

## SUMMARY OF MEETING

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**Project:** Regional Intermodal Transportation Study  
**Date of Meeting:** 1:30 PM, Wednesday, March 11, 2009  
**Location of Meeting:** New London City Hall, Council Chambers  
**Purpose of Meeting:** Presentation of key findings of Tasks 2, 3, 4, and 5 to the Steering Committee  
**Meeting Attendance:** Attendees listed on pages 3 & 4

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Larry Englisher, the Consultant Project Manager, along with Jim Wensley and Stuart Popper (of URS), presented a summary of key findings of Tasks 2, 3 and 4. They outlined transportation needs and deficiencies by describing the current facilities and current operations, intermodal connections and wayfinding and access to downtown as well as future needs and operational impacts under a low and high scenario for 2015 and 2030. Following the presentation the Steering Committee engaged in a discussion with these comments:

Charles Curtin: I've been in the taxi business for 70 years and believe the report is flawed because it eliminates the space for taxi cabs in front of the train station. Taxis are an integral part of the system, and taxi service complements, rather than competes with, other transportation services. The parking count is flawed as 25% of the taxis leave from the railroad station. He indicated that Union Station is not the only taxi stand for the city. There will be a security problem with women walking at night if the taxi stand is moved too far from the train station. Perhaps the cab station should be put on the other side of the station.

Larry Englisher responded that it was not the intent of this report to recommend eliminating the taxi stand from Union Station and that the team would be glad to discuss the issue further and will follow up.

Tony Sheridan believes the Parade project is causing a loss in space for the taxis, especially with a raised median. Todd O'Donnell noted the raised median is not being installed. Pavers are being used instead.

Sandra Chalk asked if the team had looked into using the space on the east side of the Water Street garage as a location for transportation services. Larry Englisher said options for this space would be evaluated in the next phase of the study. Sandra also asked if the team had information on how far people are willing to walk to services. Larry responded that generally a ¼ mile standard is used. The team is looking at vacant spaces within that radius.

Dan Karp asked a series of questions: 1) Are the desired improvements on the meeting handout in any priority order? Response: No, they are arranged by subject area. 2) What do you mean by providing "accessible routes" to the Eugene O'Neill Drive lots? Response: More accessible sidewalks and designated ADA compliant routes. 3) Are the wayfinding signs designed for vehicles or pedestrians? Response: Both – for people and autos. 4) A desired improvement is more food and retail at the train station. Why aren't you looking at getting people to go to the existing downtown restaurants? Response: We are looking at that as well.

Penny Parsekian said if people have only a few minutes they won't leave the station, but if they have time and there is good wayfinding, combined with the improvements with the parade project, a lot of the problem of getting people out of the station and on the streets will go away.

John Markowicz asked why a car rental is not being considered. Larry Englisher responded that car rental facilities are mentioned in the report but was not included in the slide presentation.

Todd O'Donnell asked if the study team had any information comparing walking distances between trains, ferries and parking in other cities. Larry Englisher responded that specific information was not gathered as facilities in New London are closely located. Larry added that it is generally understood that the quality of the walking experience is also a very significant factor. People perceive distance between destinations as closer than it may be in reality if the environment is pleasant or farther away than in reality if the walk is inhospitable.

Kevin Cavanaugh requested the study team come back to the Steering Committee with a prioritized list, including 1-2 major items that would have the most impact. These items may be the most costly and take the longest time but result in the biggest impact.

Tony Sheridan asked if the region was on track for the next round of federal funding. Jim Butler said Congress had not yet authorized the next round of the Surface Transportation Act, which would succeed SAFETEA-LU, and which would create funding for projects like this.

Jim Prost (of Basile Baumann Prost and Cole) and Skip Smallridge (of Crosby Schlessinger and Smallridge) made a presentation to the Steering Committee on the topic of transit-oriented economic development. They elaborated on New London's strengths, challenges and opportunities, market analysis findings (residential, office and retail) as well as redevelopment and implementation strategies. Steering Committee members expressed the following views in the ensuing discussion:

Dan Karp said he thought marketing was very important for downtown New London and new parking was needed. Jim Prost said the study team recognized the need to have parking near development but wanted to understand the relationship between parking and destinations so parking could be optimized. Larry Englisher added that a goal of the parking analysis that was done was to understand the peaking characteristics of different uses. Dan Karp said he thought there was a dichotomy of interests, do we want to make parking convenient for travelers to get in and out of the city quickly or do we want to expose them to downtown? Larry Englisher responded that he thought the RITC plan should strike a balance between these two objectives.

Tony Sheridan said the information provided by the consultant was excellent but wondered if consensus about an approach to take might be easier to reach if the consultant would provide information on what has worked elsewhere that would be applicable in New London. Larry indicated that at the next meeting when we present options we can provide some examples from elsewhere.

John Markowicz asked if there was a recommended height to new construction. Skip Smallridge suggested 4-5 stories for buildings on Bank and State Streets but from the Radisson and beyond the heights could be greater. John also asked that the team consider the impact on parking that would occur with increased service from Shore Line East (SLE) rail service and the need for

rental cars for people accessing New London on public transportation. Martin Berliner responded that it was understood that more commuters would be coming to New London when Shore Line East expands service. Deputy Commissioner of CT DOT Albert Martin said increased SLE service would come and it won't take 10 years.

Todd O'Donnell remarked that the world has been turned upside down since the study started and wondered if the study could be sped up. Would projects that address infrastructure qualify for stimulus money?

In response to a question from John Markowicz, Jim Butler confirmed that CT DOT had officially accepted the recommendation of Task 1A of the study - that the RITC should remain in downtown New London, rather than move to the Fort Trumbull area.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held in May or June.

**Meeting Attendees:**

***Steering Committee:***

Tony Sheridan	Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
Kevin Cavanagh	City of New London
Harry Smith	City of New London
Jenny Contois	Congressman Joe Courtney
John Gaucher	Connecticut DEP
Stan Mickus	Cross Sound Ferry
Charles Curtin	Curtin Transportation
Dan Karp	Daniels Dairy Downtown
Jeffrey Nelson	Governor's Eastern Office
Tom Stone	Greyhound
John Brooks	New London Development Corporation
Sandra Chalk	New London Landmarks
Frank McLaughlin	New London Main Street
Kip Bochain	New London Parking Commission
Martin Berliner	SCCOG, City of New London
Dan Steward	SCCOG, Town of Waterford
Ella Bowman	SEAT
John Markowicz	seCTer
Michael Carey	Suisman, Shapiro, Wool, Brennan, and Gray
Todd O'Donnell	Union Station

***Other***

Penny Parsekian	New London Main Street
Nat Trumbull	UCONN – Avery Campus

***ConnDOT***

Andy Davis	ConnDOT (Planning)
Craig Bordiere	ConnDOT (Rails)
Albert A. Martin	Deputy Commissioner

***SCCOG Staff***

James Butler	SCCOG
Dick Guggenheim	SCCOG

***Study Team***

Larry Englisher	TranSystems
Jim Wensley	TranSystems
Jeff Reeder	TranSystems
David Miller	TranSystems
Shruti Rathore	TranSystems
Skip Smallridge	Crosby Schlessinger and Smallridge
Jim Prost	Basile Baumann Prost and Cole
Jill Barrett	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Carla Tillery	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Stuart Popper	URS