



SUMMARY OF MEETING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Date: April 24, 2003

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

Date of Meeting: April 24, 2003

Subject of Meeting: Study Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting No. 2

In Attendance: Judy Gott – South Central Regional Council Of Governments
Gene Kennedy – Parsons Transportation Group (PTG)
Duncan Allen – PTG
Bill Peace – Town of Old Saybrook
Steve Dudley – City of Branford
Stewart MacMillan – Town of Madison
Mark Oefinger – Town of Groton
John Markowicz – Transportation Strategy Board(TSB)
Jim Butler –Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments
Linda Krause – Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
Barbara Blycker – Town of Stonington
Wayne Fraser – Town of East Lyme
Michael Chong – Federal Highway (FHWA)
Fred Riese – Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection(ConnDEP)
Peter Richter – Conn. Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)
Dan Morley – Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM)
Jean Stimolo – Rideworks of Greater New Haven
Mike Giannattasio – Town of East Lyme
Nick Mullane - Southeastern Conn. Council of Governments (SECOG)

Summary of Discussions:

Questions and comments of the Study Advisory Committee Members (*with ConnDOT or CHA responses in italics*)

- Jill Barrett opened the meeting. She asked that only the AC Committee comment initially; there would be time for the public to ask questions at the end. Jill outlined the following agenda:
 - ◆ **Welcome and Introductions**
 - ◆ **Existing Conditions Report**

- ◆ **Future No-Build Conditions**
- ◆ **Transit Evaluation Process**
- ◆ **What's Next**
- ◆ **Public Remarks**

The following items were discussed:

Welcome and Introductions:

- Members of the AC Committee were identified and introduced.

Existing Conditions Report:

- An opportunity was given for questions/comments from the draft “Existing Conditions Report.”
- There were no comments on the report.

Environmental Discussion: (Gene Kennedy)

- Gene Kennedy spoke about environmental considerations concerning the corridor study. He said that environmental data will help evaluate I-95 Alternative solutions. This data will be a large part of the basis for decision making and help establish a baseline for subsequent environmental documentation.
- Environmental resources to be mapped were also presented. They include:
 - ◆ Surface Water Resources
 - ◆ Groundwater Resources
 - ◆ Farmland Soils
 - ◆ Cultural/Sensitive Environmental Resources
 - ◆ Land Use & Environmental Risk Sites
 - ◆ Minority/Low Income Populations
- Will noise and illumination be studied? *Noise will not be studied now, as we are in the feasibility study phase at this time. Noise locations will be identified in this study but Noise and illumination will be studied in detail during the EIS phase.*
- The noise level rises exponentially if the speed limit is changed from even 55 to 65 mph.
- Need to look at Illumination pollution
- *The water by the highway needs to be studied in detail, what needs to be mitigated must be identified.*

Future No-Build Conditions: (Rod Bascom)

- Rod Bascom spoke about the Future No-Build Condition, 2025. He explained the findings of this part of the study reflect the 2025 conditions if no improvements are made. He also explained that we are working under the assumption that the Route 11 project will be in place.
- The average traffic will increase 38% from 2000-2025. The peak evening hour summer Friday traffic will increase 43% if nothing is done.
- What is the definition of an operational deficiency? *Operational deficiencies are segments that have been evaluated to be operating at a Level of Service of ‘E’ or ‘F’. In this study, 80% of the segments will be deficient.*

- *Ramps are not operating well on I-95. Weaves will become extremely deficient if nothing is done.*
- It is clear that segments evaluated at LOS E and F are not operating properly. However, those at LOS C, D are not operating very well either. Hopefully they will be considered for improvement as well.
- Do projections consider third casino?
- Consider impact of other state/local roads during construction.

Transit Evaluation Process: (Duncan Allen)

- Duncan Allen spoke of multi-modal investigations made as part of this study. They include regional links to serve reverse commuters, summer residents and leisure access to and from southeast Connecticut. Investigations also include local service enhancements to link accommodations and attractions in support of car-free visitors. Duncan discussed the practicality of the enhancements using existing infrastructure and pursuing only the largest markets at first. Duncan also discussed the methodology employed using the statewide transportation model to estimate the effect of the transit alternatives on the congestion on I-95.
- Need more train service not less, Metro North to Old Saybrook at least with Train service 7 days a week
- Will transit become high priority if determined viable option?
- Wouldn't it be better to buy new trains rather than try to retrofit old ones worrying about height, voltage? *This study is only looking at the effect of transit alternative on the traffic. Future studies on the implementation of any alternative will address the cost effectiveness of replacement vs. retrofit.*
- Bridge opening is an issue between New London and Old Saybrook
- Don't forget about the Valley Railroad.
- Will study look at other options for freight? Waterborne to rail?
- Bus across Baldwin Bridge not addressed. Buses are cheaper. Traffic to New London over the bridge for commuting/tourism would be alleviated with a bus from Old Saybrook to New London.
- Need something between now and when road construction complete. Are there any short term solutions that are being discussed? *All problems are being prioritized and if deemed necessary, short-term solutions may be feasible.*

What's Next: (Rod Bascom)

- ◆ Review of Future Conditions Report
 - ◆ Identification of Preliminary Alternatives
 - ◆ Public Information Meetings
 - ◆ Study Advisory Committee Meeting 3
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- It was suggested by an AC Member that public access advertisements be used to generate *interest in the Public Informational meetings, such as Local Cable broadcast of meetings*
 - *Radio could also be used as a vehicle to make people aware of these meetings(Local Radio Stations like WQUN).*