



**PROJECT  
MEETING REPORT**

**Client:** Stonington and Groton, CT  
**Project Name:** Multi-Modal  
Transportation Study  
for the Mystic Seaport Area  
**Location:** Stonington, CT  
**Project Number:** 36938369  
**Issue Date:** 17 JUN 10

**MEETING DATE:** 9 JUN 10

**TIME:** 7 PM

**LOCATION:** Hoxie Fire House 34  
Broadway Avenue,  
Mystic, CT

**FROM:** Leslie Black, FHI

**SUBJECT:** Public Information Meeting #1 Summary

**ATTENDEES:** Advisory Committee Members and Public who signed in: 61 in attendance

**Study Team:**

Bill Haase	Town of Stonington
Bill Parent	Mystic Seaport Museum
Rick Norris	Town of Groton
Stephen Gazillo	URS Corporation
Stephen Mitchell	URS Corporation
Robert Aloise	URS Corporation
Jenna Nichols	URS Corporation
Leslie Black	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Sam Eisenbeiser	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

**Welcome**

As participants entered the public meeting, they signed in and were provided with a meeting agenda, study newsletter, a comments form, and post-it notes. They were then asked to answer the following three questions on the post-it notes and stick the notes to a piece of chart paper. The following is a summary of participant responses (not in order of priority):

**What do you think are the most important transportation challenges facing the Mystic area now?**

- more opportunities for car-free mobility; minimizing auto dependence
- getting cars off the road from 4<sup>th</sup> of July to Labor Day
- separating tourists from their cars once they arrive
- encouraging/facilitating bicycling and walking
- safe biking in traffic – bike lanes/paths
- parking (17 responses)
- parking downtown (2 responses)
- free parking
- lack of good public transportation and alternate transportation (bike lanes, etc)
- traffic flow/auto management (10 responses)
- traffic flow downtown/east and west on Main Street (3 responses)

- traffic congestion downtown in summer
- mobility for senior citizens
- people with disabilities - getting to work – i.e. reduction of ADA services
- poor signage (2 responses)
- signs at both ends of River Road should be updated!
- educating the public regarding the TRUTH about bike lanes – dangerous!
- tourists who use the bicycles should know the rules of the road
- connecting Exit 89 area with downtown Mystic for pedestrians/bike riders
- pedestrian crossings/traffic speed
- safety along Route 27
- highways
- need cogent plans in order to get Connecticut Department of Transportation funding
- tourists
- no trolley service
- correct signage on I-95 for Exits 89 and 90, parking near 95 and alternate ways to get to destinations
- the bridge by the YMCA needs a specific left turn light
- jaywalkers
- bridge

**If you had to pick one, which transportation improvement would you most like to see implemented?**

- As many options other than autos (bicycles, shuttles, zip cars, etc)
- trolley buses/buses (11 responses)
- efficient trolley shuttle with attractive facilities and amenities, signage, advertising
- basic improvement in the SEAT bus system –more vehicles, more frequent service to serve both residents and tourists
- more parking (5 responses)
- parking garage nearby with a shuttle to bring people to town
- car parking at Coogan Boulevard and bike parking downtown and elsewhere
- parking meters downtown
- more safe bike and walking lanes and trails (9 responses)
- “share the road” signage for cyclists (“sharrows” on the pavement)
- bicycle parking downtown
- directional signage on I-95
- pathway from Aquarium to Seaport
- more water taxi shuttle service (2 responses)
- extend Shoreline East commuter rail to Mystic
- larger ferry service
- more efficient traffic pattern downtown
- pedestrian advancements; sidewalks
- wider lanes
- better access for mobility impaired to Mystic Seaport
- better wayfinding signage for both autos and pedestrians

### **What area do you frequent most in the Mystic area? How do you get there?**

- downtown – I work there – drive some days, bike some days
- downtown- park on east side of river and walk into downtown (3 responses)
- I pass through downtown at least 2 times every day
- downtown area by car (14 responses)
- restaurants - car
- Mystic Seaport and nearby areas – car (5 responses)
- downtown – walk, bike and car (5 responses)
- high school – car
- Mystic Aquarium – car
- CVS - car
- Olde Mistick Village – car (3 responses)
- McQuades market – car (2 responses)
- Greenmanville Avenue, Coogan Boulevard daily – car
- Route 27 and Broadway – car or walk
- Mystic River Park – walk
- Library – walk; downtown – bike
- All over Mystic – walk and bike

### **Study Introduction- PowerPoint**

To begin the meeting, Bill Haase welcomed participants and gave a brief introduction to the study and the primary study goals.

The study team then presented a PowerPoint presentation aimed at walking attendees through the study's goals and objectives; introduce the study staff and study team; present the problem statement of the study; present an overview of the study area; and describe study timeline and progress to date including a discussion about the study concept of Transportation Mobility Hubs versus a Transportation Center. The Transportation Center concept has been discussed in a number of previous studies. The focus of the Transportation Center concept proposed a location near the interchange area. However, the scale of this concept seems disconnected with the Mystic image and "feel". An alternative concept of New Mobility Hubs placed at strategic locations throughout the Mystic area has been identified as a different option to a Transportation Center. URS is in contact with leading experts in the area of New Mobility Hubs and will present options at a future public meeting if the public is in agreement that this concept is worth investigating further.

### **"Planner for an Evening" Mapping Exercise**

Participants were then asked to imagine they were taking a driving, bicycling, or walking tour or catching a trolley shuttle bus in the study area. They were asked to mark up a study area map with locations of concern to help the study team gain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of existing local transportation infrastructure and services as perceived by the public. Participants took notes as they marked up their maps and then reported their thoughts to the group as a whole. The bulleted list below provides a summary of findings from this mapping exercise:

### **Driving Tour:**

- Intersections of concern: I-95 off-ramp (confusing), by Howard Johnsons, Route 27 at Willow Street (awkward sight lines) and Roosevelt Street, Broadway Avenue at Civil War Monument (confusing right-of-way), East Main Street at Holmes Street, West Main Street at Route 215 (congestion)
- Coogan Boulevard congestion occurs because of poor entrance from Route 27
- wayfinding signage is poor for tourists arriving by car and people will drive less if they are not lost!
- Use Holmes Street for route to downtown instead of Willow Street.
- Traffic light at Willow Street and Mistuxet Avenue
- Aquarium access road has poor visibility, poor signage, lack of gateway/ugly
- Coogan Boulevard – bad for pedestrians and bikes, dangerous
- Congestion noted at Mystic Seaport Museum, Flagpole in Mystic, Civil War monument, Groton turn to Route 215
- Offset roads are a problem
- Pedestrian traffic slows traffic at Mystic Seaport Museum; solution is to build a walking bridge over the roadway
- Confusing at Civil War monument as to who has right-of-way
- parking spots at Mystic Seaport Museum work well
- add parking at Fort Rachel
- Downtown doesn't need more parking
- Parking is underutilized at Olde Mistick Village
- Reserve parking for residents near "Margaritas" restaurant
- resident-only parking on Haley Street
- Mystic Seaport Museum – traffic calming needed between parking and museum
- Consider parking meters downtown to move cars more frequently
- Need left turning arrow at Route 1 and Mystic Avenue
- time the traffic lights on Route 1 with the drawbridge opening
- traffic light timing at Coogan Boulevard and Route 27 need adjustment
- immediate help required to change green light facing Route 27 at Roosevelt Street/Williams Avenue intersection to last longer
- congestion occurs at Groton intersection (Mystic Pizza)
- Hewitt Road is not a congestion issue but a signage issue – emphasize stop line, tree impeding turn
- If you install Mobility Hubs, have more smaller parking lots rather than fewer, larger lots

### **Walking Tour:**

- Coogan Boulevard is hostile environment for pedestrians with discontinuous sidewalks; dangerous to cross Route 27 in that area
- wayfinding signage should be added to direct people and explain walking routes; should include mileage information so that newcomers know distances to destinations
- who did the New London signage?
- more pedestrian access to walk along the river (both towns)
- comfortable crossing exists at Mystic Seaport Museum

- pedestrian crossing at Friendly's to Mobil Station dangerous
- lack of sidewalks on Clara Drive
- sidewalk improvements needed near Margaritas restaurant
- Improve trails between Mystic Aquarium, Denison Pequotsepos Nature center and Mystic Seaport Museum
- great walking from Mystic Seaport Museum on Isham Street, Bay Street, Holmes Street, East and West Main Street to Bank Square
- Washington Street sidewalk improvements
- Holmes Street "warehouse" look, people miss walking opportunity – no sidewalk on Bay Street
- Seaport to Aquarium - sidewalk improvement but also need signage for "nice walking area"
- Gravel Road needs better sidewalk
- Holmes Street sidewalks in terrible condition
- sidewalks near cemetery on Route 27 are sloped so that they fill with mud and water during rain storms and are impassable for pedestrians and cyclists
- Use crossing cones in main crosswalks
- Main Street in Mystic needs better signage and wayfinding
- At the train station, there is lack of traveler information/wayfinding; lack of transit to hotels etc.; lack of welcome to the area
- gathering spots to consider: Cottrell Park, Cottrell Street, River walkway
- long boarding problems – very popular and no access for skateboarders

**Bicycling Tour:**

- Olde Mistick Village and Mystic Seaport Museum areas need better bike amenities
- bicycling signage needed
- too few bike parking racks around town
- cycle weaving on Route 1
- Route 27 and Route 1 are dangerous for cyclists
- cut tree limbs along Route 27 to improve safety for bicyclists
- Route 27 shoulder is too narrow for cyclists all the way past the Mystic Seaport Museum
- make a bike path connection between Mystic Aquarium and Mystic Seaport Museum via Clara Drive, behind Coogan property to Clipper Drive, and Rossie Street.
- bike path along Mistuxet – Pequotsepos – Jerry Browne – Coogan
- Pequotsepos too narrow, too windy, shoulder too small
- consider parking only on one side in downtown Mystic with a bike lane running along the other side.
- "Share the road" signage needed in downtown, on Route 215 to Groton Long Point, Route 1 to Stonington Borough, River Road between I-95 and downtown Mystic
- Improve Route 1 with signage, pavement markings for bicycles, and bike parking amenities
- bike lane or better signage on Route 215 in Groton
- Have easy-to-identify signage where bicycle rentals are available

**Trolley Shuttle Bus Tour:**

- trolley stops should be considered at the Olde Mystick Village/Aquarium, Mystic Seaport Museum, flagpole in Mystic, Cottrell Street but do not cross drawbridge, Mystic Depot, hotels north of I-95, Sea Swirl, Art Center, Taber Inne on Williams Avenue
- trolley tours should be informative
- trolley can run behind the village and doesn't need to cross the bridge
- create a tourist attraction route and a hotel loop route connecting to main trolley shuttle route
- a trolley should loop Olde Mistick Village/Mystic Aquarium, stop along route 27 to Holmes Street
- drop people off at Seaport Marina then to train station, down Route 27 to Mystic Seaport Museum and back to Mystic Aquarium/Olde Mistick Village
- eliminate cars for certain hours so trolley does not have to wait in traffic or keep trolley running with cars
- tours are great for tourists! For example: duck tours, day-bus tours; market or brand the tours
- water taxi shuttle should start north of I-95 with a launch on the east side of the river opposite Olde Mistick Village, Mystic Seaport Museum, and both east and west sides of the river in the downtown area
- we definitely need mobility hubs on the ends of town and one by the drawbridge
- Mobility hubs should include – ticket vendors (sticker pass), food and beverage vendor, “you are here” maps, touch screen information; aesthetic styles to consider: “Music Man” or “Pleasantville” or “Sailor/Seaman”, shell-shaped overhang; hubs should always be CLEAN!
- we decided it is dangerous to walk near the Sea Swirl and watertaxi's are a great idea to advertise
- consider tour prices: Full day - \$12 Adults, \$8 Children; Half-day - \$6 Adults, \$4 Children; Single trip \$3.

### Question and Comment Period

Participants were asked to provide any questions or comments to the study team:

- Where did the transit hub idea originate and where has it been implemented? **Steve Gazillo indicated that it started in Europe but now is being implemented in several locations in the U.S. If implemented in Mystic, it would be the first example of New Mobility Hubs in the Northeast U.S.**
- In what ways are the transit hubs interactive? **Steve Mitchell indicated that the hubs are viewed as an integrated system, they serve as information centers, they may be able to interact with smart phones and PDAs but they will be usable without smart phones as well to provide real-time information about trolley schedules and area events.**
- Comment: sign Exit 89 for downtown Mystic village traffic to reduce congestion for Route 27.
- What is an acceptable headway for the trolley? **Steve Mitchell noted that it should be less than 15 minutes, but the shorter the headway, the higher the cost, so a balance will need to be found.**
- Comment: a central information center is needed.

- Why were just the sidewalks at Tim Horton's replaced? **Bill Haase indicated that this is part of a full replacement in both Stonington and Mystic that is being completed in scheduled phases.**
- It was noted that a meeting on the construction project in Groton will be held on Thursday, June 17 at 6:30 PM at the town hall.
- Comment: people are addicted to their cars and increased incentives will be necessary to have them shift to alternative modes.
- If we view Mystic as a place, where is the central gathering place? **The town engineer for Groton, Norris, indicated that amenities are being added as part of the streetscape project that will enhance potential sites such as Bank Square.**
- Comment: there are differences between the needs of tourists and the needs of residents and this study should address both.
- Comment: using energy footprint as an indicator is an upcoming issue and the outcome of this study should position Mystic to conserve energy.
- Comment: the Central Hall Block is an opportunity for a public gathering/meeting space.
- Comment: the study should address the needs of families and senior citizens who are less mobile.
- Comment: the study should address the needs of individuals with disabilities including wheelchair access or providing information at mobility hubs in a format that takes into account those with hearing and vision limitations.
- Comment: the shuttle service serving Acadia National Park and Mt. Desert Island in Maine may serve as a comparison.

The meeting concluded with the study team asking participants to forward any further comments to Bill Haase, Stonington Town Planner, via email or the study website comments form at [www.mysticmobility.org](http://www.mysticmobility.org). The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.