

**Regional Intermodal Transportation Center Study**  
**Summary of Public Meeting**  
**January 14, 2010, 6:30 p.m.**  
**New London Public Library**

Jim Butler, Executive Director of Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG), sponsor of the study, welcomed attendees and introduced the study team and recognized State Representative Ernie Hewitt who was in the audience. Approximately 35 people were in attendance (see attached sign-up sheet).

Larry Englisher, project manager for the consultant team, made a thirty five minute Power Point presentation that detailed the purpose and findings of the study. He said the intent of the study was to develop a seamless transportation hub for the region that will support revitalization of downtown New London as well as plan for future development opportunities in the vicinity of the transportation center. The city has a unique confluence of modes (bus, train and ferry) that are located next to each other but are not necessarily well connected.

The consultant team created a Master Plan for the transportation after reviewing the suitability of the existing location, identifying operational issues and solutions, conducting passenger surveys and traffic analysis, estimating the cost of improvements, and identifying development opportunities and public/private partnerships. Also reviewed were environmental impacts. Extensive feedback from a Stakeholder Steering Committee occurred throughout the study.

Major recommendations of the study included a pedestrian and wayfinding plan, to make it easier and less confusing for pedestrians as well as vehicles to navigate around the transportation hub. The final Preferred Alternative for the transportation center located all facilities on the east side of Water Street and provided additional capacity for bus service to meet additional demand. A new bus terminal for both SEAT and Greyhound passengers and footbridge would be built. In addition, a Fallback Minimum Construction Alternative was developed, that houses more transportation services in Union Station and does not require relocating Water Street, in the event that no funding becomes available for the Preferred Alternative. However, this alternative does not provide additional bus capacity. Both alternatives require the use of privately held property.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Jim Butler moderated a session where members of the public shared their views and posed questions to the study team. The following is a summary of public discussion. Responses to questions are in italics.

Tony Sheridan: I am pleasantly surprised by the study. The consultants have done a good job. It will bring New London back to the days of glory. When you go to the next step, let's continue to have good give and take with the stakeholders as you did throughout the study. Be creative with the design.

*Jim Butler: As a city resident I want to be proud of the transportation center. The new signage and gateway improvements that have just been put up show some of the recommendations of this study are already starting to happen.*

Larry Hample: New London's Parking Commission had no involvement in the study and it should have.

*Jim Butler: We believe we met with representatives early on in the study, as well as with City staff, but he would be glad to meet with the Commission.*

Peg Curtin: On behalf of the taxis, please consider taking out the bump-out at Union Station. Also, why don't you consider diagonal parking for the taxi area in front of the station?

*Larry Englisher: The City expressed concern about removing the bump-out. We don't know if diagonal parking is practical and meets safety considerations but this decision needs to involve the taxi operators and the City.*

*Jim Butler: This is a detail that can be worked out. Tonight we are looking at the larger picture. Recently I tried to make the turn around the bump-out and found that I could.*

John Markowicz: It seems like the cost of additional connections to the garage and the ferry from the footbridge would cost \$7 million and this does not include the cost of acquiring private property and making improvements to accommodate Shore Line East. Who will pay for this? Do you expect a recommendation for STP funds out of this study?

*Jim Butler: There may be a couple of sources of money. There is a \$7 million allocation earmarked through the Surface Transportation Act. Also, there may be federal enhancement funds. I am hopeful there is enough support locally to form an association of the transportation providers. We call it a regional center because the geography is shared but the services operate independently. The group would provide advocacy to advance the project. The CT DOT (Transportation Department) would need to be a participant at the table as well.*

Harry Smith, New London City Planner: I like the idea of a working group. The minimum construction Fallback Alternative and central portion of the footbridge could be funded with the \$7 million but not the pedestrian improvements. Does the glass bus station fit with the historic nature of the train station?

*Sandra Chalk, New London Landmarks: Architects would have to be involved in creating a design that would work. The idea of the glass is to try to keep the views to the river open.*

*Skip Smallridge: The bus terminal does not have to be mostly glass, though glass is needed on the Water Street side so that passengers waiting for a bus can see them as they approach the station. He also said there are two schools of thought when designing a building near an historic structure – make the new building in the style of the old or make the new building compatible with old but with a new design.*

Bud McAllister: As a preservationist I like what you have done.

Kathleen Barrett: There is a lot of pedestrian traffic for the morning and evening boat to Fishers Island. Are there any improvements planned?

*Larry Englisher: There are pedestrian improvements – rubber surfaces, wider sidewalks and quad gates – planned.*

Thank you for bringing up sidewalks. New London should be walkable.

A sidewalk on Water Street is important because people are now walking in the mud on or the road.

Sandra Chalk: I love the recommendations for pedestrian access improvements. I'd love to see them separated out from the short term alternatives [building plans]. I like to immediately concentrate on making the area as attractive as possible.

*Larry Englisher: Implementing pedestrian improvements are a matter of timing. The plan identifies pedestrian improvements that could be done immediately if funding is available - at the two railroad crossings and on the waterfront side of the right-of-way. The other improvements would logically need to wait until Water Street is relocated or they would have to be redone.*

Todd O'Donnell: I think you underestimate the importance of the open space north of the train station. A lot of cars use it for quick pick up or drop off of "Aunt Mabel or "Uncle Bill." Snow removal will be difficult. Your proposal has all the passengers coming to that area. It will be very congested.

*Jim Butler: The consultants expressed concerns about space constraints but this summer there was strong consensus to concentrate the transportation center on the east side of Water Street. However, without cooperation things won't happen.*

Sandra Chalk: The public would enjoy seeing more detail on access to Waterfront Park and Cross Sound Ferry so they could picture what is proposed.

From a bicyclist's perspective, new racks in front of Union Station and bike sharing in the Water Street garage are good. How do you envision cyclists coming here safely as there are no bike lanes in New London?

Larry Hample: How many steps are there in the staircase for the pedestrian bridge – seventy? When's the last time you went up 70 steps?

Barbara Hample: I'm looking out for the taxpayers and have no interest in a pedestrian bridge. I'm concerned about safety and maintenance. It's only benefitting the ferries. We had a pedestrian bridge in the 30's. No one used it and it was torn down. It's not human nature to walk up 65 steps. Using an escalator is scary for some and not practical for people with luggage and strollers. The wait line for the elevator when the ferry arrives will be long. Many people are not happy about the idea of the pedestrian bridge. Who will pay for it?

*Jim Butler: We asked the consultants to have an open mind about the bridge. When DOT decided to expand Shore Line East they determined a bridge was necessary for safety. We hope the State will pay for it.*

Does having a pedestrian bridge make New London eligible for federal funds?

*Andy Davis, CONNDOT: Originally Cross Sound Ferry had proposed a new terminal and footbridge that involved federal funds. For this project CONNDOT [CT Department of Transportation] has a lot of sources of funds that could be used.*

I love New Haven's tunnel at their train station. What did you find when you investigated a tunnel for New London?

*Paul Schmidt, consultant team: There were several factors we considered when comparing the tunnel and pedestrian bridge. There were more negatives with the tunnel including: disruption and maintaining access to rail during construction, cost, security, groundwater issues, higher maintenance and it had no capability for expansion [to the garage or ferry.]*

*Andy Davis: From the CTDOT perspective the tunnel is more costly and a pedestrian bridge has the advantage of being able to see in and out.*

Laura Cordes: How do you access the pedestrian bridge to access Shore Line East from Water Street?

*Larry Englisher: There will be access to the footbridge elevator by a door from the street and from inside the building.*

Is the tower for the pedestrian bridge that connects to the Water Street garage free standing? If the life span of the garage is limited, then the bridge support should not be connected to the garage and need to be re-built if the garage is taken down.

*Jim Butler: We will make a note of this point.*

Sandra Chalk: Quite a bit needs to happen for Shore Line East to be able to expand service to New London.

*Andy Davis, CONNDOT: We are having negotiations about bridge openings, Amtrak wants more switches and platforms need to be built. However, expanding service is not contingent on the new platform being in place.*

The plan for moving Water Street sounds fairly major and pretty disruptive. Would it impact the Julian lot?

*Larry Englisher: There will be no impact on the Julian lot, minimum impact on the Water Street garage and Parade improvements. The relocated road would be built first so that traffic can be maintained on the existing road during construction.*

People come into New London for the train and ferries and then shoot right out again. Who are we doing this for? How do we keep them in New London?

Should we stop now and bring the plan before the City Council before it is finalized? I am concerned City Council members are not here tonight.

*Jim Butler: The Council had a conflicting meeting tonight; I have offered to meet with the City Council to discuss the plan.*

I appreciate the glass for the bus station but Bridgeport built a new glass bus station that was much bigger than needed.

*Larry Englisher: We approached SEAT and Greyhound to learn what they thought their space needs were.*

*Andy Davis: We plan for 20-30 years into the future for projects.*

*Jim Butler thanked those present for attending and for their interest throughout the study.*

**Meeting Attendees**

Sandra Chalk

Peg Curtin

John Markowicz

Frank McLaughlin

Stan Mickus

Todd O'Donnell

Tony Sheridan

Harry Smith

Dan Steward

Rep. Ernest Hewett

Ella Bowman

Bill Humphreys

Barbara Hample

Larry Hample

Andrew Lockwood

Andy Davis

Lindsey Blank

Bud McAllister

Anthony Silvestri

Rachel Pattison

Wick York

Demetrios Louziotis

Kip Bochain

Diane Ruhmshottel

Nat Trumbull

Art Costa

Krystel Kornegay

Laura Cordes

Susan Munger

Kathleen Edgecomb

Lloyd Beachy

Christopher Deveau

Kathleen Barrett

Laurie Deredita

Elena Pascarella  
Jim Butler  
Skip Smallridge  
Jim Wensley  
Paul Schmidt  
Jill Barrett