



SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Date: August 20, 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: Waterford Town Hall; Waterford, CT

Date of Meeting: July 30, 2002 11:00 a.m.

Subject of Meeting: Local Outreach **Meeting No. 5** – Town of Waterford

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

- In 1999, ConnDOT prepared a Southeastern Connecticut Corridor Study that identified lack of capacity and recommended a more detailed study of alternatives and improvements; hence this Study which will look at I-95 from Branford to the Rhode Island state line, including 85 intersections.
- I-95 was planned in the 1950's and constructed in the 1960's and used a planning window of 1975; therefore, we are overdue for a renewal of the highway's capacity and operations.
- Project will not only study the main line of I-95 and its interchanges but will also include limited lengths of the feeder roads adjacent to interchanges.
- Project will include studying the feasibility and environmental impacts of adding a 3rd lane in each direction on I-95. It will also look at alternative systems and ways to mitigate traffic on I-95 such as Rideshare and other intermodal transportation, including AMTRAK and Shoreline East. The Study includes a sensitivity analysis for Environmental resources, etc.
- The Study includes an Implementation Phase and will involve stakeholders in prioritizing improvement projects. This will allow ConnDOT to identify deficiencies that can be addressed and corrected in the short term. These critical spot improvements can be constructed in advance of major highway improvements if they have minimum potential for environmental impact or property acquisition.
- Project methodology includes conducting traffic counts at 85 intersections for Thursday and Friday p.m. peak hour. These counts are underway. ConnDOT will then generate future year 2025 traffic and growth of background traffic and new traffic generation from proposed development. (It is important, therefore that the towns provide information on projected growth in their towns). Once we have this projected traffic demand we can assess the capacity of the highway and look at traffic and safety improvements for the entire corridor. The geometrics of each interchange will be analyzed and compared with current standards. We will also gather information about accidents and determine where trouble spots are. Does town have database on accident history? *Town of Waterford has accident reports for the last 2 years, but only on the roads, not the ramps.*

- Project 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 (6 meetings to start in November).
 - 2) Local Outreach: Meetings with local towns (40 meetings)
 - 3) Public Informational Meetings (6 meetings)
- 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 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).
- Current I-95 projects in the study area (in planning phase or scheduled for construction) include:
 - 1) ITS (Intelligent Traffic Systems) projects: CONNDOT has two on-going incident management or ITS projects that will help manage congestion on I-95. These ITS projects will likely include: closed circuit TV traffic flow monitoring, pavement sensors to monitor traffic, highway advisory radio, and variable message signs. An elaborate fiber optics network will connect the ITS to both Bridgeport (control center operated by State Police) and CONNDOT headquarters. The ITS projects include:
 - Exit 54, Branford to Exit 64, Route 145. This project is in final design and is scheduled to begin construction in the summer 2003;
 - Exit 64 (Westbrook-Clinton Town line) to Rhode Island State Line plus portion of I-395 from I-95 to Route 2. This project is the development state (preliminary design). Transcore is the consultant. Project schedule calls for bidding in 2003 with construction starting in August of 2003. The project will be constructed in 3 phases and may not be completed until 2011.
 - 2) Exit 81 of I-95 – replacement of Cross Roads bridge and relocation of north bound on-ramp. This project will be advertised in November 2002. The Bridge will be wide enough for 3 lanes on main line.
 - 3) Resurfacing of I-95 from the Baldwin Bridge to Waterford/New London Town line. This project will include bridge parapet replacement and improvements to sight lines. Project schedule calls for bidding in December of 2003 with construction in 2004-2005.
 - 4) Route 11 Extension Project: will finish Final EIS by late Summer/early Fall with preferred alternative. Next step will be design.

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

- Exit 82 at 85 north and south is a trouble spot as well as the Parkway north and south at Vauxhall (Exit. 82a) intersections in Waterford.

- Will we look at visionary ideas or is the Study more ‘nuts and bolts’? *The latter. We will not be looking at expansion of the existing R.O.W. beyond 3 lanes in each direction.*
- Regarding proposed development or major traffic generators, the Route 85 retail project will be 400,000 s.f. ConnDOT has information on it. There is sufficient capacity on Route 85.
- RPA did study of growth in Waterford in the late 1980’s.
- Northbound on-ramp at Exit 82 has a very short merge. Town thinks that ConnDOT could create new frontage road to solve the problem. Alternate solution is to close Exit 82A and create a new exit further down. There was a discussion to close northbound off-ramp and require people to exit at Coleman at a new ramp.
- No entrance ramp is needed northbound on-ramp for Vauxhall Ext., because it’s dangerous. Noise barriers are needed in this area. Exits 82 – 82A southbound is a problem. Replacement of Vauxhall Street Bridge is an issue because of its width and angle.
- The Route 85 off-ramp from southbound I-95 is important to preserve (without requiring traffic to 1st go along frontage road) to northbound I-395 now and in t
- he future.
- Old Waterford Airport property is a possible development site on the south side of the highway.
- Weigh Station is still used. It creates a problem in re-designing at Exit 81.
- WalMart proposes to expand, the slip ramp from southbound at this location is a problem. The Town (and ConnDOT) considered building a new Frontage Road on north side of I-95 (between exits 81 and 82). If this is done the frontage road should not be extended all the way to Route 85, but to an area between the mall and the retail to the west because of geometrics and wetlands.
- Sonalyst is also proposing expansion. We should contact them.
- Cross Roads traffic is horrendous and will be worse after the ramps are closed at East Lyme when Route 11 is built.
- VHB is doing a traffic study for Route 1 at Waterford Town Campus.
- The Town of Waterford has not noticed any adverse traffic impacts (some increase in volume) due to the opening of the Pfizer facility in New London, however, the New London intersection of Willetts St. and Route 1 is operating at a C/D level of service.
- Will the Study assess traffic on Route 1? *Not as much as originally planned because it is not seen as a solution to I-95 capacity problems.*
- The Study team should be familiar with the Towns’ Incident Management Plans related to re-routing of I-95 traffic on local roads when there is a shut-down of I-95 due to an accident and consider whether there are alternate routes.

- Stand pipes (hydrants) at interchange bridges are important to assist local fire-fighters with emergencies on I-95.
- The Study team should also consider how the towns emergency vehicles access the highway during accident response and look for ways to provide alternate emergency access to problem areas of I-95. For example, some areas of I-95 near key interchanges have a significant grade differential between the north bound and south-bound lanes that makes it very difficult or impossible for emergency vehicles to cross the median.
- What is the schedule for the Feasibility Study? *24 months.*

- END -