

**CT Route 15 Interchange 59
Deficiencies and Needs Study**

Summary of Stakeholder Meeting

**Woodbridge Town Hall
11 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge
June 16, 2010
10 a.m. to noon**

In Attendance:

Stakeholder Committee Members:

Edward Maum Sheehy, First Selectman, Woodbridge
Paul Chambers, representing New Haven Aldermen Tom Lehtonen and Darnell Goldson
Barry Diggs, CT Transit
Frederick Riese, Department of Environmental Protection
Lt. Thomas Begert, Commanding Officer, Troop I, CT State Police
Jamison J. Scott, Air Handling Systems Manufacturers Service Co., Inc.
Lou Mastrobuoni, Amity Wines & Spirits

Study Team Representatives

Colleen Kissane, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
David Head, CTDOT
Melanie Zimyeski, CTDOT
Jerry Gluck, AECOM
Eric Swenson, AECOM
Jill Barrett, Fitzgerald & Halliday
Steve O'Neill, VHB
Bill Anderson, VHB

Other

Joseph J. Crisco, Jr., Connecticut State Senator, 17th Senatorial District
Master Sergeant Michael Perry, Troop I, CT State Police
Deputy Police Chief Ray Stuart, Town of Woodbridge
Gene Marcussi, Town of Woodbridge
Warren Connors, Town of Woodbridge
Stephanie Ciarleglio, Town of Woodbridge
Terry Gilbertson, Town of Woodbridge
Joe Hellauer, Town of Woodbridge
Angel Cardona, CT Transit

David Head, CTDOT's project manager for the Route 15 Interchange 59 Deficiencies and Needs Study, welcomed meeting attendees and introduced project consultant Jerry Gluck of AECOM who made a presentation after everyone in attendance

introduced themselves. (The meeting presentation is available on the project website, www.exit59study.com.)

Jerry Gluck, AECOM's project manager, began by explaining the background of the study and study goals. This study was developed in response to the high number of accidents and the traffic congestion associated with Interchange 59 of the Wilbur Cross Parkway and the surrounding area, including Routes 63 (Whalley Avenue/Amity Road) and 69 (Litchfield Turnpike). The study will result in a recommendation plan for the interchange and surrounding roadway network.

Study goals include: 1) improving traffic safety, 2) improving connectivity to and from Route 15, 3) reducing traffic congestion, 4) improving pedestrian accommodations, and 5) involving the public throughout the study.

Jerry Gluck explained the role of the Stakeholder Committee will be to:

- Guide and assist in the study process (four meetings expected)
- Provide local insights
- Disseminate information
- Review and comment on draft documents
- Help address specific issues associated with the development of study recommendations

A list of major issues developed through field visits and assessment of existing data was presented to the Stakeholder Committee for their review and comments. The summary of issues and comments is listed below:

- High frequency of accidents on the southbound entrance ramp
- Nonstandard acceleration lane on southbound entrance and exit ramps and northbound exit ramp
- Congestion on southbound Route 69 approaching Interchange 59
- Lane changing on northbound Route 69 approaching the northbound and southbound entrance ramps
- Lane changing on southbound Route 63 approaching the southbound entrance ramp and Amity Plaza
- Complex intersection of Route 63/Route 69/Wright Avenue
- Frequent driveways and traffic signals
- Need for improved pedestrian accommodations

Senator Crisco asked why is there no prohibition for left turns onto Litchfield Turnpike (Route 69) from the Starbucks' driveway when drivers are not allowed to turn left onto Litchfield Turnpike at the plaza next to Starbucks (Yarn Barn driveway).

Jerry Gluck noted that the study will include reviewing driveway access in the area.

Senator Crisco noted that exiting the Amity Shopping Center a motorist could turn left from the unsignalized driveway and then right onto Bradley Road, in order to avoid traffic congestion.

Jamie Scott indicated that he has been driving on Route 69 southbound to Route 15 for twenty years and it takes 15 minutes in the evening to access Route 15. He noted that he sometimes cuts across Bradley Road to get to the southbound entrance ramp. He has seen people drive across curbs and even recently across the Yarn Barn lawn to avoid the posts and bypass queued traffic. There is often gridlock at Lucy Street. He suggested widening Route 69 to accommodate motorists who want to access the ramp, noting it is the left lane that typically gets backed up. He noted there he has observed congestion along Litchfield Turnpike (Route 69) southbound in the evening and northbound in the morning.

Jerry Gluck indicated the study will look at providing auxiliary lanes to remove the turning traffic from the through lanes.

Lt. Begert indicated he was not surprised by the number of accidents in the study area, although he would have expected the number of accidents (92) at the southbound ramps on Route 69 would have been higher. A check of the police accident data (January 2007 – June 9, 2010) indicated there were 619 accidents at all the ramps of Route 15 Interchange 59.

David Head and Jerry Gluck replied the accident data cited by Lt. Begert may be for a slightly longer period and may include accidents with less than \$1000 damage. This will be further explored.

There was a question as to when will the sidewalk installation at Bradley Road and Amity Road be completed?

Warren Connors responded that completion is expected by the end of 2010.

Terry Gilbertson noted there are a lot of complaints about speed and cut through traffic from residents of Landin Street. The town has tried bump-outs to calm traffic and have not found them effective.

Jerry Gluck indicated the shopping area in the triangle formed by Route 15, Route 63, and Route 69 has speed bumps to discourage cut through traffic.

Jaime Scott asked whether the study will address the intersection of Bradley Road at Route 63. There has been a big increase in traffic in the last 2 to 3 years. The employees leaving the corporate office parks could use a traffic signal. Congestion will only worsen when vacant property gets developed.

Woodbridge First Selectman Sheehy noted that CTDOT had been requested to install a traffic signal a couple of years ago. Lt. Begert added that CTDOT in 2009 had been requested to install a traffic signal, but it was found not warranted. Just yesterday, CTDOT said they will reopen the request and look at updated data. But, installing a signal may increase the number of rear end accidents.

Terry Gilbertson asked whether more recent accident data could be examined.

David Head responded that the latest available data is for 2008 and that the data will be assessed to see if patterns remained the same.

Ed Sheehy noted there is potential for development north of Bradley Road. There is a 155-unit development going in for which there should be an open STC permit.

David Head replied that, if it is in the STC process, it already should be accounted for in the study's traffic projections.

Ed Sheehy asked if there is anything that can be done in the short term to alleviate traffic congestion, such as signal coordination.

David Head replied that Senator Crisco met with CT DOT representatives about short-term signal coordination and signage improvements to be implemented along Litchfield Turnpike (Route 69).

Terry Gilbertson noted there appears to be extra room under the Route 69 overpass to establish another lane that could be used for left hand turns onto the northbound Route 15 entrance ramp.

David Head replied that this will be examined as a possible short term measure.

Jamie Scott indicated that the traffic light at Merritt Avenue at Route 69 seems to be on a timer rather than activated when needed.

Jerry Gluck responded that Merritt Avenue is part of the offset intersection with Lucy Street, and the timing may reflect the intersection layout.

Deputy Chief Stuart noted that when motorists obey the "No Turn on Red" sign on Lucy Street, the Lucy Street/Merritt Avenue intersection works better and there is less congestion on Route 69.

David Head indicated it would have been desirable to re-align that intersection when the Merritt Avenue Bridge is rehabilitated. This had been discussed with the designers of the emergency bridge repair project. Right-of-Way would be needed to align the intersection, adding 5 to 6 years to the project. As a result, this project is proceeding without re-aligning the intersection.

Jamie Scott inquired regarding the time frame for implementing improvements?

David Head replied there may be a timeframe of 5 to 10 years for near-term projects. He noted that both short and long term improvements are being considered.

There was a question about the impact of the construction on Whalley Avenue in New Haven.

David Head indicated that once the construction is over, congestion should lessen.

Terry Gilbertson indicated there are pedestrians on Route 69 north of Lucy Street, probably employees at corporate park businesses. He asked about the possibility of extending the bus route to this area.

A representative from CT Transit replied that a cost analysis of the B route is being performed. He noted that CT Transit is also looking at moving the bus stops back from intersections to help reduce traffic congestion.

Jamie Scott observed that it is not a comfortable walk along Route 69.

Terry Gilbertson noted that developers are required to build sidewalks as part of new developments.

Jamie Scott indicated there is a blog that tracks traffic issues here in Woodbridge.

David Head replied that it could be www.SeeClickFix.com.

A representative of the Town of Woodbridge indicated that the Town would like to link its town website to the project website.

David Head indicated that this was a good idea.

Jerry Gluck said he expected the Stakeholder Committee would meet again in the fall and a public information meeting would occur in the fall as well.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.