



**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: Thursday March 23, 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 Conceptual Public Scoping Meeting

**Attendees:**

<b>Public Members:</b>	
Please see Attachment A.	
<b>Project Team</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Michael Calabrese	Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Nilesh Patel	CTDOT
Jonathan Dean	CTDOT
Joe Belrose	CTDOT
<b>Consultant Team</b>	
Jacob Argiro	HNTB
David Schweitzer	HNTB
Rudy Franciamore	HNTB
Anna Mariotti	HNTB
Christopher Fagan	HNTB
David Giel	HNTB
Jacqueline Six	HNTB
Cole Ernst	HNTB

**1. Meeting Format and Attendance**

The Conceptual Public information/CEPA Scoping Meeting took place in person. One meeting time was offered, occurring at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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.

At 6:00 p.m., there was a 30-minute open-house period where attendees were able to view boards 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.

Please see Attachment A for a list of meeting attendees.

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

- A. The Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) Overview.**
  - a. What is CEPA? Why is the CEPA process occurring?
  - b. What is Scoping under CEPA? What is the public scoping process?
- B. The New Mix: Overview and Breakout Projects.**
  - a. An overview of the New Mix project and the progress so far.
  - b. 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. Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 Eastbound (EB) in Waterbury: Project Need.**
  - a. An overview of the terminology that needs to be understood when discussing this project.
  - b. An overview of the current issues within the project area that illustrate the Need for the project.
  - c. A summary of the Need for the project
- D. Solutions: Project Purpose and Components.**
  - a. An overview of the purpose of the project, and what will be improved by conducting this project.
  - b. An overview of the solution that was identified by the project team to address the purpose and need for the project. The solution is to close Exit 21 EB Off Ramp and lengthen the auxiliary (weave) lane.
  - c. An overview of the improvements that would occur as a result of the project's identified alternative.
    - a. Traffic Improvements
    - b. Urban Design Opportunities
    - c. Bike and Pedestrian Improvements
- E. Project Benefits.**
  - a. An overview of the expected project benefits that include increased safety and a decrease in crashes in the vicinity of Exit 22, improved traffic operations, improved air quality, streetscape and urban design opportunities, improved bike and pedestrian safety and facilities, and improved travel time to key destinations.
  - b. A more detailed overview of the improvements in the travel times to keys destinations based on the route alternatives.
- F. Project Cost and Timeline.**

- a. An overview of the project timeline, including stakeholder outreach, preliminary design, public outreach, design completion, and construction.
- b. A high-level overview of the costs associated with the project.

**G. Next Steps and How to Stay Involved.**

- a. The attendees were reminded of the 30-day CEPA scoping period that ends on the close of business on April 10, 2023 and were informed of the various ways that they can provide comments and stay informed about the project.
- b. Methods of staying involved with the project: online at [newmixwaterbury.com](https://www.newmixwaterbury.com), emailing [TheNewMixWaterbury@gmail.com](mailto:TheNewMixWaterbury@gmail.com), by phone at 203-805-8018, or by US postal service to 2800 Berlin Turnpike, PO Box 317546, Newington, CT 06131-7546.
- c. An overview of the next steps for the project including a preview of the next public meeting anticipated for June/July 2023.

**A. 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/>

*Q: James Petkin:* I love this project; I think it should move forward. I live in Town Plot where the Highland Avenue on-ramp has been closed. In terms of road improvements, what are they going to include, what sorts of aspects are going to be input into the new layout of the local road network?

*A:* Thank you for that question, one thing that we are here for tonight is to understand what the community wants to see. We are expecting to construct pedestrian and bicycle improvements and not just improvements for vehicles. We will be adding standard sized sidewalks, and ADA compliant intersections in addition to new traffic signals. The local roadway network is very constrained in this area, so where possible we would look to add bicycle facilities. We are also looking at street furniture and plantings. Again, we are at such a conceptual level of design with almost a blank slate and we want to understand what the community wants to see.

*Q: Eric Bader:* Thank you for the opportunity to join in this process, I appreciate the motivations that are going into this project and the importance of safety. As someone who has driven the area hundreds of times in my life, I don't really understand the timing shown in getting to key destinations. Also, it will force a lot of traffic through downtown and Grand Street where we have already experienced traffic trouble in the past.

*A:* The important thing to note here is the amount of time that is spent on Interstate 84. In the year 2031, the models show that the traffic will fail at this point.

Q: *Eric Bader*: One other comment, this ramp is used by a lot of folks coming up Route 8 north to get onto I-84 and using this exit to immediately get off. This is the best way to get to this part of town from Route 8 without having to drive through the local roads, so if you close it you will need to get off one exit earlier from Route 8.

A: Correct, however the congestion won't only be on I-84 eastbound, the analysis shows that traffic congestion will occur on the system ramp from Route 8 northbound as well because of the conflict points. This means people taking the exit from Route 8 northbound to I-84 eastbound will be sitting in traffic and will have longer travel times due to the conflict points and resulting traffic backup. Again, we are looking at the year 2031, and we are looking at other traffic signal improvements as well as the improvement to the highway eliminating these conflict points to get less traffic congestion.

Q: *Eric Bader*: Without access to the modeling systems you have I can't comment on that, but I just wanted to give you my practical experience driving these roads every day.

A: Understood, thank you.

Q: *James Petkin*: I would like to continue off of what he was saying. My personal experience going from Route 8 to Exit 21 is that there are a lot of problems with the weave area that was described, and I personally don't think there is a big problem with removing Exit 21 as Exit 22 would be able to suffice. It has been closed for three years and hasn't been a huge problem. Continuing on from earlier, will there be elements (such as red-light cameras) in place to ensure safety at the improved intersections, especially for bicycles and pedestrians?

A: At this time red light cameras are not permitted by state law; however, the intersections are designed so that there is a lag time between the red light and when the other light turns green, which is a safety feature.

Q: *Stephanie Harris*: Hi, I am with the Mattatuck Museum, a cultural institution in Downtown Waterbury. Currently a lot of our visitors coming from that direction are taking Exit 21 and my question is during that two-year construction period, do you have any anticipation on what the effect may be on traffic and congestion when you are working through the construction process.

A: Great question. We always come up with a plan to handle traffic and keep it flowing freely and smoothly during construction. As you noted there will be some work going on with Exit 22 as a part of this project, this may be occurring at nighttime, however we do not know that yet. We will always try to keep traffic flowing during peak hours.

Q: *Jim Gilland*: My concern is the 2:51 time you described will more likely be double that, especially if you hit all of the red lights on the cross streets. If you remove the Our Lady of Lourdes church to put the exit for I-84 westbound, then there will need to be another light there as well, so it is hard for me to trust that time. My main concern is the lane closures [referring to the Mixmaster Rehabilitation Project]. I have been having trouble since September taking the interchange from Route 8 south the I-84 east. I have to drive to work at 5:00 a.m. and my exit (Exit 31 southbound) has been closed, so I want to know how much longer I am going to have to deal with this as it adds 20 minutes to my commute driving through the local road network. If this were to occur again during the construction of this

project, I would need to sell my house and move. Additionally, police will sometimes block the traffic getting on to the exit. So, my main concerns are the lane and exit closures.

A: Thank you. We are only looking at removing Exit 21 eastbound right now, not westbound. Our Lady of Lourdes is not going to be impacted by this. In terms of the lane closures you described, I know the Mixmaster Rehabilitation Project, which is separate from the project we are talking about today, is scheduled to be completed this year. After the completion of the Mixmaster Rehabilitation Project, we hopefully will not have to do any additional construction on the mainline until the reconstruction.

Q: *Meeting Attendee:* Good evening. I am curious if any improvements have been made to Exit 21 in the last two years?

A: I do not believe so, no. Just to note that the Exit 21 bridge was scheduled for rehabilitation to extend its service life, however that has been put on hold while this project [removal of the Exit 21 Off-Ramp on I-84 EB] is in development.

Q: *Meeting Attendee:* Thank you, this is a project that should be done.

A: Thank you.

Q: *James Petkin:* I'm not sure if this is something that has been talked about, but will the ramp [structure] be removed? Are there any developable opportunities available once the ramp is removed? I also noticed Exit 22 will be expanded to have two lanes, is this really necessary?

A: Yes, the ramp is planned on being removed. We are currently looking at opportunities can be done with this area [the land that the ramp currently occupies] in the future. Having an additional lane on Exit 22 would help the traffic flow on the mainline and the additional traffic that would be using that ramp and would also allow ample space for cars to queue at the signal at the end of the ramp.

Q: *Jim Gilland:* I got off Exit 22 today, and I do not believe that it is currently wide enough to support two lanes, so I am not sure if you are planning on widening it or just restriping it. Additionally, from what I have heard you will be reopening the Highland Avenue ramp as well, is that correct?

A: Thank you. The Exit 22 off-ramp is currently wide enough to support two lanes. The shoulders will be narrow, but it will be wide enough to support two lanes. The Highland Ave on ramp is going to be reopened, potentially this spring.

Q: *James Petkin:* Are there any plans in the future for the Highland Ave on-ramp to be removed or will that stay for good?

A: I will use this opportunity to plug the New Mix Study which looks at the long-term future of the interchange as a whole. The goal overall is to simplify the on and off ramps entering and exiting the highway, there are a lot of different alternatives being considered and many ramp configurations we are looking at. Again, the goal is to simplify and remove some of the ramps coming on and off of the highway.

Q: *Meeting Attendee:* Can you tell me at this point will the mainline 84 entrance and exit ramps receive improved lighting? Currently it is very dark. Will the completed project have improved lighting throughout?



A: Yes, improved lighting is part of the Mixmaster Rehabilitation Project that is currently ongoing. New LED luminaires will be installed.

Q: *Meeting Attendee:* Will there be improved lighting for Exit 22 as well? Since there we be more traffic exiting that ramp it will need good lighting.

A: Yes, that will be a part of the project in later stages to look into lighting on Exit 22.

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). He added that to be documented under the CEPA scoping period, comments must be received by the close of business on April 10<sup>th</sup>, however the Project Team will still accept comments regarding the Project after that date.

**Meeting was adjourned at 7:24 P.M.**



**Attachment A**

**Meeting Attendees, Removal of Exit 21 Off-Ramp on Interstate 84 Eastbound in Waterbury  
Project Conceptual Public Information/ (CEPA) Scoping Meeting, March 23, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.**

<b>Meeting Attendees</b>
Ben Cadwell
KaLyn McCullough
Cheryl Couture
Janet Phillips
Tamara Mattei
Deborah Cronin
Lex Nesta
James Petkin
Paul Kondash
Laraine Mills
Mary C. Griffin
Gary Grewal
Roy Cavanaugh, City of Waterbury
David Simpson, City of Waterbury
Brian P. Peterson
Marla Curley
Edward Irizarry
Michael Stere
Stephanie Harris
Jim Galland
Ty Fernandes Wrenn
Belinda D. Weaver
Eric Bader