

Client: Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG)      Date: March 22, 2022  
 Meeting Date: March 22, 2022      Prepared By: Joe Rimiller, PE, PTOE  
 Meeting Location: Microsoft Teams      Job Number:  
 Meeting Topic: Route 161 Corridor Study – Advisory Committee Meeting #1

---

## ATTENDEES:

NAME	ADDRESS / AFFILIATION	NAME	ADDRESS / AFFILIATION
Joe Rimiller	BETA Group	Gary Sojka	CTDOT
Kaethe Podgorski	BETA Group	Gary Goeschel	East Lyme, Town Planner
Najib Habesch	BETA Group	Christian Lund	East Lyme Public Schools, Director of Facilities
Kate Rattan	SCCOG	Mike Finkelstein	East Lyme Chief of Police
Anna Bergeron	CTDOT, Planning	Kevin Seery	East Lyme First Selectman
Fred Kulakoski	CTDOT, Traffic Engineering Operations	Joe Comerford	Estuary Transit District
Claudiel Merronis	CTDOT, Traffic Engineering Operations	Mike Carrol	SEAT
Tyler Roth	CTDOT Transit		

## RECORD OF MEETING MINUTES:

The Route 161 Corridor Study Advisory Committee convened for its first meeting via Microsoft Teams. The following items were discussed:

- I. Introductions
  - Representatives from BETA Group, SCCOG, CTDOT, the Town of East Lyme, Estuary Transit District, and SEAT introduced themselves.
- II. Project Vision and Goals
  - BETA Group identified the project limits of the corridor study – from the East Lyme High School driveway to the Route 156 Intersection.
  - BETA Group summarized project goals, including:
    - Alleviating traffic congestion during peak hours
    - Improving pedestrian and bike mobility
    - Promote use of healthy and environmentally friendly modes of travel
    - Enhancing transit ridership

- Improving safety for all users
  - Integrating climate resilience
- The committee was asked if they had any additional goals that should be taken into consideration. No additional goals were identified. Committee members commented that the list of goals seemed comprehensive.

### III. Project Schedule and Scope

- BETA Group gave an overview of the project schedule and scope
- BETA suggested that future bi-monthly Advisory Committee meetings be held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 2:00 PM via Microsoft Teams. There were no objections.
- BETA Group will notify the East Lyme Chief of Police when data collection efforts are scheduled on the corridor.
- BETA Group requested transit ridership data from SEAT and the Estuary Transit District. Mike Carrol commented that SEAT should be able to provide data.
- CTDOT provided a response to BETA Group's request for available traffic data.

### IV. Public Engagement Strategy

- BETA Group discussed the public engagement strategy including live meetings, stakeholder outreach, electronic media, and information distribution.
- The Town of East Lyme currently no restrictions on live meetings.
- BETA Group requested input on an ADA accessible venue for public meetings. The Town of East Lyme suggested that the high school auditorium would be suitable. BETA Group will coordinate with Chris Lund to reserve the auditorium for meetings.
- BETA Group identified additional stakeholders including Niantic Main Street, Costco, Stop & Shop, Niantic Bay Bicycles, emergency managers (Chief of Police), and first responders. The Town of East Lyme suggested that representatives from Niantic Main Street would be able to identify additional businesses that should be contacted. The Town also indicated that BETA three senior housing complexes should be added to the stakeholder list: Chapman Woods, Chapman Farms, and the senior housing complex across from Midway Mall.
- The Town identified the IT Room at the high school as the best background for a virtual public meeting room. Chris Lund can provide BETA with access.
- The Advisory Committee provided suggestions for distributing information The Day, CT Examiner's online paper, the Town's quarterly event magazine, East Lyme Public School's newsletter for parents, the Town website (coordinate through Mr. Seery), the Town Facebook page (coordinate through Mr. Finkelstein), the bulletin board at the senior center/community center, and the digital sign at the high school

### V. Planned Projects

- BETA Group identified several recent or ongoing projects and studies on the corridor, including:
  - I-95 Interchange 74 Improvements at Route 161 & Replacement of Bridge No. 00250
  - I-95 Planning and Environmental Linkage study

- SCCOG’s Congestion Management Plan, Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, and Regional Safety Plan
- Gary Sojka from CTDOT will forward additional information on the I-95 Planning and Environmental Linkage study once the project website is up and running.
- The Town of East Lyme indicated that there are currently no additional known projects or developments taking place within the corridor.

VI. Open Discussion/Questions

- The Town inquired as to whether additional roadway outside of the corridor, such as Route 1, will be studied. Gary Sojka indicated that portions of Route 1 including the Exit 74 interchange will be studied as part of the I-95 Planning and Environmental Linkage study.
- Mr. Sojka indicated that CTDOT providing future traffic volume forecasts is preferable and that projections would take into account planned interchange improvements.
- BETA Group indicated that traffic data collection is scheduled for late May to account for both seasonal and school traffic. CTDOT suggested collecting additional traffic counts at the Route 1/Route 161 and Route 1/Route 156 intersections in July for comparison.
- The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 PM.