

**Interstate 89 Exit 17 Scoping Study  
Public Meeting #1 (Local Concerns Meeting) Notes**

DATE: Tuesday, September 10, 2013  
TIME: 6:30 PM  
PLACE: Presentation before the Colchester Selectboard, Colchester Meeting House,  
830 Main Street, Colchester  
PRESENT: Please see end of document

The Selectboard Chair, Nadine Scibek, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and opened the public hearing for the Exit 17 Scoping Study. Bryan Osborne, the Colchester Public Works Director, explained that this meeting is to gather local concerns about the project. The Exit 17 Study is part of the final round of CIRC Alternatives planning projects.

Steve Rolle of Parsons Brinckerhoff made a presentation about the existing conditions of the study area, including the interchange and Routes 2/7. The presentation will be available at: <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/exit17>.

Steve explained that the study purpose is to advance the development and evaluation of improvements to the Exit 17 interchange and the US 2/US 7 intersection to: reduce congestion and improve traffic flow; accommodate future travel demands for all modes; and improve safety. Steve described the study process, including a second meeting to discuss alternatives on October 22, 2013 at 6:30PM with the Colchester Selectboard. He described the existing highway network and cited the following congestion issues:

- Heavy southbound US 7 to southbound Interstate 89 traffic pattern during AM
- Significant PM Peak queuing on Interstate 89 northbound off-ramp
- Southbound through and northbound left turn movements compete for green time at US 2/US 7 intersection
- Eastbound left turns onto northbound Interstate 89 on-ramp block through movements on US 2

In addition to congestion issues, the study area includes the following safety issues:

- High Crash Location on US 2 at the I-89 northbound on/off ramp intersection
- Queuing on northbound on-ramp backing up onto Interstate 89
- Weaving movement on westbound US 2
- High speed limits (50 mph)
- No pedestrian or bike accommodations

Steve noted that the alternatives development process is just beginning, but identified some possible options that will be considered to improve travel in this area; these will be analyzed in more depth for the October 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. In the near-term, the following will be considered (along with other potential strategies): intersection widening/reconfiguration; traffic signal modifications; and modifications to the northbound off-ramp connection to US 2. In the long-term, the following will be considered: additional lanes on US 2 (replace overpass); roundabouts or signalized intersections; modify northbound ramp connection; new northbound off-ramp south of US 2 (for trips to US 7); and intersection widening/reconfiguration at US 2/US 7.

The floor was opened to Questions and Comments.

Marc Landry asked if the “third quadrant” (south of US 2, east of I-89) could be used to help traffic flow. Steve answered in the affirmative, that the possibility of a northbound ramp in that location will be considered. Marc is concerned about the growth projections in the study area. He wants to be sure that the new improvements perform well if there is more significant growth in the area and region. Further, Marc noted that there are significant parcels in the study area at the intersection of Routes 2 and 7 that are slated for future development. The access to these parcels will likely add significant congestion to the intersection. Marc would also like to incorporate utility infrastructure in this corridor with whatever improvements are made.

Q: Level of Service “F” is due to left-turns going north on Route 7. You could cut an exit in the lower left quadrant. A: Yes, the possibility of a northbound ramp in that location will be considered.

Q: What are the immediate plans for improvements? A: There are no immediate plans. We are in the study phase and all ideas are on the table. We’ll talk more about alternatives at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Q: It strikes me that these intersections are a lot like the intersection of Dorset Street and Williston Road. There may be something to learn from the work that they’ve done there.

Tom Mulcahy asked if the Exit 17 study is linked to the Clay Point intersection work. A: Mike LaCroix from VTrans answered in the negative.

Q: Do you have the convenience stores in your model? A: We will account for access to the stores in the alternatives.

Q: When was the last traffic study? Did it take place when school was in session? A: The traffic counts are current. Q: Can you improve the sight distance from the Interstate to the Exit 17 ramp to help drivers choose whether to exit at 17 or 18?

Q: When traveling north on Route 7 in the AM, the right turn lane is impacted by vehicles going south. Could there be a “No Right on Red” signal?

Q: This area should be patrolled and policed heavily due to vehicles running lights and making illegal U-turns.

Q: You should include Exit 17A in Milton in your analysis because it could solve the Exit 17 problems relatively inexpensively. The Catamount Industrial Park, when built out, justifies the need for Exit 17A. A: Michele Boomhower of the CCRPC explained that Exit 17A will be part of the Route 7 Corridor Study that will be underway early next year. It cannot be part of this study due to restricted funding streams and a tight timeframe. Marc Landry further explained that Colchester worked hard to get Exit 17 included in the CIRC Alternatives process; the Task Force will not allow projects further north. CIRC Alternatives funds are paying for this study.

Q: You should consider a double crossover diamond for this interchange.

Nadine Scibek asked about the CIRC Alternatives funding. A: Michele Boomhower responded that the recommendations of the Exit 17 study will compete against twelve other projects at the Task Force level. These meetings will take place in late October/early November. The Task Force will make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for funding. The level of project funding has not been determined.

Q: What about the Routes 2/2A/7 intersection (at the Spanked Puppy Pub)? A: VTrans is securing the right-of-way now and construction is slated for 2015. This is not part of the CIRC Alternatives funding.

Michele Boomhower noted that another CIRC Alternatives project of interest is the Colchester-Essex Network Transportation Study (CENTS) that includes Route 2A(Colchester Village), intersection of Mill Pond Road and Severance Road, and Kellogg/Susie Wilson/Route 15. More information is available at: [www.ccrpcvt.org/cents](http://www.ccrpcvt.org/cents).

The public hearing was closed at 7:23PM.

### **Participants**

**Colchester Selectboard:** Herb Downing, Mac Landry, Tom Mulcahy, Nadine Scibek (Chair)

**Members of the Public:** Katelin Brewer-Colie; Rick & Judy Grupp; Jim Ricker; Bill Dailey; Jeff Rubman; Jeremy Berger; Dennis Goyette; Mark Huff

**Study Team:** Meredith Birkett (CCTA); Roger Hunt (Milton DPW); Mike LaCroix (VTrans); Bryan Osborne (Colchester DPW)

**CCRPC Staff:** Michele Boomhower, Jason Charest

**Consultant Team:** Steve Rolle, Parsons Brinckerhoff; Diane Meyerhoff, Third Sector Associates