



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

MEETING MINUTES

Project No.: 151-331
Project Name: Reconstruction of Interstate 84/CT Route 8 Interchange (the Project)
Date of Meeting: Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 12:00 PM and again at 6:00 PM
Location of Meeting: Virtual via Zoom
Subject of Meeting: New Mix Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study, Public Meeting No. 1

Attendees:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Public Members: | |
| Please see Attachment A. | |
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| Project Team | |
| Name | Organization |
| Michael Calabrese | Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) |
| Nilesh Patel | CTDOT |
| Scott Roberts | CTDOT |
| Jonathan Dean | CTDOT |
| Joe Belrose | CTDOT |
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| Consultant Team | |
| Jacob Argiro | HNTB |
| David Schweitzer | HNTB |
| Christopher Fagan | HNTB |
| Naomi Hodges | HNTB |
| Anna Mariotti | HNTB |
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1. Meeting Format and Attendance

The first New Mix public meeting took place via Zoom. Two meeting times were offered, one at 12 noon and the other at 6 p.m. Please see Attachment A for lists of attendees.

Real-time translation, in Spanish and in Portuguese, were provided for both meetings.

2. Presentation: Introduction to the New Mix Project’s Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

A. Public Involvement Overview

- a. New Mix Project’s approach to Public and Stakeholder Outreach
- b. Ways in which the public can learn more, ask questions, provide comments

B. Historical and Community Context

- a. Construction of the original Mixmaster Interchange
- b. Overview of various maintenance work conducted on the Mixmaster, including the Mixmaster Rehabilitation Project, which is currently in construction.

C. New Mix Project Overview

- a. Study Area and vision for the New Mix Project
- b. Timing and phasing of anticipated projects

D. Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) PEL Study Progress

- a. Overview of the PEL process and study documents

E. Next Steps

- a. Public feedback due date for the information presented at meeting.
- b. Overview of PEL schedule and preview of upcoming public meetings.
- c. Reminder of various ways the public can stay informed, leave comments, and ask questions

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/>

A. Q&A for the 12:00 p.m., June 16, 2022, Public Meeting

Q: *Alderman Michael Salvio*: [In favor of] reducing the left hand exits and the number of on and off ramps.

A: Our goal is to eliminate as many left-hand ramps as we can and if they are to remain in the future they would be adequately spaced and in a better configuration than they are right now.

Q: *Lawrence DePillo*: Ten years ago, there was a proposal to unstack the route 84 interchange and instead lay the roadways side by side. The proposal was abandoned. Is this [the New Mix project] going to be a dusted off version of that plan? Laying down the interchange side by side would have taken approximately \$150 million of taxable properties off Waterbury's tax rolls. From a topographic situation, it makes more sense to have a stacked double deck than to have the structures unstacked.

That same study seemed to be more concerned with moving traffic through Waterbury, instead of also bringing traffic *into* the city. Will this study have the same approach?

In addition, most of the accidents on I-84 are do not occur on the Mixmaster, they occur in Middlebury or near the Southington/Cheshire line.

A: Yes, you summed up the challenges, we have the ridgeline challenges and a constrained corridor which is why the interchange was originally constructed in a stacked configuration.

All reconstruction options are still on the table, and we are looking at ways to mitigate all of these challenges. We encourage you to visit our website, which has a lot of information, including the Needs and Deficiencies Study, which contains the crash data we collected: NewMixWaterbury.com.

Access to and from Waterbury is very important to the design team and is something they are looking to enhance.

Q: *Adam Weber*: In reference to future traffic volumes: the 2020 Needs and Deficiencies report is showing a significant increase in the number of vehicles using the interchange in 2045. The Governor and CTDOT have set a goal to reduce vehicle miles traveled in the coming years.

A: Our projections come from a traffic model that looks at demographics, population growth, and commuting trips. Data will be updated as needed to make sure that it is timely. This is a long process and we will make sure that any developments are included in our data as we move forward.

Q: *Jason Chamis*: When will draft plans be available for public review?

A: The “Universe of Alternatives” will be posted on the New Mix website in time for the next public meeting. The Universe of Alternatives includes all options from rehabilitation to some conceptual realignments. We are at a very early stage in the study, so any plans will be conceptual nature. The plans will not be very detailed. We will show the Universe of Alternatives at future public meetings and there will be opportunities for public comment.

Q: *Jason Chamis*: When will the PEL Study be completed?

A: The PEL Study will be completed by mid-2023. We will then move into further study under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). There will be many opportunities for public comment. We are also taking project related emails at thenewmixwaterbury@gmail.com.

Q: *Richard Atchison*: Why can't we go back to original design where the highway stayed further south in the middle of Middlebury before Exit 17 and ended up around Exit 24. You could have a straight through route and have a business exit as they do down south.

A: We may consider that – there are challenges to constructing new highways. We are looking at all options right now.

At this point in the meeting, there were no further questions or comments from meeting participants. Jonathan Dean, Connecticut Department of Transportation Project Manager, stated that if something comes to mind after the meeting, individuals can always submit



comments and/or questions on the New Mix website at NewMixWaterbury.com. In addition, individuals can sign up for project related information on both the website and at thenewmixwaterbury@gmail.com.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

B. Q&A for the 6:00 p.m., June 16, 2022, Public Meeting

Q: *Lex Nesta*: A previous study concept for the Mixmaster included construction of new ramps to I-84 opposite Oronoke Road which would have impacted properties in the Country Club and Town Plot neighborhoods. Will the study team consider leaving this area alone in new designs?

A: Right now, we are in a very early study phase. We are looking at potential improvements as far west as exits 17 and 18 and as far east as Hamilton Avenue. These areas are in our study limits. Right now, everything is on the table and as we move forward, concepts will be whittled down. At this early stage we don't have a solid answer to that. We will have concept plans to share with the public in the late summer or early fall, and we will be accepting public input throughout the study.

Q: *Mary Vitkauskas*: Once a week, I experience problems on the Mixmaster due to the repairs. When going to the Riverside Street exit from Route 8 South, there is no signage. Drivers have to get on 84 West or Route 8 North and then circle around to access 84 East. Route 8 South to North is very dark and also missing, signage.

Since the repairs, water pours down from the Route 8 North overpass, making it hard to see when driving underneath it.

An overpass for I84 that carries traffic between Hartford and Danbury would reduce traffic on the Mixmaster.

Another thing that should be corrected: getting onto East 84 from Chase Parkway and getting onto Route 8 South is dangerous, nobody lets you in. We should start with tolls to take care of the project.

A: We will pass along your comments to the Mixmaster Rehabilitation project team. As we look to the future of the Mixmaster, we want to simplify traffic movements, reduce closely spaced ramps and left exits and entrances. We will be balancing the needs of drivers getting on and off the highway and also mobility through the city, allowing people to get in and out of the city easily.

Q: *Thomas Wamser*: What do you envision in the final layout for the speed limit?

A: We will look to design to more modern standards. We are not yet entirely sure what speed limit we will be able to get to. We will try to eliminate some of the interchange's sharp curves and design to modern standards.



Q: *Pat Wright:* We see so much on the news about wrong-way drivers. I hope the entrance ramps will have a way to deter folks from entering the highway in the wrong direction.

A: There are initiatives that are being studied to keep people from getting on the highway in the wrong direction. This is something we will be looking at.

At this point in the meeting, there were no further questions or comments from meeting participants. Jonathan Dean, Connecticut Department of Transportation 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. In addition, individuals can sign up for project related information on both the website and at thenewmixwaterbury@gmail.com.

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



Attachment A: Public Attendees, New Mix Public Meeting No. 1

| New Mix Public Meeting No.1, 12 p.m. |
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| Joanne Marquis |
| Michael Salvio |
| John DiFederico Jr |
| Diane Betkoski |
| Nancy Barbato |
| Paul Kondash |
| Paul Iadarola |
| Frederick Luedke |
| Stephanie Valickis |
| William Cekovsky |
| Adam Weber |
| Lawrence DePillo |
| Peter Delaney |
| Julia Rogers |
| Katrina Scalise: Republican-American |
| Amanda Savio |
| Richard Atchison |
| Jason Chamis |
| John Gemetro |
| Nancy Cebik |

| New Mix Public Meeting No.1, 6 p.m. |
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| Michael Ference |
| Mary Vitkauskas |
| Thomas Wamser |
| Lindsay Larson |
| David Simpson |
| Brian Peterson |
| Pat Wright |
| Louise Bacc |
| Ken Stanco |
| Lex Nesta |
| Suzanne McDonald |
| Katrina Scalise |
| Albert Bacchicchi |