

Route 195 Corridor Study Newsletter



*Merrow Road
Tolland, Connecticut*

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2008

We'd Like Your Input....

On behalf of the Town of Tolland and the Capitol Region Council of Governments, we'd like to invite you to attend a public informational meeting on **Wednesday, March 5, 2008 at 6:00 PM at the Fire Training Center** to discuss the Merrow Road (Route 195) corridor. We'll specifically be discussing existing corridor conditions related to vehicular circulation, pedestrian and bicycle travel, and land use as it relates to traffic in addition to developing a corridor vision.

The project corridor consists of 2.7 miles extending from Route 74 within the historic town green southerly through the interchange/commercial area to the intersection of Route 195 with Anthony Road and Baxter Street. Together with a Local Advisory Committee, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT), and our technical consultants (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.), we have analyzed existing conditions and began to evaluate future traffic and conceptual improvements to the existing system.

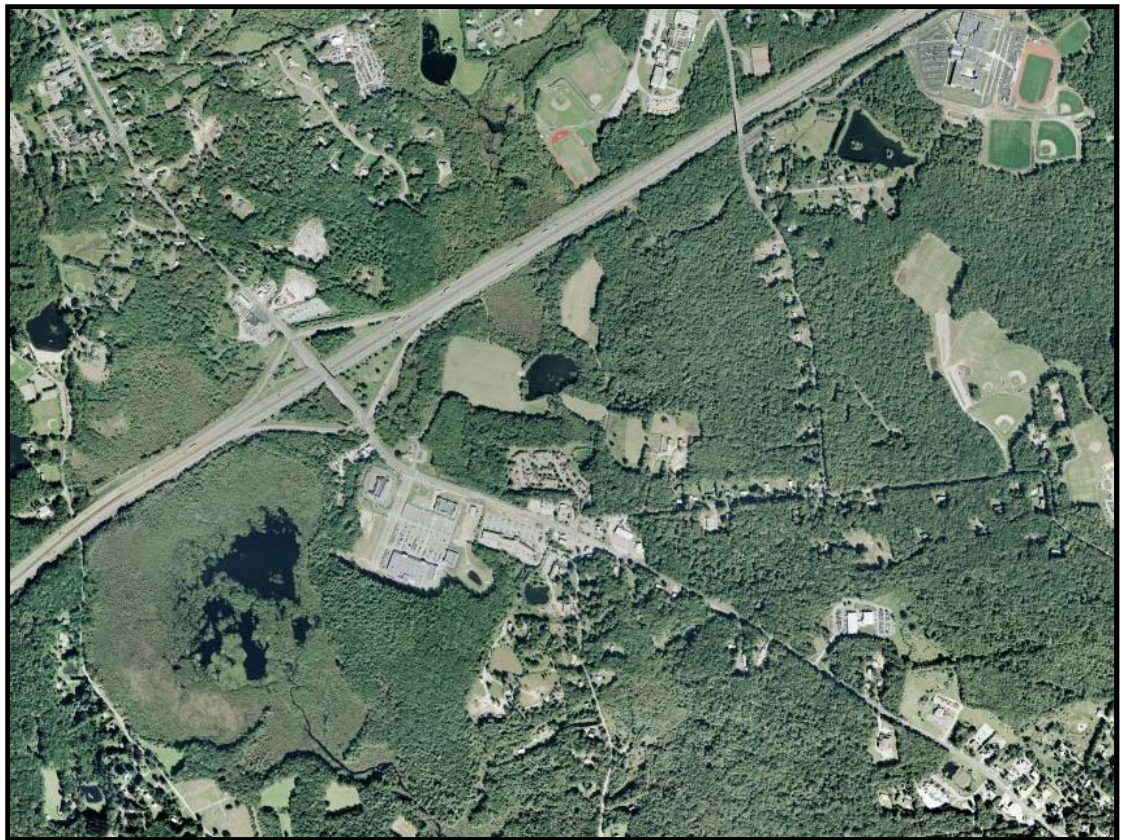
This newsletter gives you the opportunity to review the work completed to date, learn about transportation critical areas as we look into the future, and ensure that issues that are important to you have been identified. Your input is critical to the development of a plan that can be advanced toward implementation. We'd like your ideas and your comments on our findings. Two more public informational meetings will be held before we finish this study but we'd like your involvement from the beginning.

We look forward to seeing you soon. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please visit us on-line or feel free to comment by mail, phone or email. Contact information is listed on the back page of this newsletter.

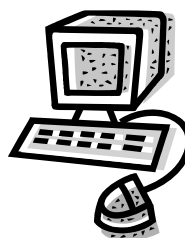
Sincerely,

Steve R. Werbner
Town Manager
Town of Tolland

Lyle D. Wray
Executive Director
CRCOG



Visit us
on-line at
www.crocog.org
and click on
Route 195



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Corridor Study Defined

Question: What is a Corridor Study?

Answer: A multi-modal planning process to prepare a master plan for a transportation corridor. The study will evaluate the roadway (geometrics and operations) as well as land use, transit, pedestrians and bicyclists under both existing and future conditions.

Question: Why prepare a Corridor Study?

Answer: For all the same reasons you prepare a Plan of Conservation and Development – to promote orderly growth, efficient use of public infrastructure and assure there is adequate infrastructure to accommodate growth. The study will also provide guidelines for roadway improvements to which all parties (Town, State, developers, and property owners) can refer.

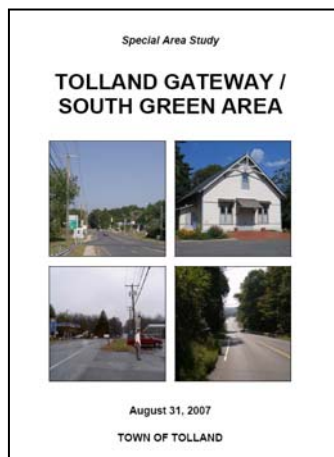
Question: Will the study be sensitive to community vision?

Answer: Yes. Traditionally, corridor studies were facilities plans that identified needed transportation improvements to ensure roadways could handle current and future traffic safely and efficiently. Over the past few years corridor studies have taken on more of a context sensitive direction, recognizing that transportation facilities are one piece of the larger community fabric, needing to fit into the communities they pass through. This specific study will include more urban design treatments and landscape architectural treatments. We aren't necessarily going back to the days of the horse and buggy, but we're looking for a vision that incorporates your community goals.



South Green Project

The Town of Tolland, with assistance from Planimetrics Consultants and the University of Connecticut's Landscape Architecture Program, has been working with residents and businesses since the Fall of 2006 to evaluate and define the best land uses and development patterns for the Tolland Gateway / South Green area.



The Planning and Zoning Commission has endorsed the findings from the visioning process and will be using the study as a planning policy guide for development of regulations to implement the vision. For further information on this study, please visit the Town's website at <http://www.tolland.org>

State Project 142-146

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is in the process of designing improvements along Route 195 between the existing Interstate 84 eastbound off-ramp and the intersection of Route 195 with Goose Lane / Rhodes Road. In general, the design will provide for two lanes from I-84 towards the University of Connecticut and one lane from the Goose Lane / Rhodes Road intersection towards I-84. Amenities such as a planted island and a multi-use trail are also expected.

ConnDOT has been working with Tolland officials and residents to advance design plans. A public informational meeting was held in May 2007 and design plans are expected to be completed in the Spring 2009. Construction will likely begin in the fall of 2009 and is expected to take 18-months. Plans are available for your review at the Town Hall.



Existing Conditions

The ability to implement appropriate corridor improvements depends on correctly understanding the existing challenges and opportunities throughout the study area. To uncover these challenges and opportunities the project team collected a significant amount of transportation and land use data and spent time observing operations within the corridor. In addition to this, the project team has and will continue to meet with local officials and town staff to guide the study and we will also be looking for input from residents and business owners.

The study corridor is diverse, traversing through three land use zones, each with their own unique character. The three zones (Village Center Zone, Gateway Design District and Neighborhood Commercial Zone) are discussed a little later in this newsletter. The corridor offers historic landmarks and places to congregate, commercial services, as well as employment and residential options.

Manual turning movement counts as well as daily traffic counts were taken at locations within the corridor during the summer and fall of 2007. The study team also reviewed traffic accident data, commuter lot occupancy information, vehicular speed data, and corridor travel time runs; and inventoried pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and environmental features such as wetland and watercourses.

Primary issues that we'll be looking to address as the study advances include:

- Confusing geometry at Route 195 / Route 74 intersection
- Creating / defining gateways to the village center that preserve the history and enhance safety for all users
- Lack of pedestrian connections between Town Green and Gateway Design District
- Offset intersection of Route 195 / Goose Lane / Rhodes Road
- Accommodating potential major traffic generators within the corridor and minimizing impacts to area roadways
- Curb cut management throughout the corridor
- Unsignalized intersection of Anthony Road and Baxter Street

Village Center

The Village Center Zone is the historic core of the Town of Tolland providing a mix of historic, religious, civic and residential buildings. Average daily traffic along Route 195 in this area is 9,600 vehicles per day. The 85th percentile speed¹ is 37 miles per hour (mph.) During the evening peak hours, between 4 and 6 PM, the northbound Route 195 approach to Route 74 backs up resulting in long vehicle queues and delays. Motorist delays are also realized during the morning peak hour, between 7 and 9 AM, at the intersection of Route 195 with Old Post Road. Pedestrian amenities such as period lighting, bluestone sidewalks and marked crosswalks are generally good within this zone, bolstering a village atmosphere.



Gateway Design District

The Gateway Design District is intended to manage the retail and service growth naturally stemming from the Interstate 84 interchange. Average daily traffic volumes within this area vary between 13,000 vehicles per day north of Interstate 84 to 22,000 vehicles per day south of Interstate 84. The 85th percentile speed is 42 mph. Vehicular delays are realized during the evening peak hour at the intersection of Route 195 and Fieldstone Commons. Accident information reveals potential issues with the existing offset intersections of Rhodes Road and Goose Lane, as well as with the location of existing driveways near the signalized intersection. Additional delays are also experienced within this area as a result of University of Connecticut (UCONN) sponsored events occurring at the Storrs campus. Pedestrian facilities are relatively limited in this zone.



Neighborhood / Commercial Zone

This area extends from Rhodes Road / Goose Lane to Anthony Road / Baxter Street, and consists of smaller-scale developments that provide a transition to the residential areas south of the study area. Average daily traffic volumes within this area are about 18,000 vehicles per day. The 85th percentile speed is 47 mph which is higher than the posted speed limit of 40 mph. Existing conditions reveal that motorists exiting Baxter Street and Anthony Road experience long delays during both the morning and evening peak hours. There are no pedestrian facilities within this zone.



¹ The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of the traffic travels at or below.

*The Town of Tolland and the Capitol Region Council of Governments
Invite you to an Open House on*

*Traffic Circulation, Safety and Development
Along Merrow Road (Route 195)*



Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Location: Fire Training Center
191 Merrow Road (Route 195)

Time: 6:00 to 7:30 PM, Presentation at 6:30PM

The Town of Tolland has partnered with the Capitol Region Council of Governments to undertake a study of the Route 195 corridor. The multi-modal study will aim at reducing delays and congestion, improving safety and providing for orderly growth and development.

*Please join us to discuss existing conditions and
develop a vision for the corridor!!*

*For more information contact Jennifer Carrier, CRCOG 860 522-2217x12
Information related to the study can be found by visiting www.crcog.org*

Prepared in cooperation with Town of Tolland, the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the respective Municipal Advisory Committee that served on the project and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Connecticut Department of Transportation and / or the U.S. Department of Transportation. For more information contact CRCOG at (860) 522-2217, x12 or go to CRCOG's website at www.crcog.org

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