



## SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

**Date:** September 24, 2002

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

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

**Location of Meeting:** Old Lyme, CT

**Date of Meeting:** September 17, 2002 1:00 p.m.

**Subject of Meeting:** Local Outreach Meeting #14

### **Project Overview by Jim Andrini of ConnDOT and Rod Bascom of CHA:**

- 85 key intersections
- transit opportunities including Shoreline East
- identify deficiencies in Corridor
- I-95 planned and built in the 50's and 60's and is not designed to handle current demand
- Will look at geometry to be assessed against current standards, operational, short, mid, long – term improvement recommendations
- The analysis of existing conditions 2/3rds complete
- High profile, high priority with State's Transportation Strategy Board.
- Public participation is an important part of the Study. The Study will include Public Outreach on 3 levels:
  - 1) A Study Advisory Committee established specifically for this project and consisting of local, regional and state stakeholders, including COG/RPA and town representatives and special interest groups (The first of 6 meetings will be on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002).
  - 2) Local Outreach: Meetings with local towns (40 meetings).
  - 3) Public Informational Meetings (6 meetings) – will be advertised – public is invited.
- In addition, we will establish a 1-800 phone line, web page and Email address where people may learn more about the project and provide comments. The Email will be answered by Jim Andrini; all questions or comments will be answered.

The outreach sessions will allow the Study team to learn about the specific conditions, issues and concerns locally and to better understand future traffic demand since we are requesting that Towns provide information relative to growth and land use (e.g. Plans of Development, major proposed developments, etc).

- Environmental sensitivity analysis: looking only at major impact areas, not detailed environmental review or quantification.

**Questions and Comments** *(with ConnDOT or CHA's response in italics)*

1. Police Departments should be consulted because they are out on I-95 every day and see the accidents and fatalities.
2. Some people believe the only solution is to widen 95 to 4 lanes. Money used for committees, studies, etc. should be eliminated and just put to 'doing'. *A fourth lane is not feasible, due to resources, cost, environmental issues, etc.*
3. As soon as the 3<sup>rd</sup> lane is built, it will fill up just as fast. *The DOT's priorities begin with safety, congestion being a close second.*
4. It was stated that the casino traffic is really becoming a problem.
5. *This project is the highest priority project in Connecticut at this time, although the congestion problems it faces is mostly seasonal; casinos, beaches, the Cape, etc.*
6. *The concept of a third lane as a solution sounds easy enough, but there is a complex process that needs to be completed in order to get federal money for construction. The documentation process is not as simple as the conceptualizing.*
7. Why can't four lanes in each direction be constructed? In the long run, safety and human lives are more important than saving wetlands. *Merely adding more and lanes may not solve I-95's capacity problems. ConnDOT prefers a more balanced approach of multi-modal transit mixed with physical highway improvements. It is believed if 95 gets bad enough, people will become so frustrated that other modes of transit may become much more appealing.*
8. *Are there any 'hot spots' along I-95 corridor in Old Lyme that ConnDOT should be aware of?*
  - **Lt. River:** It suddenly cuts down to 2 lanes from 3, and has ice problems as well.
  - **Baldwin Bridge/4-Mile Road:** Bad glare problem
  - **Rocky Neck Connector:** (Exit 72) Bad glare problem
  - **Exits 71 & 72:** transition to get off southbound is awful, confusing; no on/off.
9. *Would closing any specific movements be helpful?*
10. There have been letters written to the DOT stating some very strong beliefs about what should be done. They believe an additional problem with the summertime is a combination of the DOT choosing to mow at bad times, traffic lights are set differently, and tempers truly begin to flare.
11. The acceleration/deceleration lanes were also thought to be a big problem.

Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP

12. Emergency vehicles are also having a hard time getting through.
13. Some believe there has been enough studies done already, that action needs to be taken now. When casinos were conceptualized, that was when the studies should have been conducted. The time frame is a concern. I-95 should be going to construction drawings now so that the problem doesn't get any worse. The group thought the issue at hand was how to unload I-95. It was proposed that there be, in working with the casinos to solve the problem, express transport, possibly utilizing Amtrak to large population centers, New York, Boston. Residents could have express access to these locations too. This would rid 95 of a lot of traffic. Possibly extend Metro North to gamblers along the coast. There have been electrical problems going past New Haven. The casinos would be glad to go along with this idea, it will ensure gamblers keep coming. NJ Transit systems were referenced as a system which works well. Philadelphia to Atlantic City travel has been effective. It was thought that should be used as a model.
14. Could Rte. 11 be used as alternate route? *This study is focusing mainly on 95 itself.*
15. Communication was also discussed as being a problem. *Future ITS projects will disseminate information via variable message signs advising the use of alternate routes when problems occur.*
16. It was discussed that land around the casinos could possibly be turned into affordable housing and offered to casino employees, who could then bike, walk to work. The casinos, it was thought would be willing to help.

-END-