

**INITIAL - CORRIDOR PLAN
I-91 TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT AREA**

**Adopted by the I-91 TIA Board
November 8, 2001**

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I-91 TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT AREA (TIA)**

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Plan Purpose

House Bill No. 7506/Public Act 01-5 establishes the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) and five multi-regional Transportation Investment Area (TIA) boards for the purpose of preparing a State Transportation Strategy. Section 3(d) of the Bill requires each TIA to prepare an Initial Corridor Plan for submission to the TSB on, or before, November 15, 2001. Section 4(a) of the Bill requires that the TSB submit its State Transportation Strategy to the General Assembly “not later than January 15, 2002.” Finally, Section 4(h) of the bill states that in order to prepare the State Transportation Strategy, the TSB “shall review the corridor plan prepared by each TIA ... and may incorporate all or parts of such plans in the strategy.”

Plan Development

This Interim Plan is a product of the combined knowledge, experience, and understanding of the fifteen member I-91 Transportation Investment Area Board. It is based on information provided to the Board by members of the public, by special interest groups, and by the Area’s adopted Regional Plans, which contain extensive geographic, demographic, social and economic information about the TIA, as well as information about the TIA’s transportation challenges, strategies, objectives, and projects.

The TIA adopted the following four policy principals governing plan development:

- 1) The TIA Board has not considered the costs of any particular projects during its deliberations. It is understood that the new process created under House Bill No. 7506/Public Act 01-5 is meant to identify critical transportation initiatives for the State regardless of cost. The Board recognizes that cost will be an issue for the TSB and the state, and believes that new sources of dedicated revenue to fund transportation will need to be found.
- 2) Metropolitan area transportation issues are often regional in scope. However, regions in the State of Connecticut have no ability or authority to raise funds dedicated to transportation projects. The TIA Board supports state legislation, which would allow municipalities to raise funds for regional transportation projects.
- 3) Good public policy should be supported by good research and information. The Transportation Strategy Board should allocate resources to ensure policy decisions are appropriately supported by research. The TIA Board particularly supports the development of a methodology for doing cost/benefit analyses of alternative modes of transportation; for example, analyses comparing the costs and benefits of passenger rail and bus service as opposed to highway expansions, and similar analyses related to freight movement.

- 4) The TIA Board also wishes to make clear their intent that projects currently in the STIP that are already slated to be implemented should go forward. Current projects should not be de-funded in order to fund priorities identified by the TIA and the TSB.

Area Profile

Excerpted from “The Connecticut Strategic Economic Framework,” (“GALLIS REPORT”)

The I-91 “corridor is an important transportation and logistics corridor. This corridor, with an interstate freeway, rail line, seaport and airport, forms a logistics sub-structure within New England. Bradley occupies a strategic site in the center of the I-91/Connecticut River Valley corridor midway between I-90 and I-84, and forms the anchor point for logistics functions. Utilizing the combination of transportation and logistics resources found in this corridor to create a foundation for various economic activities can have long-term benefits to the state and the region.” (p. 13).

“The I-91/Connecticut River Valley Corridor is important to the future of the state. The state has never had a ‘Silicon Valley,’ or ‘Route 128,’ as a focus for its technology sector. The I-91 corridor could provide this type of location. Commercialization of research is one of the most promising initiatives that can impact the state’s economy. The future of Connecticut will be strongly influenced by the utilization of educational, medical, and research resources found in the I-91/Connecticut River Valley. However, the I-91 corridor appears isolated and difficult to access from global and continental markets. A fundamental issue is how to get these resources to world markets and how to get world markets to these resources.” (p. 16)

The I-91 corridor has an “opportunity to develop as a significant transportation and logistics corridor, linking port, road, rail and air facilities into a network that can provide world class support to manufacturing, research, information and finance-based industries.” (p. 19)

Challenges and Opportunities

In order to focus its evaluation of potential transportation system improvement strategies the TIA Board identified the following key TIA transportation challenges and opportunities:

1. Inadequate infrastructure for north/south commuter rail passenger service.
2. Inability of the existing primary road networks to adequately handle an increasing volume of traffic.
3. Traffic congestion on I-91, especially at intersections with I-95 in New Haven, and I-84 in Hartford.
4. Lack of a Statewide Airport Strategy to facilitate potentially significant growth in passenger traffic and economic activity.
5. Lack of supporting transit systems to distribute airport passengers to their destinations.
6. Lack of east/west rail corridors for through and local freight movement.

7. Inadequate and poorly integrated transit systems throughout the TIA.
8. Potential for continued deterioration of the Area's natural and cultural environments as increased transportation system needs are met.
9. Inadequate State and Area policy guidance to reduce the continued spread of suburban sprawl and urban decline.
10. Underutilization of the port facility in New Haven, which could spur economic activity and provide part of the solution to freight movement problems.
11. Insufficient resources for significant new investment in transportation infrastructure (capital and operating).

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

State Strategy

Section 4(b) of House Bill No. 7506/Public Act 01-5 requires that the State Transportation Strategy prepared by the TSB must:

1. Stimulate "sustainable economic growth."
2. Enhance "the quality of life for the residents of the state."
3. Develop and upgrade "analytical tools to demonstrate the link between transportation and the public benefits."
4. Facilitate "mobility of people and goods within the state and the TIAs, ... [by] (A) reducing traffic congestion, (B) enabling inter-corridor movement within the state, and (C) enabling access to employment opportunities and essential services."
5. Improve "connectivity in access to the regional, national, and global economies ... [by] improving access (i) to surrounding states, consisting of the . . . Interstate 91 corridor to Springfield, Massachusetts and southeastern Connecticut to Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island, and (ii) to the national and global economies ... and ... [by] expanding modal choices for passenger and freight ... [by] developing an airport system that stimulates growth ... linking the state to international rail grids ... developing water-borne alternatives, and ... assuring workable freight access to the ports of New York and New Jersey and the corridor related to the North American Free Trade Agreement."
6. Improve "safety and security ... [by] adequately maintaining infrastructure and equipment, and ... enforcing safe operations and use of the transportation systems by customers and operators."

TIA Vision, Goals, and Strategies

Enactment of Public Act 01-5 signals a new direction in transportation policy development for the State of Connecticut. The new law can cause a fundamental shift in the state's approach to Transportation – tying the expenditure of state transportation resources to land use and economic development policy. The TIA Board strongly supports this new direction and urges aggressive implementation of the initiative. Our vision for the I-91 corridor stresses the connectivity between transportation, economic development and land use policy and multi-modal solutions to such transportation related issues as congestion, over-reliance on trucks for freight movement, environmental degradation, and urban decay. We urge the use of commuter rail, bus, and rapid transit and the development of an airport strategy that serve all the state's population centers.

Area Vision

With these issues in mind, the I-91 corridor will have the following characteristics (not prioritized):

- Interstate 91 will be maintained as a limited access highway with additional lanes, where required for safety, in urbanized areas where traffic congestion warrants.
- Highway traffic incidents will be managed by a highway incident management system (IMS) to minimize traffic delays regardless of type of incident.
- Freight will pass seamlessly from the rail, highway and port facilities of New Haven throughout the corridor and through Springfield with minimal legal, political, and physical constraints.
- Rail passenger cars will be well-maintained and provided in adequate numbers to meet all demands with excess capacity and the State will be served by a single rail transit passenger service.
- Integrated rail, bus and rapid transit passenger services will be available throughout the corridor, including greater New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield.
- The area's airports will be intermodally linked for efficient freight and passenger transport. Air passenger and freight traffic will be managed in a coordinated system that is customer driven and marketed for economic development purposes. Direct international air service will be available.
- Port facilities will be adequate to meet all anticipated demands with excess capacity and will be operated in a coordinated manner.
- Through transportation investment, community character will be preserved, urban centers will be revitalized, and transit services will be afforded increased utilization.

Goals and Strategies (not prioritized)

- Restore, maintain and enhance the vitality, diversity and economic and cultural health of the corridor's urban areas.
- Encourage future development to allow the most efficient and environmentally sound use of resources.

- Adopt policies and provide facilities that allow freight and passengers to be moved by the most efficient and environmentally sound means possible.
- Publicly acquire and preserve existing physical assets to enable future port, rail and bus, passenger and freight infrastructure to be developed.
- Invest in transportation infrastructure, which strengthens linkages to the NAFTA Corridor and to the rest of the northeastern United States (e.g. Bradley International Airport, New Haven Sea Port, New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Intercity Rail, Hudson River rail crossing [passenger and freight]).
- Encourage the development of multi-modal transportation systems to facilitate movement of people and goods.
- Encourage employer-sponsored programs such as flextime, telecommuting, car/vanpooling, and compensation for transit use.
- Support incentives to increase automobile occupancy levels
- Encourage, through transportation investments, the preservation of community character, the revitalization of urban centers, and increased utilization of transit services.
- Promote the most efficient use of existing transportation facilities and infrastructure with an emphasis on integration, safety and connectivity of services.
- Initiate new approaches to the use and development of transit systems, such as bus rapid transit, with seamless intermodal links, which provide commuters with additional convenience and choice.
- Implement policies that will integrate transportation planning strategies with land use, economic, and environmental goals and objectives.
- Utilize technology to improve transportation and management.
- Provide feasible, competitive alternatives to automobile and truck use.
- Promote greater safety and courtesy among the driving public.

RECOMMENDED INITIATIVES/POLICIES AND PROJECTS

Initiatives/Policies and Projects Identified and Recommended by the I-91 TIA Board

Initiatives/Policies (prioritized)

1. Engagement of other New England states, the state of New York, federal agencies, and the eastern Canadian provinces in addressing many of our critical issues including commuter rail, feeder barge service and rail freight (e.g. additional Hudson River rail crossing.)
2. Integration of transportation and land use planning in setting transportation strategies and priorities for the State, including development of State policies to increase core city densities.
3. Exploration of the use of existing electronic toll collection systems that do not require the

use of toll booths. In addition, utilization of these systems to charge for, manage, selectively subsidize and collect statistics about all aspects of transportation including HOV lanes, capacity pricing, buses, trains, parking, ridesharing, van pools, etc. Monthly “passes” under this system would be able to cover almost any possible mix of resources from home to work with appropriate incentives or disincentives applied as required.

4. Development of a statewide airport strategy.

Projects (prioritized)

1. Purchase new equipment and expand commuter rail service to Hartford/Springfield to establish a seamless commuter rail network.
2. Integrate the resource management of all rail based facilities in the state, including AMTRAK, Metro-North, Shoreline East and the freight lines to optimize passenger and freight interchange between the systems while eliminating existing restrictive agreements and inefficiencies, and increasing the utilization of inter-modal opportunities. Purchase the Hartford Division from AMTRAK.
3. Improve transit services by implementing the recommendations of the Statewide Bus Study.
4. Establish the container barge service for the Port of New Haven including the purchase of two cranes as recommended by the Coastal Barge Feeder Study.
5. Provision of monetary incentives for cyclists and transit commuters in the form of state income tax credits and/or employer subsidies.
6. Provision of incentives for late night truck deliveries.

Projects Funded by the TSB Legislation, Fiscal Years 2001-2003 (prioritized)

In addition to the funding provided to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) in the State Budget, Section 16(a) of House Bill No. 7506/Public Act 01-5 appropriates \$50 million of the State’s budget surplus to ConnDOT for 21 listed transportation related improvements. The TIA supports completion of existing ConnDOT projects already in design, r-o-w acquisition, or construction. The TIA also supports completion of the following additional projects which are listed in Section 16(a), and which will impact this Area

1. A study of the infrastructure cost and operating characteristics of rail commuter services from New Haven to Springfield, including Bradley International Airport.
2. Continuing the efforts of the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency to support the Hartford to New Britain Bus Way.
3. Implementation of a demonstration project for a freight Feeder Barge Service in Long Island Sound between the port facilities of New York and New Jersey and Bridgeport Harbor in Bridgeport and New Haven Harbor in New Haven.
4. A design study for an Orange/West Haven rail station with parking for one thousand commuters.

Note: The I-91 TIA supports a design study of a rail station for Orange/West Haven. We believe a design study should be consistent with the goals of community development, reducing auto dependency, increasing intra-state ridership and reducing congestion. The study should also examine ways to improve access to all Metro North stations by foot, bike and feeder bus service with the goal of reducing parking demand.

5. The Jobs Access program, which provides reverse commute bus service route extensions and customized paratransit services for residents in the cities of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury.
6. Expansion of express bus service in the Hartford area.
7. Marketing an employer-sponsored pretax commuter benefit program to be known as the "Deduct-A-Ride" program.
8. A site selection study for the expansion of the New Haven Line rail maintenance facilities' capacity, and purchase of land for a new rail service maintenance facility.
9. Expansion of existing commuter parking lots statewide.

MEMBERS OF THE I-91 TIA BOARD

Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)

RPO Representative: Stephen T. Cassano, Mayor of Manchester
Alternate: Richard J. Porth, Executive Director, CRCOG
Public Representative: Norman Garrick, All Aboard!

Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA)

RPO Representative: Theodore C. Scheidel, First Selectman of Burlington
Alternate: Carl Stephani, Executive Director, CCRPA
Public Representative: Morgan Seelye, Retired Town Engineer

Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA)

RPO Representative: Linda Krause, Executive Director, CRERPA
Alternate: N/A
Public Representative: T. Gerald Dyar, Financial Consultant

Midstate Regional Planning Agency (MRPA)

RPO Representative: W. Lee Osborne, Secretary, MRPA
Alternate: N/A
Public Representative: Michael Doyle, Association of Commuter Rail Employees

South Central Region Council of Governments (SCRCOG)

RPO Representative: Judy Gott, Executive Director, SCRCOG
Alternate: William Dickinson, Mayor of Wallingford
Public Representative: Denis Pope, Association of Commuter Rail Employees

At-Large Members:

John J. Leone, President, Bristol Chamber of Commerce
Cornelius P. O'Leary, Associate Vice President,
Central Connecticut State University
Robert Santy, President, Regional Growth Partnership
John Shemo, Vice President, CT Capitol Region Growth Council
David Titus, Mattabeseck Audubon Society