

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Division of Highway Design**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Project No.: 151-340  
 Project Name: Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 Eastbound (EB) in Waterbury (the Project)  
 Date of Meeting: Wednesday October 25, 2023, at 6:00 PM  
 Location of Meeting: Maloney Magnet School, 233 South Elm St, Waterbury, CT 06706  
 Subject of Meeting: Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 Eastbound (EB) in Waterbury Public Information Meeting No. 2

**Attendees:**

<b>Public Members:</b>	
Please see Attachment A for list of attendees that signed the sign-in form.	
<b>Project Team</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Michael Calabrese	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Jonathan Dean	CTDOT
Joe Belrose	CTDOT
Zachary Guarino	CTDOT
Shannon Burnham	CTDOT
<b>City of Waterbury</b>	
David Simpson	City of Waterbury Public Works
Ken Stanco	City of Waterbury Mayor's Office
<b>NVCOG</b>	
Richard Donovan	Naugatuck Valley Council of Government
<b>Consultant Team</b>	
David Schweitzer	HNTB
Rudy Franciamore	HNTB
David Giel	HNTB
Samantha Scharpf	HNTB
Jacqueline Six	HNTB
Cole Ernst	HNTB
Ben Cadwell	Mintz+Hoke
KaLyn McCullough	Mintz+Hoke
Caitlyn Wells	Mintz+Hoke
Alba Peguero	Integrate Language Services

**1. Meeting Format and Attendance**

The Public Information Meeting took place in person. One meeting time was offered, starting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> with a 30-minute open-house period where attendees were able to view roll plans with Project information and speak one-on-one with

the Project Team. At 6:30 p.m., the presentation began and was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The meeting was live streamed on Waterbury Government Access and on the New Mix YouTube page and will also be shown periodically on both Waterbury Government Access and Waterbury Community Access.

Real-time translation in Spanish was provided for the meeting.

Please see Attachment A for a list of meeting attendees.

## **2. Presentation: Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 EB**

### **A. The New Mix: Project Overview**

- a. A brief overview of the long-term plan for the future of the Mixmaster was presented.

### **B. The New Mix: Breakout Projects**

- a. Overview of the different types of breakout projects and the nature of the anticipated schedule for the Early Action, Near-Term, and Long-Term Projects.

### **C. A map of the Project location was presented.**

### **D. Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 EB in Waterbury: Project Need**

- a. An overview of the current Project needs related to the I-84 Interchange gaps in service was presented.
- b. Several visual models of the existing traffic flow.

### **E. Proposed Design**

- a. Presentation of preliminary design of I-84 EB and Exit 22 Off Ramp.
- b. Presentation of the local roadway improvements in the preliminary design. This included cross sections of several areas of the local roadway network.

### **F. Project Goals**

- a. The Project proposes to improve safety, traffic operations on I-84 EB in the vicinity of Exits 19-22, traffic operations for the local roads within the study area, and air quality by reducing the number of idling cars. An overview of how the proposed changes are anticipated to improve these conditions was presented.

### **G. Project Rights of Way Impacts**

- a. An overview of Rights of Way (ROW) implications was presented. This included an explanation of the ROW acquisition process provided by the CTDOT Division of Rights of Way. The temporary construction

easements and permanent partial acquisitions that would impact ROW were displayed.

**H. Project Cost Estimates**

- a. An overview of the cost estimates for the undertaking of this Project was presented. The overall \$21,435,400 Project cost will be 80% federally funded by the Surface Transportation Block Grant and 20% state funded.

**I. Public Outreach Activities**

- a. An overview of the extensive public outreach efforts was presented. This included direct mailing to residents and businesses within the Project area, field meeting with stakeholders, and a Conceptual Public Information Meeting / Connecticut Environmental Policy Act Scoping Meeting held March 23, 2023.

**J. Project Timeline**

- a. The presenters provided an explanation of the anticipated Project timeline:
  1. Fall 2023 - Public Information Meeting;
  2. Fall 2024 - Final design complete;
  3. Spring 2025 - Initiation of construction; and
  4. Summer 2027 - Anticipated completion of construction

**3. Post-Meeting Question & Answer (Q&A) Sessions**

The following is a summary of the questions asked at the public meeting along with the answers that were provided. It has been edited for clarity. Please visit the New Mix website to view the recording of the entire public meeting. The video may be found at: <https://www.newmixwaterbury.com/public-involvement/public-meetings/>

At the beginning of this session, CTDOT's Jon Dean invited Senator Joan Hartley to address the attendees. Senator Hartley reinforced the importance surrounding the Project's process. She proposed a meeting with the Project Team to go through the legislative elements of the Project. Senator Hartley then addressed the attendees and thanked them for their civic engagement.

Q. Why will the Project Team need an additional year to finalize the plan and design?

A. There is a standardized design process that the Project Team must adhere to. This involves a preliminary period of planning for the Project needs and an environmental documentation phase which occurs under the National Environmental Policy Act / Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (NEPA / CEPA). After the preliminary design and NEPA / CEPA phases are complete, the Project will progress to the final design phase. The final design phase includes the ROW acquisition process which is expected to set the Project schedule.

Q. An attendee expressed concern that a number of residences and businesses are anticipated to be affected by the Project. They go on to question how this Project could affect the tax base and economy of the city.

A. The ROW impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Most of the proposed impacts are for traffic control equipment or temporary construction easements to facilitate installation of sidewalks.

Q. What is the cost of rehabilitating the bridge that carries Exit 21?

A. The cost of addressing only the Exit 21 bridge is estimated to be in the range of \$5-10 million, but please keep in mind that rehabilitating the bridge would only remedy one portion of a larger issue. The Project intends to improve the severity of congestion and increase safety.

Q. The Mixmaster appears to be under constant rehabilitation. Why not just replace it now? Why is this Project being stretched out for years? The attendee expressed the belief that the largest issue is the impact to those who live and work on Meadow Street and in the surrounding area. Is the Project Team going to implement wayfinding signage to direct the community to these businesses?

A. The team is proposing to implement wayfinding signage along Exit 22 to help people navigate this area.

At this time an attendee noted knowledge of several routes to the Home Depot and stated a personal lack of understanding of why the Project is being proposed. The attendee expressed strong concern with the validity of the data the Project Team presented as justification for the Project. The Project Team did not engage with this individual due to the nature of the interaction and to allow for other attendees speak.

Q. Is there a way of reconfiguring I-84 in the area of the merge from Route 8 South to I-84 EB, so commuters do not make the dangerous crossing movements in order to exit the highway in the vicinity of I-84 EB Exit 21 and Exit 22?

A. The New Mix Program is assessing ways to fix that dangerous movement in the long-term, but at this point in time, it cannot be improved and there is an immediate need to address the other identified deficiencies as part of this Project.

Q. Considering that the Exit 21 is currently closed – why reconfigure the side streets if the exit is already not accessible?

A. The traffic volumes are expected to grow and will need to be accommodated in the future.

Q. Have the future traffic studies been completed? The attendee is not sure these are accurate because of a potential for autonomous vehicles in the future.

A. The Project Team is required to design for the current conditions with the standards that are established. If these standards change in the future, the project will be adjusted to accommodate those changes.

Q. In the event of eminent domain, does the Project Team believe the eminent domain laws that were set 50 years ago will still work? The attendee went on to ask what the largest square footage acquisition of this Project would be.

A. The Project Team would be meeting with property owners well before eminent domain would be used and would offer fair market value. There would be an opportunity for the owner to negotiate for a larger value sum. For this specific project, the largest acquisition will be a small partial acquisition of land that is currently owned by the City. There are no full acquisitions.

Q. Are there plans to widen I-84 to reduce congestion?

A. Additional Early Action Projects could be identified and implemented for the purpose of relieving congestion; however, at this time, there are no plans to widen I-84.

Q. Who in the City works with you on this project?

A. Many offices coordinate on this project including the City of Waterbury Public Works, Planning, and Engineering Departments, the Mayor's office, and more.

Q. Will there be any extra traffic going onto the City streets because traffic is being diverted from the Interstate?

A. Not necessarily, traffic currently going to the Exit 21 would be rerouted to Exit 22 but would not be increasing the overall volume of vehicles on City streets. These proposed improvements account for the anticipated redistribution of vehicles.

At this point in the meeting, there were no further questions or comments from meeting participants. Jonathan Dean, CTDOT Project Manager, then stated that if something comes to mind after the meeting, individuals can always submit comments and/or questions on the New Mix website [NewMixWaterbury.com](http://NewMixWaterbury.com). In addition, individuals can sign up for Project-related information on both the website and at [thenewmixwaterbury@gmail.com](mailto:thenewmixwaterbury@gmail.com).

Meeting was adjourned at **7:40 P.M.**

**Attachment A**

Meeting Attendees that signed in, Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 Eastbound in Waterbury Project Conceptual Public Preliminary Design Meeting, October 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. This list does not include the attendees that did not sign in on the sign-in form. The total number of attendees is estimated to be 20 people.

<b>Meeting Attendees</b>
Eric Savelle
Paul KonDash
Michael Stere
Arthur J Denze Sr.
Juan Pegurar
Maria E Saluro