

## SUMMARY OF MEETING

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**Date:** July 8, 2009  
**Project:** New London Intermodal Transportation Study  
**Date of Meeting:** 1:30 PM, Tuesday, June 30, 2009  
**Location of Meeting:** New London City Hall Council Chambers  
**Purpose of Meeting:** Discuss Short-Term Alternatives and Long-Term Vision Concepts

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### Summary of Meeting Discussion:

- Introductory remarks were made by Jim Butler
- Larry Englisher and Skip Smallridge made a presentation summarizing the study progress to date and the short-term alternatives and long-term vision concepts

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

- Kenric Hanson asked what was considered “short term” vs. “long term”
  - Larry replied short term is what may be implemented in 3-5 years compared to 15-20 years. Over the short term the overall increase in demand would be marginal
- Senator Andrea Stillman inquired about the meaning of the phrase “encouraging transportation uses at Union Station” listed as an urgent need on slide 9
  - Larry replied other uses will include bicycles and car rentals.
  - Jim Butler added that existing transportation uses will also be encouraged.
- Kevin Cavanaugh asked if costing of the short term-common improvements has been done.
  - The team replied that it has not been done yet but it is a part of the next steps.
- Dan Karp asked, on slide 11, why sidewalk improvements are suggested for Eugene O’Neill Drive and not Bank St, noting that there are more businesses on Bank St.
  - Skip Smallridge noted that Eugene O’Neill Blvd. has a wider pedestrian pathway than Bank St.
  - Senator Stillman asked if there could be multiple alternative pathways.
  - Skip Smallridge indicated that we need to provide signage for one ADA-compliant route
- Joseph Celli noted a concern that directional signage should suggest one direction (towards RITC/ Union Station) and not disperse on several paths
  - Skip Smallridge noted that if the distance from the parking area, for instance the Julian Lot, is closer to the destination via Gov. Winthrop Blvd., then people will take that route, so both pathways will be signed.
  - Larry Englisher noted that the preferred pathways are being identified.
  - Dan Karp indicated that the shortest routes may change if the Cross Sound Ferry ticket office were moved closer to Union Station
- Tony Sheridan emphasized the importance of improving passenger safety as an objective of this study and asked what became of pedestrian bridge plans
  - Larry Englisher noted that these plans are covered in the latter part of the presentation on Long Term Vision Concepts

- Charles Curtin noted that there is not much difference between pick up/drop off and taxis and that these areas might be shared in the plan. He also noted that 50 taxis are licensed to operate in New London.
- Joseph Celli asked if there has been increased demand for bus service.
  - Jim Butler replied that SEAT wishes to increase routes and decrease the time between pulses.
  - Tom Stone mentioned that ridership has been hit due to the economic downturn. Also they face increased competition from other intercity carriers that operate the same routes between Boston and NYC. Tom suggested that bays may be used by other buses (tour buses, etc) as well as shared with SEAT.
  - Kevin Cavanaugh asked if official projections were used to estimate bus demand.
  - Jim Wensley indicated that there were none available
  - Tom Stone noted that in other cities specific areas are designated for charter or tourist buses
  - Charles Curtin noted that it is good to have the taxis close to the buses
- Senator Andrea Stillman: How are people expected to transfer from ferry to bus when there is a train in the station?
  - Larry Englisher: Ferry operators have mentioned previously that in such cases, ferries wait for the trains to clear the tracks.
  - Jim Butler added that such connections are very few in number.
  - Tom Stone added that they have explored the idea of shifting to the CSF property but traffic delay crossing the RR tracks??? presents the greatest hindrance.
  - Larry Englisher also said that if the buses are moved to or closer to Gov Winthrop Blvd., it will offer a better connection to ferries.
  - John Markowicz: Can Amtrak extend platforms further north?
  - Craig Bolieri (CTDOT Rail): It may not be possible due to the arc of the tracks and distance between the northbound rail and freight tracks.
  - Several members stressed the need to address transfers among modes and trains blocking up State Street.
  - Sandra Chalk asked how long the trains are typically in the station
  - Larry Englisher noted that it was about 7-8 minutes. (Time when gates at a crossing are closed is about 5 minutes- observation made by team after the meeting)
  - Kenric Hanson asked if the issue weren't simply a matter of poor planning on the part of travelers
  - Stan Mickus noted that Amtrak is typically late, contributing to connections being missed, and that it is not necessarily the fault of the travelers
- Sandra Chalk liked the 2<sup>nd</sup> Short-Term option which allows for open space and for Pick up/Drop Off (PU/DO) and bicycles and around station, and consolidates buses. It is assuming a good cross walk is provided.
- Jesse Lerch remarked that saw-tooth bays are needed for SEAT to increase service (as shown in short-term option 2B)
- Another attendee asked if there is a concern with PU/DO traffic and taxis interfering with traffic flow at the intersection of State Street and Water Street, also noting that a saw tooth parking configuration would allow independent movement of queued vehicles
  - Jim Butler said that saw tooth parking would require backing up into the traffic lanes

- Senator Stillman liked option 3. She expressed that she did not like taxis queuing on State Street. Sharing of PU/DO and taxis makes sense however too much short term parking will be used by people not using the station.
  - Jim Butler asked if the City can work with the taxis to identify a taxi waiting area nearby.
  - Senator Stillman asked if more taxis could fit if they pulled in at an angle
  - Jim Butler indicated that the 20' designated width would then not be enough and travel lanes would be interfered with
  - Charles Curtin said that in the past, taxis have used a saw tooth configuration in which they backed into the space, allowing for independent operation while avoiding the issue of backing into the flow of traffic
- John Markowicz asked if buses and taxis can share the same space
  - Tom Stone indicated that this does not work. He suggested that taxi cabs utilize space at Amtrak parking lot.
- Todd O'Donnell noted that Amtrak has a six-car parking lot for employees and that the taxis might be able to go there and these cars could be given parking spaces in the Water Street garage
- Commissioner Martin asked whether it was logical to move parking structures away from the waterfront and develop the lots near the water for more active uses
  - Skip Smallridge indicated that the ideal site for parking from a city development standpoint is to have passengers walking through the town to access the ferry
  - Comm. Martin asked if this would be better for attracting business to the city
  - Skip Smallridge agreed that it would be better to not have Water Street Garage serve as the face of the city
- Tony Sheridan advised the committee to concentrate on long term and utilize the transportation money that will be available in the near future, find a way to cross tracks, and via development options seek to revitalize the major streets around the RITC. Passengers by water modes form the major bulk of New London visitors and hence development along Water St is critical and needs to be inviting.
- Michael Carey asked why the area behind the Water Street Garage currently occupied by The Day is not considered for redevelopment
  - Skip Smallridge indicated that the areas highlighted in yellow are considered to be underutilized and that is the focus. He noted that the street could be enlivened in the future if the Day moved its production facilities to a suburban location as other newspapers such as the Boston Globe have done.
- Charles Curtin indicated that he would like to see pedestrians cross the tracks and the road from a multi-level building on the west side using elevators
- Kevin Cavanaugh asked for a cost comparison between short term and long term options. In his opinion common short term improvements will be expensive and the team should concentrate on the development scenarios in the long term alternatives
- Kevin Cavanaugh also mentioned that language on pg. 28 regarding the pedestrian overpass is very dismissive and that the team should revise it
- John Markowicz: For the Gov. Winthrop option (bus terminal on Radisson parcel) one of the disadvantages to point out is that the long walk to the station will be undesirable during winter.
- John Markowicz: A suggestion was made that the freight rail track merge with the Amtrak North Bound rail track north instead of south of the station. That will free up a lot of waterfront area.

- Craig Bolieri of CT DOT's rail division indicated that it is unclear whether the switch can be relocated
- Sandra Chalk: Some people asked about a tunnel rather than building a pedestrian bridge. A member pointed out that it works well in New Haven (though conditions vary at both the locations). The team pointed out problems that an underpass will pose.
  - Larry Englisher noted that a great deal of space is required for the ramps to the tunnel and that given a necessary turn within the tunnel, security was also an issue
  - Paul Schmidt noted the inherent problems with providing tunnel access given the groundwater
  - Craig Bolieri indicated that the New Haven station location provides adequate space for the tunnel access system and that it is not comparable to this area. He said that there is a tunnel in Westport but a tunnel poses many challenges with regard to the geology and meeting ADA requirements
- Kenric Hanson asked about the projection of vehicular transportation use in the area for the long term scenario with respect to I-95 widening plans.
  - Larry Englisher indicated that the assumptions for forecasting growth of the various modes were outlined in Task 3 & 4 and that they had limited information to use
- Tom Stone pointed out that only short term option 1 works if there is going to be subsequent long term development of the Water St garage parcel . He also raised concern that moving the terminal to Gov. Winthrop Rd will not qualify for FTA funding as an intermodal center.
  - Skip Smallridge said that some places across the country where there has not been a big chunk of space available have obtained FTA funding for facilities located several blocks away from the rail station. FTA may also be rewriting rules within the next year.
- Larry Hample pointed out that the pedestrian bridge is not practical, and the older bridge was taken down for the same reason – it required 90 steps up and 90 steps down to reach the ticket office from the west side of the rail.
- Jim Butler noted that a mechanism should be established to maintain the dialogue among the local stakeholders after the study is finished
- John Markowicz asked if adding an at grade crossing midway (in front of Water St Garage) to address the blocking of the State St. was considered
  - Larry Englisher said it had not.
  - Craig Bordieri indicated that CTDOT is trying to reduce at-grade crossings.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be scheduled for early fall 2009.

### **Meeting Attendees**

#### ***Steering Committee:***

Tony Sheridan	Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
Kevin Cavanagh	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
Tom Stone	Greyhound
Sandra Chalk	New London Landmarks
Frank McLaughlin	New London Main Street
Martin Berliner	SCCOG, City of New London
John Markowicz	seCTer
Michael Carey	Suisman, Shapiro, Wool, Brennan, and Gray
Todd O'Donnell	Union Station
Joseph Celli	Water Street Garage
Craig Bordieri	CTDOT Rail
Andy Davis	CTDOT
John Gaucher	CTDEP
Larry Hample	New London Parking Commission

***Other Attendees***

Kenric Hanson	New London Sustainability Commission
Don Gibson	New London Main Street
Jesse Lerch	New London Main Street
Karin Compton	The Day

***Study Team***

Jim Butler	Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
Larry Englisher	TranSystems
Jim Wensley	TranSystems
Shruti Rathore	TranSystems
Skip Smallridge	Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge
Paul Schmidt	URS
Jill Barrett	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Sam Eisenbeiser	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Submitted By:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 07/08/09  
Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.