

# REPORT OF MEETING

Project: I-84/Route 8 Interchange Study  
Date: Thursday, April 7, 2005  
Time: 7:00 P.M.  
Location: UConn Waterbury Campus, Waterbury, CT  
  
**Subject: I-84 WINS Public Meeting #1**

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## Meeting Presentation/Summary:

Present at the public meeting were study team representatives from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Wilbur Smith Associates, and Fitzgerald and Halliday.

Mike Morehouse of Wilbur Smith Associates opened the meeting. He gave a brief background of the project by describing the study area and discussing the purpose of the project. He then discussed the various transit modes, bike/pedestrian access, land use and employment characteristics assessed as part of the existing conditions analysis.

Mr. Morehouse also summarized the deficiencies identified in the existing conditions analysis within the study area, particularly geometric and structural deficiencies, heavy congestion locations and high accident rate locations.

Once the presentation was complete, the floor was opened to questions and comments from members of the public.

## Questions/Comments

1. Question: From what source were the Route 8 traffic volumes obtained?

Answer: Mike Morehouse-The volumes were provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT), both as daily and peak hour volumes. The Route 8 volumes north and south of the I-84 interchange were averaged to obtain one volume representative of the flow of traffic on Route 8 throughout the study area.

2. Question: Was a previous study done for the I-84/Route 8 interchange? Will any recommendations from the previous study be looked at as part of this study?

Answer: Mike Morehouse-Yes, preliminary recommendations for the interchange were included as part of the I-84 West of Waterbury Needs

and Deficiencies Study, completed in 2001. However, it was determined that a more detailed evaluation of the interchange would need to be undertaken. The recommendations made in the West of Waterbury study will be looked at as part of this new study.

3. Question: How was the estimated truck traffic of 8% arrived at? The truck percentage seems more than 8% based on my personal experience.

Answer: Mike Morehouse-The truck percentage can be higher during the off-peak periods because truck drivers tend to avoid the peak hour periods. However, 8 % is a reasonable estimate and is based on traffic count data provided by ConnDOT.

4. Question: Will Route 8 ever be funded as an interstate?

Answer: Carmine Trotta- It is currently not being planned.  
Mike Morehouse- There were also fewer deficiencies identified on Route 8.

5. Question: Will the final report of this study be made available to the general public?

Answer: Mike Morehouse- Yes, the final report will be available in CD format. The report will also be available at the Chamber of Commerce and public libraries. Presently, the Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum is in draft format and will be available for public reference when finalized. The Final Report will be available once the alternative recommendations have been made.

6. Question: I read from an article that there were some private properties on Plank Road. Will these properties be taken as part of this study?

Answer: Mike Morehouse-The widening of I-84 east of Interchange 23 is in design, and is not a part of this study.

7. Question: How are the traffic growth factors determined for estimating the future traffic volumes?

Answer: Mike Morehouse- Growth factors are derived from state travel demand model based on various inputs such as future demographic and land use estimates. The ConnDOT traffic group checks these growth factors for reasonableness and then applies these to existing traffic volumes.

# **REPORT OF MEETING**

Project: I-84/Route 8 Waterbury Interchange Study

Date: Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Arts Magnet School, Waterbury, CT

Subject: **I-84 WINS Public Meeting #2**

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## **Meeting Presentation/Summary:**

Present at the public meeting were study team representatives from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Wilbur Smith Associates, Fitzgerald and Halliday and members of the public.

Jim Morrin of the Connecticut Department of Transportation opened the meeting and gave a brief description of how the study originated and how it fits into the overall plan for I-84. He then introduced Mike Morehouse of Wilbur Smith Associates as the presenter for the evening.

Mike Morehouse of Wilbur Smith Associates began by providing a brief background of the study and described the steps that had been taken to date in developing two Technical Memoranda and a White Paper for the study.

Mr. Morehouse also gave an overview of the three conceptual improvement alternatives that had been developed. Mr. Morehouse described each alternative in terms of traffic operations, travel route options, highway design standards, environmental constraints and potential impacts and conceptual cost estimates. Mr. Morehouse then ended the presentation by summarizing preliminary recommendations being considered for this study.

Once the presentation was complete, the floor was opened to questions and comments from members of the public regarding the study.

## **Questions/Comments**

1. Question: Who constitutes the Advisory Committee?

Response: Mike Morehouse - Representatives from the city, public works, regional planning agencies, neighborhood associations etc.

2. Question: How were suggestions from the last meeting with the City of Waterbury Aldermen taken up? Who makes the decisions?

Response: Carmine Trotta - We are in the process of developing the information that was previously requested. Decisions are made by consensus of individuals representing the State, City and region.

3. Question: Comments from the last meeting held on June 12, 2007 with Aldermen from the City of Waterbury have as yet not been addressed?

Response: Carmine Trotta - We are in the process of collecting the requested data. It is not information that is readily available.

4. Comment: At the June 12 meeting a list of properties that would be impacted was asked for and that has still not been provided.

Response: Mike Morehouse - We are working on it. We just completed overlaying a GIS map of parcels on a CADD map of the alternatives.  
Carmine Trotta - We are trying to come up with an idea that can be developed. A list specifying property owners is not being prepared as part of this study. It would be premature to say we are going to take certain properties now since the improvement alternatives are only conceptual at this stage and the property impacts will likely change. An Environmental Impact Statement, when prepared, will be used to refine the concept agreed to from this current planning study, as well as the specific social and environmental impacts.

5. Question: Did you look at interchange 17 instead of relocating interchange 18?

Response: Mike Morehouse - It would be difficult to deconstruct the I-84 mainline and leave interchange 18 at its current location.

Jim Morrin - Interchange 18 is one area where we could potentially do some refinement and consider different options.

6. Question: Under the improvement alternatives, how far back is Route 8 going to tie into I-84? How will these changes impact my commute?

Response: Mike Morehouse - You would be able to complete all the movements that are currently being done.

7. Question: Putting an interchange on Oronoke Road would be a nightmare for the residents in that area. How do I ensure that my suggestions are heard and addressed? Does my one voice matter?

Response: Mike Morehouse - There are numerous ways to accomplish this. We are taking notes at this meeting that will be included in the study record. You can also contact us through the study website and the toll free number. Your one voice does matter.

Carmine Trotta - If we do not implement your suggestions we would have to demonstrate a good reason why your suggestion was not implemented.

Mike Morehouse - As Jim Morrin stated, this area has the most latitude for modification.

8. Question: I would like to see the redevelopment of the downtown area. How then do I market this area when there are many negative impacts associated with Alternative 8? No one would like to develop in the prime area of downtown because there might be a highway going through that area some years down the road.

Response: Mike Morehouse – The footprint of Alternative 8 is close to that of the City’s Jackson Street Connector study proposal. One option to consider, may be to purchase the Right of Way for Route 8 along the same alignment (in the near-term) and identify the area available for future redevelopment.

9. Question: Are there any more imaginative alternatives that look at other alignments apart from the two improvement alternatives?

Response: Mike Morehouse - We are more or less limited to the mainline right of way. We were asked to stay within the foot print of the mainline to the extent possible.

Carmine Trotta - That is correct.

10. Question: Can you give an example of similar size cities that have had highways passing through them?

Response: Mike Morehouse - Bridgeport, Stamford and Hartford.

Carmine Trotta – New Haven (Q Bridge).

11. Comment: Exit 18 is currently in an area that is commercial and so should be kept there. There are concerns about the impact relocating this exit ramp to a residential area would have, particularly during the school year.

Response: Carmine Trotta - Understood. We should also keep in mind that the majority of property takes would not be full takes but rather partial or strip takes.

12. Comment: I prefer Alternative #8 because I see this alternative as a way of making Waterbury better. There would be more opportunities for

redevelopment even though it does take properties. It would also address environmental cleanup of the existing Brownfield.

13. Question: When is Construction of I-84 to the east of Waterbury going to begin?

Response: Jim Morrin – The bid process is scheduled for early 2009.

14. Question: When is the Environmental Impact Statement for the West of Waterbury Study going to start?

Response: Carmine Trotta - It is scheduled to begin later this year.

15. Comment: The on-ramp from Highland Avenue going eastbound takes a lot of traffic.

Response: Jim Morrin - The new Interchange #18 will help alleviate some of the congestion on Highland Avenue. Two ramps are needed from this area to handle future traffic volumes.

16. Question: Can we get a preview of the properties that are going to be impacted so that the City can do an Economic Impact Report of its own in advance of the EIS?

Response: Mike Morehouse - We will provide what we have developed to the City for their use.

17. Comment: There are no accidents on the Mix Master.

Response: Mike Morehouse – Records indicate that there are accidents on the Mix Master. The number and locations are listed in Technical Memorandum #1 which can be viewed on the study web-site.

Jim Morrin- Incidents that occur in the areas outside of the Mix Master impact that area, also this non-redundant structure which cannot be indefinitely maintained and must be replaced at some time in the future.

18. Question: It seems the highway was built wrong from the beginning and it makes it difficult to trust that it would be built better this time. Also, I did not know anything about the project even though I am in a neighborhood council. Do you know that the City has neighborhood councils?

Response: Mike Morehouse - Yes, we have contacted various councils during the conduct of this study. Although it appears we could have done a better job of involving the neighborhood councils.

19. Comment: You are building a 3-lane highway.

- How are you addressing properties that are being taken?
- I don't need the DOT's improvements.
- This project is about keeping us (Waterbury residents) off the highway.
- I also want the list of property takes.

20. Comment: We are interested in the alternative with the least impact to the local properties.

21. Comment: You should have held a meeting with the local people/citizens before organizing this project.

Response: Mike Morehouse - We made an attempt to do that. The interest level in the beginning of the study was limited. We would be happy to participate in discussions regarding this study with any interested organization, if invited.

22. Comment: Accidents primarily occur on I-84 at Exits 24, 25 and 25A. Can this portion of the project be pushed ahead? Why is it taking so long to get this going?

Response: A lot of accidents also occur at the on-ramps in the vicinity of I-84 Exits 21-23. Even a minor accident in that area can cause a backup because of the lack of sufficient shoulder in that area.

23. Comment: The alternatives show the Meadow street ramp to I-84 EB is being moved to Benedict Rd. Benedict Rd is narrow and needs improvement; however impact on St. Anne's should be reduced.

Response: Mike Morehouse - Widening will occur to increase functionality but will not involve the taking of St. Anne's Church.

24. Question: What problems do these alternatives propose to correct?

Response: Jim Morrin – The reasons for this project are enumerated in Tech Memo #1; they include removal of Left exits/entrances (safety), expansion of I-84 from 2 to 3 lanes (capacity), reduction in accidents and the reduction of highway access points while increasing the ability of local people to navigate the city from CD roads or frontage roads (future growth, safety).

25. Question: How are projects planned for 20 years in the future? The plans shown seem not to have the capacity that will occur in the next 20 years. In 15 years traffic will be horrendous—you are not considering it. Why not put in a 4<sup>th</sup> lane.

Response: Bridges are designed for 2030. Census models predict how much traffic will go up. Traffic projections based on historical data are used to project demand. The alternatives will meet projected demand.

26. Comment: The Chase parkway weave segment from I-84 EB to Route 8 NB is too short and dangerous.
27. Comment: Highland Avenue has insufficient weave length. Also, local roads should provide an improved connection between Highland Avenue and the Mall.
28. Comment: There needs to be more focus on Mass Transit. The plan is too car friendly, there should be more impediments to driving coupled with better Mass Transit (trolleys).
29. Comment: Walking trails are important to Waterbury residents.