bridgeport. As a result of the study, it was determined that several smaller projects with independent utility can be initiated to improve conditions at several locations along the corridor.

The purpose of this project is to relieve traffic congestion and minimize crashes on I-95 NB by increasing the existing capacity of Exit 27A through the addition of an auxiliary lane. Currently, the vehicle queue lengths for the Exit 27A off-ramp extend upstream past the Exit 27A off-ramp to Myrtle Avenue. Exit 27A has a single lane that is approximately one mile in length and opens up to two lanes once beyond the gore area of the exit. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes from 2019 indicate 26,400 daily vehicles exiting I-95 NB via Exit 27A.

The project proposes to provide an additional exit lane from I-95 NB to Exit 27A. This will require the widening of Bridge No. 03532, which carries Exit 27A from I-95 NB to Route 8 over Warren street and South Frontage Road. Since Bridge No. 03532 ties into the same western abutment as Bridge No. 00107 (I-95 NB over Warren Street) and due to the complexity of the existing design, a portion of Bridge No. 00107 will also require steel framing and concrete deck modifications.

In the project design phase, additional lane striping and a lane shift was added, which extends the project limits a bit further on I-95 in each direction. This improvement is being made to provide sufficient deceleration length for traffic taking the second exit lane for Exit 27A. Previously, traffic would exit directly to the ramp right at the curve. Under the proposed conditions, traffic in the second exit lane will have a designated lane for roughly 460 feet prior to the curve so there is adequate time to slow down. Additionally, six overhead sign structures leading up to the exit will be modified.

The Maintenance and Protection of Traffic and Construction Sequencing are anticipated to include an extended road closure of South Frontage Road and Warren Street at the project location to facilitate widening of Bridge No. 03532. Traffic detours are expected along with traffic alterations of adjacent

local roads. Traffic on the I-95 NB Exit 27A off-ramp will require lane shifts to accommodate bridge work, but a long duration ramp closure is not anticipated.

This project was scoped in the Environmental Monitor on October 6, 2020 and a virtual public scoping meeting was held on October 27, 2020. The public comment period remained open until the close of business on November 10, 2020. A summary of comments and responses are included at the end of this document. No public controversy is associated with the proposed action.

The proposed action is non-site specific, or encompasses multiple sites;	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current site ownership:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State; <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal, <input type="checkbox"/> Private, <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Explain.
Anticipated ownership upon project completion:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State; <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal, <input type="checkbox"/> Private, <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please Explain.

Locational Guide Map Criteria:

<http://ctmaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ba47efccdb304e02893b7b8e8cff556a>

Priority Funding Area factors:

- Designated as a Priority Funding Area, including Balanced, or Village PFA;
- Urban Area or Urban Cluster, as designated by the most recent US Census Data;
- Public Transit, defined as being within a ½ mile buffer surrounding existing or planned mass transit;
- Existing or planned sewer service from an adopted Wastewater Facility Plan;
- Existing or planned water service from an adopted Public Drinking Water Supply Plan;
- Existing local bus service provided 7 days a week.

Conservation Area factors:

- Core Forest Area(s), defined as greater than 250 acres based on the 2006 Land Cover Dataset;
- Existing or potential drinking water supply watershed(s);
- Aquifer Protection Area(s);
- Wetland Soils greater than 25 acres;
- Undeveloped Prime, Statewide Important and/or locally important agricultural soils greater than 25 acres;
- Storm Surge Inundation Zone(s);
- 100 year Flood Zone(s);
- Critical Habitat;
- Locally Important Conservation Area(s),
- Protected Land (list type): Enter text.
- Local, State, or National Historic District(s).

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

1. Impact on water quality, including surface water and groundwater

Water Quality – No negative impacts are anticipated. All CTDOT projects must conform to the CTDOT Standard Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities, and Incidental Construction Form 818. Section 1.10.03, Environmental Compliance, specifically deals with water pollution control and Best Management Practices (BMP).

Surface Water – No negative impacts are anticipated.

Groundwater – No negative impacts are anticipated. All CTDOT projects conform to the CTDOT Standards Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities and Incidental Construction Form 818. Section 1.10.03, Environmental Compliance, specifically deals with water pollution control and Best Management Practices. Additionally, the project does not take place within an Aquifer Protection Area or Sole Source Aquifer.

2. Effect on a public water supply system - No negative impacts are anticipated. The project is not located within a source of public drinking water.

3. Effect on flooding, in-stream flows, erosion or sedimentation - No negative impacts are anticipated.

Flooding – No negative impacts are anticipated. The project is not located within Connecticut's coastal boundary, nor is the project within the 100-year flood zone as indicated by the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Mapping for the City of Bridgeport.

In-stream flows – No negative impacts are anticipated.

Erosion or Sedimentation – No negative impacts are anticipated. All work will be consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

4. Disruption or alteration of an historic, archaeological, cultural, or recreational building, object, district, site or its surroundings – No negative impacts are anticipated. On September 22, 2020, the CT State Historic Preservation Office (CTSHPO) concurred with CTDOT's recommendation that the project would result in No Historic Properties Affected.

5. Effect on natural communities and upon critical species of animal or plant and their habitat; interference with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species – No negative impacts are anticipated. The project does not occur in a Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) area, but according to the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) there is a known Peregrine Falcon nesting site in the vicinity with the potential for Peregrine Falcons to be found in the project area. CTDOT will follow its existing Best Management Practices for working in areas with known Peregrine Falcon populations.

- 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. Land use in the vicinity of the project limits and the potential for excess soil as a result of construction will be considered during project design. Should there be any sites with known contamination issues in the vicinity of the project, additional study will be performed within the project area and/or adjacent right-of-way. As design progresses, a testing plan will be developed to assess soil and groundwater in any high-risk areas within which intrusive construction activities are proposed. Remediation measures will be put in place to mitigate potential impacts if contaminated soils or groundwater is confirmed by the testing. If needed, registration under CTDEEP's *General Permit for Contaminated Soil and/or Sediment Management* (Staging & Transfer) will be obtained, and soil management will be conducted in accordance with the General Permit.
- 7. Substantial aesthetic or visual effects** – No negative impacts are anticipated.
- 8. Inconsistency with (a) the policies of the State Plan of Conservation and Development developed in accordance with Section 16a-30 of the CT General Statutes, (b) other relevant state agency plans, and (c) applicable regional or municipal land use plans** – This project is consistent with the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development. CTDOT has adopted a programmatic approach for meeting the requirements of CGS Chapter 297 Section 16a-31(a) and Chapter 297 Section 16a-35(c) and 16a-35(d) for determining consistency of proposed actions with the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development, as indicated in a memo from CTDOT to OPM. As indicated in that memo, CTDOT has characterized this project type under the category: "Renovations with Capacity Improvements," an activity type which is consistent with Growth Management Principle #1: "Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure", specifically the state policy, "Ensure the safety and integrity of existing infrastructure over its useful life through the timely budgeting for maintenance, repairs, and necessary upgrades." The project is considered a "Growth Related Project" and is located within a Priority Funding Area.
- 9. Disruption or division of an established community or inconsistency with adopted municipal and regional plans, including impacts on existing housing where sections 22a-1b(c) and 8-37t of the CGS require additional analysis** – No negative impacts are anticipated. This project is not in conflict with any municipal or regional plans. There will be temporary road closures during construction for pedestrians and vehicular traffic, however short detours will be established.
- 10. Displacement or addition of substantial numbers of people** – No negative impacts are anticipated. This project does not involve the displacement or addition of people.
- 11. Substantial increase in congestion (traffic, recreational, other)** – No negative impacts are anticipated. The purpose of the project is to relieve traffic congestion and minimize crashes. The Maintenance and Protection of Traffic and Construction Sequencing are anticipated to include temporary road closure of South Frontage Road and Warren Street at the project location to facilitate widening of Bridge No. 03532. Traffic detours are expected along with traffic alterations of adjacent local roads. Traffic on the I-95 NB Exit 27A off-ramp will require lane shifts to accommodate bridge work, but a long duration ramp closure is not anticipated. All traffic impacts will be minimized as much as possible.

CTDOT will coordinate with the City of Bridgeport during final design (well in advance of construction) regarding any detour extent and timeframes.

- 12. A substantial increase in the type or rate of energy use as a direct or indirect result of this action** – No negative impacts are anticipated. No new construction of any buildings is proposed. The project is safety related and is not anticipated to result in any change to land use or traffic conditions that would impact energy use.
- 13. The creation of a hazard to human health or safety** – No negative impacts are anticipated. The project will be reviewed for the potential of having hazardous material constituents in existing infrastructure components. Testing will be performed on any suspect materials. Should the presence of hazardous materials be confirmed through the testing, specifications to properly handle and dispose the hazardous materials will be incorporated into the design to mitigate potential health or safety. Therefore, significant impacts associated with hazardous materials or waste sites are not anticipated. Additionally, the project will have beneficial effects on human health and safety once complete, as the project is being proposed to address existing safety concerns related to roadway capacity.
- 14. Effect on air quality** - No negative impacts are anticipated. The project is located within the boundaries of the portion of the state that has been classified as attainment for carbon monoxide (CO), attainment maintenance for PM 2.5, non-attainment for Ozone, and attainment for PM 10. A project level Air Quality Conformity Determination is not required, nor is an analysis or discussion of Mobile Source Air Toxics, as this project is 100% State and/or locally funded and is not considered regionally significant. Any potential temporary impacts during construction can be avoided or limited by proper operation of construction equipment and adherence to regulations limiting idling of engines.
- 15. Effect on ambient noise levels** - No negative impacts are anticipated. The project was reviewed by CTDOT's Office of Environmental Planning and it was determined that no noise study would be required. The proposed full width lane addition does not exceed the 2,500 ft. auxiliary lane threshold, nor would the proposed full width lane addition and shoulder expansion halve the distance to any nearby noise receptor. Any noise impacts during construction will be temporary and will be minimized to the best extent practicable by compliance with CTDOT Standard Specifications for Roads, Bridges, Facilities and Incidental Construction Form 818 regarding construction noise pollution:

“1.10.05 – Noise Pollution: The contractor shall take measures to control noise intensity caused by his construction operations and equipment, including but not limited to equipment used for drilling, pile driving, blasting, and excavating or hauling. All methods and devices employed to minimize noise shall be subject to continuing approval of the Engineer. The maximum allowable level of noise at the nearest residence or occupied building shall be 90 decibels on the “A” weighted scale (dB(A)). Any operation that exceeds this standard will cease until a different construction methodology is developed to allow work to proceed within the 90-dB(A) limit.”
- 16. Effect on existing land resources and landscapes, including coastal and inland wetlands** – No negative impacts are anticipated as the project does not impact wetlands.

- 17. Effect on agricultural resources** – No negative impacts are anticipated. The project takes place in an urban setting.
- 18. Adequacy of existing or proposed utilities and infrastructure** – No negative impacts are anticipated.
- 19. Effect on greenhouse gas emissions as a direct or indirect result of the action** – No negative impacts are anticipated. Construction phase impacts on greenhouse gas emissions will be limited. Any potential temporary impacts during construction can be avoided or limited by adherence to regulations limiting idling of engines.
- 20. Effect of a changing climate on the action, including any resiliency measures incorporated into the action** – No negative impact is anticipated. The project is located outside of the coastal boundary and will not be exposed to climate change hazards.
- 21. Any other substantial effect on natural, cultural, recreational, or scenic resources-** No other substantial effects are anticipated.
- 22. Cumulative effects** – This project does not involve any cumulative effects that have the potential for significant effects on the environment.

Conclusion:

After examining any potential environmental impacts and reviewing all comments received, CTDOT has concluded that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) will not be required for the I-95 NB Ramp Widening at Exit 27A project. Publication of this document to the Environmental Monitor shall satisfy the agency's responsibilities under Section 22a-1a-7 of the RCSA.

During the comment period, CTDOT received comments from the public and also from one State agency (CTDEEP). Below is a synopsis of the comments/questions received and CTDOT's responses.

Questions from the Public:

Question 1: Having the new lane appear on the left will reduce usage as drivers will assume that lane is connected to the I-95 lanes. Having it start on the right will increase use and speed by which traffic can use both lanes at the intended volume. Behaviorally, now with the existing set up, the left lane when it appears, gets less use except by locals.

Response: We looked at several different options for increasing the capacity of the exit ramp and this one worked best from a performance and safety standpoint. The horizontal sight distance is limited on the right side of the exit ramp due to the sharp curve, which is why we chose to add a lane to the outside of the curve. We will be revising the signs along I-95 Northbound so that the lane configuration will be clear to drivers.

Question 2: Why not have the third lane on I-95 go both straight and exit? This would reduce the cramming into the exit lane that happens now before the exit.

Response: The third lane on I-95 Northbound will go both Straight and exit. Additionally, a fourth lane for exiting only will be presented in the final design. So, drivers can exit to Route 8 from either lane, or continue straight on I-95 Northbound in either of the three left lanes.

Question 3: Is the intent to widen the lanes of the circular exit? An additional problem there is the merging of traffic onto Route 25/8 north, Exit 27A northbound has 2 lanes and Exit 27A southbound has 1 lane merging into 2 lanes PLUS the entrance from Prospect St - additionally there is Exit 2 just up ahead. Although tight, there does appear to be room for an additional lane on the left northbound until just beyond the James St bridge to allow for more merge space.

Response: The intent is to add a lane to the Exit 27A off-ramp from I-95 Northbound to relieve traffic congestion in the right lane of I-95. Currently, the exit consists of one initial lane that splits into two lanes as it circles into Route 8 Northbound. Once the project is completed, there will be two exit lanes throughout. To do this, we'll need to widen the bridge over South Frontage Road to make room for the additional lane. Improvements to Route 8 Northbound and its on-ramps are not part of this project.

Question 4: There is concern from the owner of Brewport Brewing that a planned widening of Exit 27A will either temporarily or permanently impact Brewport Brewing's operations. It is located on the south side of I-95, at the bottom of Exit 27 North, inside the highway loop formed by Exit 27A, which connects Route 8 NB with I-95 NB. Brewport Brewing holds a lease with the State of CT for all the state land inside the highway loop. The lease runs through December 31, 2053.

The concern is that the State may elect to use state land that serves as the leased parking lot for either a staging area or final building area for the expanded Exit 27A North. Further concern includes possible disruptions or closing Exit 27 or South Frontage Road, Myrtle Avenue, and/or Warren Street, all serving as primary arteries for Brewport Brewing's guests.

Response: CTDOT is mindful of Brewport Brewing's business and is planning on using work zones on the land at the outside of the ramp's curve. At this time, we do not anticipate the need to use the parking

lot for any construction activities. CTDOT will remain in contact with Brewport Brewing throughout the design and construction process regarding potential road closures to pedestrians and vehicular traffic as well as detours. Access to Brewport and its parking lots will remain unaffected.

Questions/Comments from CTDEEP

Question 1: Is it feasible to simply restripe the existing Exit 27A ramp to provide a two-lane configuration instead of a single lane. The ramp goes to two lanes in the southeastern quadrant of its circular alignment. Looking at the northeast quadrant of the ramp's circular alignment, where traffic enters from I-95, it appears that the ramp has the same width as in the southeast quadrant's two-lane section. There are wide shoulders on both sides of the ramp. Is there room to simply narrow the shoulders and restripe the ramp to be two lanes, which is what happens when traffic moves to the southeast quadrant of the ramp and beyond.

Response: The option of simply restriping the roadway to provide 2 exit lanes was considered. The concern with this approach is for safety reasons. The shoulders would need to be narrowed at the ramp causing the stopping sight distance along the curve to dramatically reduce. Traffic coming into the ramp would be slowing down from 55 mph to 25 (posted) and providing an adequate length of roadway cannot be done by simply restriping. Sideswipe and rear end crashes are common here and one goal of this project is to reduce the number of crashes.

Comment 1: This project does not occur in a NDDDB area, but there is a known peregrine nesting site in the vicinity, with the potential for peregrines to be found in the project area.

Response: CTDOT will follow its Best Management Practices (BMPs) for peregrine falcons.

Comment 2: If excavation of soils is required and if the excavation work encounters any evidence of pollution, CTDOT or its contractors would need to address the source of the contaminations and potentially follow the General Permit for the Discharge of Groundwater Remediation Wastewater. If soil excavation is required, it is very possible that there may be hazardous or solid waste related concerns. Development plans in urban areas that entail soil excavation should include a protocol for sampling and analysis of potentially contaminated soil. Soil with contaminant levels that exceed the applicable criteria of the Remediation Standard Regulations (concentration above the specified analytical detection limit) are polluted soil as defined in section 22a-133k-1 of the RCSA. Reuse of polluted soil is governed by requirements found in section 22a-133k-2(h)(3) of the RCSA and requires written authorization from DEEP unless it is managed at a site that is authorized to accept polluted soil. In addition, the solid waste management regulations prohibit the disposal or indefinite storage of more than 10 cubic yards of stumps, brush or woodchips on the site, either buried or on the surface.

The Waste Engineering & Enforcement Division has issued a *General Permit for Contaminated Soil and/or Sediment Management (Staging & Transfer)* (DEP-SW-GP-001). It establishes a uniform set of environmentally protective management measures for stockpiling soils when they are generated during construction or utility installation projects where contaminated soils are typically managed (held temporarily during characterization procedures to determine a final disposition). Temporary storage of less than 1,000 cubic yards of contaminated soils (which are not hazardous waste) at the excavation site does not require registration, provided that activities are conducted in accordance with the applicable

conditions of the general permit. Registration is required for on-site storage of more than 1,000 cubic yards for more than 45 days or transfer of more than 10 cubic yards off-site.

Response: This project does involve excavation for extension of the pier and east abutment of Bridge No. 03532. Environmental Compliance investigations have determined that “a hazardous investigation (Task 710) is recommended. Excess excavation materials should be managed within the project limits to minimize disposal quantities. Excess soils that cannot be re-used within the project limits should be stockpiled and characterized prior to disposal/removal from the site.” Additionally, this project will be surveyed for lead-based paint and any other contaminated or hazardous materials. Following the Task 710 investigation, plans and specifications will be developed as necessary for handling contaminated soils and hazardous materials.

Comment 3: DEEP has had experience with other construction projects in urban environments where excavation work affecting underground utilities can cause rats and mice to move out of pipes and drainage basins and go into neighborhoods. Recent mild winters have helped rat populations to more successfully overwinter. If the proposed Exit 27A ramp widening will involve any excavation work, an integrated pest management plan should be developed prior to beginning work to address the potential for rodents to be disturbed and mobilized by the construction work and to become a nuisance in the community.

Response: No underground utilities are anticipated to be impacted by these excavations. There is potential for drainage work to be done along the I-95 NB corridor, but this will not be determined until final design. Appropriate steps will be taken if this is the case.

Comment 4: For larger construction projects, CTDEEP typically encourages the use of newer off-road construction equipment that meets the latest (EPA) or California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards. If that newer equipment cannot be used, equipment with the best available controls on diesel emissions including retrofitting with diesel oxidation catalysts or particulate filters in addition to the use of ultra-low sulfur fuel would be the second choice that can be effective in reducing exhaust emissions. The use of newer equipment that meets EPA standards would obviate the need for retrofits.

DEEP also encourages the use of newer on-road vehicles that meet either the latest EPA or CARB standards for construction projects. These on-road vehicles include dump trucks, fuel delivery trucks and other vehicles typically found at construction sites. On-road vehicles older than the 2007-model year typically should be retrofitted with diesel oxidation catalysts or diesel particulate filters for projects. Again, the use of newer vehicles that meet EPA standards would eliminate the need for retrofits.

Additionally, section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the RCSA limits the idling of mobile sources to three (3) minutes. This regulation applies to most vehicles such as trucks and other diesel engine-powered vehicles commonly used on construction sites. Adhering to the regulation will reduce unnecessary idling at truck staging zones, delivery or truck dumping areas and further reduce on-road and construction equipment emissions. Use of posted signs indicating the three-minute idling limit is recommended. It should be noted that only DEEP can enforce section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the RCSA. Therefore, it is recommended that the project sponsor include language similar to the anti-idling regulations in the contract specifications for construction in order to allow them to enforce idling restrictions at the project site without the involvement of DEEP.

Response: Contractors will be required to adhere to anti-idling requirements.