



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
INTERGOVERNMENTAL POLICY DIVISION

September 18, 2015

Mr. Mark Alexander
Connecticut Department of Transportation
Bureau of Policy and Planning
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131

Re: Notice of Scoping:
Relocation of I-91 Northbound (NB) Interchange 29 and Widening of I-91 NB and Route 15 NB to I-84 Eastbound (EB)

Dear Mark:

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has reviewed the Notice of Scoping for DOT's proposed I-91/Rt 15 project and submits the following comments:

- The section of highway to be addressed by this project already serves as an alternate route enabling long-distance traffic to bypass Hartford via I-91 and I-691 or Rt 9. Because of that function, it seems plausible that this capacity might influence the planning and design for the I-84 Hartford Project. Decisions regarding the I-84 project certainly could influence the demand placed on this section of I-91 and Rt 15, which could be a vital link during construction of the I-84 Hartford Project or even afterwards, depending on the approach taken with I-84.

The public should be made aware of how decisions regarding this I-91/Rt 15 project might affect or be affected by the functioning of the broader-scale highway network, both in the short and in the long term. The Notice of Scoping, however, is silent on such implications and treats the I-91/Rt 15 project in isolation from associated state actions or proposed actions. While it is too late for this particular scoping notice, would it be possible for future DOT scoping notices to also include information about how individual projects fit into the broader picture?

- In addition to its highway projects, Connecticut is making significant investments in other transportation modes in the Hartford area and out along the I-91 and I-84 corridors. How might those investments or other changes impact the long-term need for the proposed I-91 project and, similarly, how might the proposed I-91/Rt 15 project impact other regional or corridor transportation initiatives?
- Because of the limited information provided by the Notice of Scoping's project description and map, it is difficult to envision the potential impacts of the proposed project on areas adjacent to the highway. Given the intensity of development in those areas and the magnitude of recent private and public investment, it is important to understand the full extent of those potential impacts. It would be helpful if such a scoping notice included aerial imagery illustrating additional lanes, new alignments and other such changes.

- Public discussions about the I-84 Hartford Project are highlighting that highway design choices can not only impact the broader transportation system and the surrounding community, but also impose significant long-term financial obligations on the state. What is the I-91/Rt 15 project's impact on the state's long term maintenance obligations and how are long-term costs of different options accounted for in DOT's decision-making process?

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Notice of Scoping and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely:



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