

SUMMARY OF MEETING

Project: Regional Intermodal Transportation Study
Date of Meeting: 2:00 PM, Monday, July 14, 2008
Location of Meeting: New London Office of Development and Planning Conference Room
Purpose of Meeting: Kick-Off Meeting; to introduce the consultant team and to discuss the objectives, schedule and initial data collection efforts
Meeting Attendance: Attendees listed on page 4

Summary of Meeting Discussion:

- Welcoming remarks were made by James Butler, SCCOG Chairman Joseph Jaskiewicz (Mayor, Montville) and Mayor Kevin Cavanaugh (New London)
- The Steering Committee members in attendance introduced themselves along with the project team consultants
- Larry Englisher made a presentation summarizing the project approach, objectives and schedule

Questions/comments made during the presentation and in the discussion period afterward:

- Senator Stillman: Why is the schedule 14 months long and not less? And why did it not start sooner?
 - Jim Butler: The starting schedule was constrained by the funding and procurement procedures of ConnDOT (Connecticut Department of Transportation) and SCCOG (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments). The consultant was hired within a week of the target date. The schedule is based on the number of tasks and it was initially thought to take 18 months but we were able to work with the consultant to shorten the schedule to 14 months. If the consultants can finish sooner, they will; since they will be paid based on completion, there is no disincentive to finishing sooner. The addition of the screening of the Fort Trumbull site did not extend the schedule by more than a month or so, especially since much of the data collection can take place concurrent with the screening.
- Senator Stillman: Can the draft report be made available prior to the next tourist season so the local organizations can act on the recommendations?
 - Jim Butler: Yes, and interim draft findings will be provided over the course of the study so it is not as if the findings will be held until the end and presented all at once
- Tony Sheridan: Who suggested including Fort Trumbull as an alternative?
 - Jim Butler: ConnDOT asked SCCOG to look at it, and it is anticipated that this effort will fulfill the “Alternative Site” requirements of NEPA/CEPA, facilitating environmental documentation in the future.
 - Mayor Cavanaugh: Looking at an alternative site is necessary to the process
- Question: Who will make the decision regarding which site is chosen?

- Jim Butler: SCCOG/ConnDOT, in conjunction with the operators of the current transit services. As part of the SCCOG, New London will be part of the decision-making
- ConnDOT Deputy Commissioner Albert Martin: It is not ConnDOT's intent to impose on the process, they are following the City's lead
- John Markowicz: An issue for the cruise ships is that more security is necessary at the terminals when the ships are in – please note that in the report
- Tony Sheridan: Can the data collection effort capture the exodus of riders to the Old Saybrook station for Shore Line East service? They have better amenities and free parking (although full) and better service frequency at that location.
 - Gene Colonese of Rail Administration at ConnDOT: there is a phased approach planned to bring service back to New London
- Tony Sheridan: A legislative agenda item for the Chamber of Commerce is to try to get all Amtrak trains to stop in New London
- Charles Curtin: While there is free parking in Old Saybrook, there is no taxi service there. The availability of taxi service in New London could potentially alleviate the need for some parking if people take a taxi to and from the terminals instead of parking
- Question: Can we survey people in Old Saybrook or New Haven who would be potential riders of rail from New London?
 - Paul Schmidt: We will work with Gene Colonese of Rail Administration to collect data from CONNDOT surveys of Shore Line East users
- Comment: Shore Line East service does not currently meet the needs of the City/Region
- Comment: While surveys were conducted in conjunction with the 2003 study of transportation in the region, findings regarding the propensity to use mass transit may be invalid if today's gas prices would influence opinions
- Tony Sheridan: Can we look at the survey questions prior to the survey?
 - Jim Butler indicated he will make them available via e-mail.
- Comment regarding the interfaces between modes of transportation: People on Cruise ships do not typically interact with train service
- Question: Can the link to study documents posted on the web be included with the invitations to future Steering Committee Meetings?
 - Jim Butler: Yes
- Mayor Cavanaugh: At the scoping process we determined that there would be monthly meetings, yet the schedule indicates that there are only five meetings with the Steering Committee. This is important to keep the project on track.
 - Jim Butler: It was our understanding/intent to hold monthly meetings with the project team and City/SCCOG staff. If additional meetings are needed with members of the steering committee, they can be called on short notice as needed. Jim also indicated that he would be including in his monthly report to the SCCOG an update on the study progress.
 - SCCOG Chairman Jaskiewicz/Deputy Commissioner Martin confirmed that meetings can be organized if additional meetings are determined as necessary
- John Markowicz asked Todd O'Donnell what he thinks about the process, since he owns Union Station
- Todd O'Donnell: I will work with the consultants. I want this process to work. However if the decision is to go to Fort Trumbull, it is a big, 12- year problem.

- Tony Sheridan: What is the format of the final report – it needs to be something that can result in funding requests for the upcoming window of opportunity for the opening of federal funding.
 - Jim Butler: This is being referred to as a report but in fact it is a plan and it will include preliminary design plans.
- Kip Bochain: Don't relocate the transportation center to Fort Trumbull.
- Comment: Downtown business owners don't want the RITC to move to Fort Trumbull.
- Question: What is the status of the Coast Guard Museum?
 - Michael Joplin: the Environmental Documentation is expected to be submitted in Mid September and it is anticipated that the decision one way or the other will be announced by the end of October. We are speculating that the announcement will be made on Homecoming Weekend of the Academy in Mid October.
- John Markowicz: What is the schedule of the Parade construction and how do these projects impact one another?
 - Bruce Hyde: The Parade construction is expected to take place from August 2008 to September 2009
- Michael Joplin: Is the consultant team okay with the Parade design?
 - Jim Butler: The consultants submitting for the Study were instructed that the SeCTer project should be considered a given component of the design of the area, and that although the projects are adjacent they should not conflict with one another
- Comment: Getting pedestrians across the rail is a key issue
- Comment: There is a need for bicycle storage and car-sharing at the Train Station.
- Tom Stone: Surveys of bus passengers should be conducted on a weekend
 - Larry Englisher: Surveys will take place on a Saturday and a weekday
- Todd O'Donnell: How do the consultants intend to reflect the impacts of rising gas prices on forecasts of ridership
 - Larry Englisher: It's important to strike a balance between incorporating changes in behavior stemming from rising fuel prices and over-estimating changes in travel behavior based on short-term observations of responses.
 - Tom Stone: We have seen increased ridership over the past 18 months
 - Dep. Comm. Martin: The irony is that as public transit use increases and personal vehicle use decreases, gas tax revenues used to fund public transit may actually decrease
 - Skip Smallridge: Recent studies that he has been involved with have asked whether design can incorporate short range transportation modes such as zip cars, scooters and bikes
 - Todd O'Donnell: For the study to be credible it should reflect current trends
 - John Markowicz: Eventually the prices of mass transit will reflect rising fuel prices as well, potentially mitigating the shift from personal vehicle
- Question: Is it possible that Fort Trumbull is identified as a desirable site for the cruise ships while the Regional Intermodal Transportation Center remains in its current location?
 - Jim Butler: Yes
 - Senator Stillman: The Cruise Ship Task Force should be asked for input, they are currently investigating the possibility of New London becoming a point of embarkation/disembarkation which would potentially benefit from the Cruise pier being co-located with the ITC

- Dep. Comm. Martin: While the cruise ships do not release their schedules until the start of the new season, the number of ships has increased over the past few years and the cruise companies have indicated that they are pleased with their experience in New London
- Michael Joplin: Can the Steering Committee be given 30 days notice for upcoming meetings including access to the most relevant documents available and possibly the presentation so that they can come into the meeting informed?
 - Jim Butler: Yes
- Larry Englisher: Is this time of day acceptable to everyone for the meetings?
- Consensus: Yes

The next Steering Committee meeting will be scheduled for autumn 2008.

Meeting Attendees:

Steering Committee:

Tony Sheridan	Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
Bruce Hyde	City of New London
Kevin Cavanaugh	City of New London
Jenny Contois	Congressman Joe Courtney
Frederick Riese	Connecticut DEP
William Cornish	Cornish Parking
Stan Mickus	Cross Sound Ferry
Peter Simmons	CT DECD
Charles Curtin	Curtin Transportation
Dan Karp	Daniels Dairy Downtown
Donna Simpson	Eastern CT Tourism District
Tom Stone	Greyhound
Joe Smith	Mohegan Tribe
Chris Jennings	Mystic Coast and Country
Michael Joplin	New London Development Commission
Sandra Chalk	New London Landmarks
Frank McLaughlin	New London Main Street
Kip Bochain	New London Parking Commission.
Martin Berliner	SCCOG, City of New London
Joseph Jaskiewicz	SCCOG, Town of Montville
Dan Steward	SCCOG, Town of Waterford
John Markowicz	seCTer
Sen. Andrea Stillman	State Sen. 20th District
Todd O'Donnell	Union Station
Michael Carey	Suisman, Shapiro, Wool, Brennan, and Gray

ConnDOT

Andy Davis	ConnDOT
Albert A. Martin	ConnDOT, Deputy Commissioner
Eugene Colonese	ConnDOT

SCCOG Staff

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Study Team

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Paul Schmidt URS
Stuart Popper URS

Other

H. Tucker Braddock Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce
Bill Haase Town of Stonington

Submitted By: Samuel K. Eisenbeiser, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. **Date:** 07/30/08