

Section 1

Introduction

The Route 3 Traffic and Development Study (Study) was conducted by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) on behalf of the Town of Rocky Hill (Town). The Town of Rocky Hill initiated the request for the study through CRCOG. The project is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Town, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT). The purpose of the study was to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for the study area in the Town of Rocky Hill and provide a planning document for the Town and State to guide future development and transportation system improvements.

The goals and objectives of the plan were identified by the project Technical Review/Steering Committee (TR/SC), which was comprised of Town of Rocky Hill political leaders and Town, CRCOG, and ConnDOT staff. These goals and objectives were identified at the onset of the study and memorialized in the overall Study Mission Statement.

- *Develop sustainable strategies and recommendations to provide a measured approach, identifying both short-term and long range study area transportation system improvement scenarios that accommodate projected growth of the Town of Rocky Hill*
- *Identify improvement strategies that recognize and accommodate all modes of transportation within the study area, including transit, pedestrians, and bicycles, providing a complete transportation network*
- *Seek improvements to the study area transportation system that enhance and preserve the character and setting of residential neighborhoods*
- *Formalize a transportation system management and improvement plan that effectively correlates growth in development with enhancements to the study area transportation system and presents them in a manner that will assist the town in assessing development proposals.*

The study process includes five primary work tasks that are included in the overall scope of the project.

Task 1 – Data Collection

Task 2 – Analysis of Existing Conditions

Task 3 – Analysis of Future Conditions

Task 4 – Identification and Analysis of Improvement Alternatives

Task 5 – Final Improvement Plan

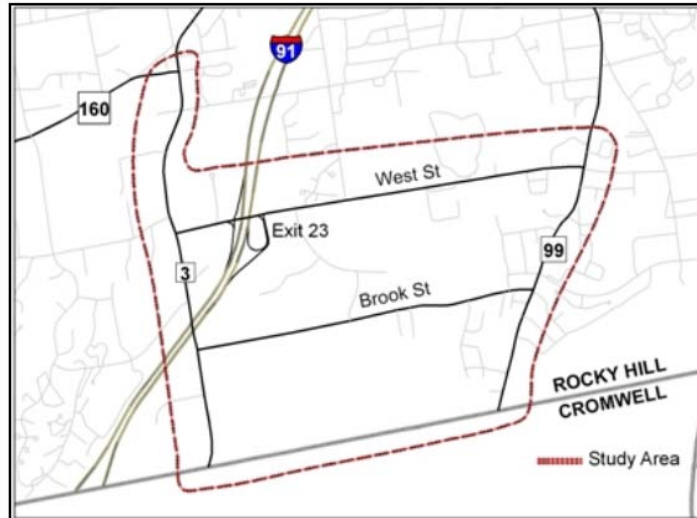
In addition to these work tasks a comprehensive Public Outreach program was conducted throughout the study process to involve and obtain input from the public. Four Public Meetings were conducted in addition to two Town Council Meetings, and two meeting with the business community during Chamber of Commerce meetings. The Public Outreach program is described in more detail, along with a summary of activities in Section 1.4.

1.1 Study Area

The Route 3 Traffic and Development Study area includes a significant portion of the Town of Rocky Hill, including the South Western commercial district of the Town. The study area includes several State Highways owned and maintained by ConnDOT, in addition to the Town maintained local roadways that were reviewed. The study area is illustrated in Figure 1-1. The main study roadways include:

- **Cromwell Avenue (Route 3)** from the Cromwell town line and extending north into Rocky Hill to the intersection of Cromwell Avenue and New Britain Avenue (Route 160)
- The full length of **Brook Street**, between Cromwell Avenue and Main Street (Route 99)
- The full length of **West Street (SSR 411)**, between Cromwell Avenue and Main Street

Figure 1-1: Study Area



- **Elm Street (Route 160)** from the intersection with Cromwell Avenue east to the Big Y Plaza driveway.
- **New Britain Avenue (Route 160)** at the intersection with Cromwell Avenue
- **Main Street (Route 99)**, from the Cromwell Town Line to the intersection with West Street. This roadway is being investigated to a lesser level of detail than the other State Routes in the study area. The primary analysis along Main Street will focus on the intersection of West Street and Main Street
- Other local town roads at intersections with the major routes in the study area.

In addition to reviewing the transportation system, the study also conducted an analysis of existing and future land use. Overall, the study area includes approximately 2,300 acres of land with a diverse mix of land uses, currently developed or zoned for development. Current land uses include residential, retail, commercial, office parks, and light industrial. The assessment of current land use and forecasted trends are provided in subsequent sections of this report.

1.2 Study Team

The study team was comprised of representatives from the Town of Rocky Hill, Connecticut Department of Transportation, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments, as well as the consultant team. The Town of Rocky Hill was represented by two leaders from the Town Council, one from each political party, and staff from the Engineering Department, the Economic Development Department, the Planning and Zoning Department, and one representative from the Planning and Zoning Commission. All Town representatives served on the Technical Review/ Steering Committee (TR/SC). ConnDOT staff are actively involved on the TR/SC and represented at all public meetings. The Department was represented by two staff members from the Bureau of Policy and Planning. CRCOG is the regional planning agency for the Town of Rocky Hill and overall project manager for the Study. CRCOG staff coordinated the efforts of the study team, Town, and State. CRCOG staff is also actively participating in the public outreach initiatives in cooperation with the Town, hosting the project website, and providing travel forecast assistance through the CRCOG maintained travel demand model. In total the Study is represented by parties at the State, Regional, and Local levels to ensure that the planning activities conducted under this Study fit within the overall planning goals at all levels of government.

The Tighe & Bond (T&B) consultant team features experts in the fields of transportation and traffic engineering, land use analysis and development planning, multi-modal planning, and environmental planning. Tighe & Bond, Inc. serves as the lead consultant on the project with expertise in transportation and traffic engineering. The other team members include Susan Jones Moses & Associates (SJM), Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), and Weston Solutions (WS). Susan Jones Moses & Associates is the land use consultant. SJM is assessing the existing land use and development and will be supporting the effort to forecast the changes in land use and expansion of development looking out 20 years. Fitzgerald & Halliday is responsible for assessing the existing natural resources and reviewing current transportation infrastructure relative to accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians and providing recommendations for future enhancements to better accommodate all modes of travel in the study area. Weston Solutions is supporting the public outreach efforts, acting as a facilitator during public hearings.

1.3 Study Process

The study was conducted following a process defined by CRCOG. Similar previous studies have been conducted by CRCOG following a similar framework followed on this study. The key elements of the study include:

- technical analyses and assessment of the study area to assess existing conditions and deficiencies
- forecasting future travel demand and identification of potential future areas of concern
- identifying feasible improvement alternatives to mitigate the effects of future traffic on the study area roadways and to enhance the overall transportation system to address all modes of travel
- stakeholder meetings, primarily the Technical Review/Steering Committee meetings, but also meetings with business owners and economic development leaders in Town,
- a comprehensive public outreach process involving meetings, websites, and a public survey to obtain public input on the study process.

This Final Study report summarizes the comprehensive analysis of existing conditions, future conditions, and describes the transportation system improvement recommendations needed to mitigate the forecast growth in traffic and development in the region and Town.

Under the assessment of existing conditions the current study area needs, deficiencies, and opportunities were identified. An Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum was prepared that provided a detailed summary of the following tasks:

- Assessing the existing transportation system and identifying needs and deficiencies
- Observing traffic volumes, vehicle classifications, and travel speeds within the study area and developing 2010 existing traffic volumes
- Analyzing traffic safety and traffic operations during the morning and afternoon peak periods
- Reviewing current multi-modal transportation services and facilities
- Analyzing existing land use and development patterns to facilitate projections of future development potential
- Reviewing current land use policy and identifying economic trends and development potential in the Town
- Screening the natural and environmental resources to identify existing resources and determine limitations on land use expansion

The assessment of future conditions was conducted to analyze the effect of local and regional growth on the study area under 2030 future conditions. Under the assessment of future conditions, regional growth patterns were established considering land use changes and employment data forecasts for the region. Based on these data, traffic

volumes were forecast for the study area roadways utilizing the CRCOG travel demand model. A Future Condition Technical Memorandum was prepared summarizing the findings of the 2030 future design year assessment including:

- Analysis of potential land use and development patterns in the Town of Rocky Hill and in the region
- Forecasting the 2030 design year traffic volumes travelling through the study area
- Analyzing intersection operations under the 2030 no-build condition using projected traffic volumes
- Identification of poor operating conditions in the study area caused by increases in traffic

The assessment of future conditions provided the basis for the development of a series of improvement alternatives for the transportation system in the study area. The improvements were developed to provide acceptable intersection operations, mitigate the effects of projected traffic growth, and address identified safety concerns and issues in the study area. Concept plans were prepared to address a broad spectrum of issues, from an assessment of possible interchange modifications along Interstate 91 to simple intersection geometric improvements to address capacity and safety, to providing an aesthetic streetscape enhancement plan for a residential neighborhood in the study area. A complete summary of the various alternatives is presented in the Appendix of this report, and the recommended improvement plans are presented in a subsequent section of this report.

1.4 Local Coordination and Public Outreach

Throughout the Study, a comprehensive Public Outreach Program was conducted by the Study Team in cooperation with the State and Local agencies. Overall, the Public Outreach initiatives were guided by CRCOG's overall transportation planning and public participation guidelines set forth in the study scope of work. The goals of the outreach program are:

- Obtain input from the Public on Study Area issues, concerns, and help identify and frame the study goals and objectives
- Advise the Public of the study findings
- Further educate the Study Team with local knowledge
- Involve stakeholders and the public in the development and refinement of recommendations that fit the vision and character of the Town
- Facilitate review by Town Council, Town Boards and Commissions, Businesses, and Residents, leading to a Final Improvement Plan that can be endorsed by the Town of Rocky Hill to help guide future transportation system improvements and enhancements

In order to meet these Public Outreach goals, the Project Team, CRCOG, Town, and State have identified the following project committees and Town Commissions for milestone meetings throughout the Study process. In addition to meetings with these groups, Public Meetings were conducted at Study milestones to seek input from the Public. The Study Process has been organized such that the Economic Development Subcommittee of the Town Council Meetings serve as the formal Public Information Meetings. The following section describes the various Project Committees and their role in the Study.

1.4.1 Project Committees

The study effort will be guided through oversight provided by the Town of Rocky Hill, CRCOG, and ConnDOT. The public outreach initiatives will be facilitated through a Project Technical Committee/Steering Committee, the Rocky Hill Town Council, the Economic Development Subcommittee of the Rocky Hill Town Council, the Economic Development Commission, and the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce. The following section describes each of the groups that will be responsible to provide oversight and guidance throughout the conduct of the study. In addition, throughout the Scope of Services, meetings with each of these groups and committees have been identified during the work task that they will take place.

1.4.1.1 Technical Review/Steering Committee

This committee will provide consistent input and oversight throughout the study process. The committee will be comprised of:

- **Town Representatives:** Staff from the planning, engineering, and economic development departments; two representatives of the Town Council; and one representative of the Town of Rocky Hill Planning and Zoning Commission.
- **CRCOG Representatives**
- **ConnDOT Representatives:** ConnDOT Staff from the Division of Policy and Planning will represent the Department on this project and serve as a liaison between the Study and other Department units

Technical Review /Steering Committee meetings will be conducted at key milestones of the study process to provide an update on the study process and obtain guidance on the results, findings, and recommendations of the study. There are six meetings scheduled with this Committee.

1.4.1.2 Economic Development Subcommittee of Town Council

The Economic Development Subcommittee of the Town Council (EDS) meetings have been devised to serve two purposes within the Public Outreach effort. These include providing a meeting setting where the Study Team can provide an update to some members of the Town Council in a venue outside of the Town Council meetings where the members of the EDS can brief the full Town Council on the Study progress. Secondly, the EDS meetings will also serve as the formal Public Information Meeting for the Study. There are four meetings scheduled with the EDS.

1.4.1.3 Economic Development Commission

One meeting was conducted with the Rocky Hill Economic Development Commission (EDC) where the results of the existing and future conditions assessments and initial concept alternatives were presented. The EDC provided input on the land use analyses and initial concept plans relative to the current planning and economic development initiatives in the Town.

1.4.1.4 Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce

The Study Team made two presentations to the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce at the Chamber's regular monthly meeting. The meeting with the Chamber members was the primary outreach to the business leaders and business owners in the Town. The initial meeting with the Chamber included a presentation of the existing conditions assessment, future condition analysis, and included a preview of the initial concept plans that were being contemplated by the Study Team and Steering Committee. The Chamber members utilized this forum to provide comments and input on the initial concepts and expressed their concerns relative to potential impacts to business, both along the study area roadways and general business activity that can be spurred by potential improvements to the transportation infrastructure in the Town. The second meeting with the Chambers was conducted near the completion of the Study and included a presentation of the Final Study recommendations.

1.4.1.5 Town Council

During the Analysis of Alternatives task and prior to publication of the Final Study Recommendations, the Study Team will conduct meeting with the Rocky Hill Town Council. The intent of these meetings will be to present the work of the Study to the governing body of the Town and obtain input on Town policy direction relative to the future impacts and recommended improvements. The Town Council meeting scheduled for the end of the Study will present the Final Study Recommendations and seek endorsement from the Town. There are two meetings scheduled to take place with the Town Council.

1.4.2 Summary of Outreach Activities

The Public Outreach initiatives have been on-going since the initiation of the Study. The following public meetings have taken place during the conduct of the Study:

Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting:	November 10, 2010
Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting:	December 8, 2010
Rocky Hill Mayor's Report:	December 12, 2012
Town of Cromwell Meeting:	January 4, 2011
Steering Committee Data Collection Meeting:	January 19, 2011
Steering Committee Existing Conditions Meeting:	February 23, 2011
Economic Development Commission Meeting:	May 10, 2011
Steering Committee Future Conditions Meeting:	May 11, 2011
Steering Committee EDS Preparation Meeting:	June 14, 2011
Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting:	June 21, 2011
Steering Committee Alternatives Review Meeting:	November 9, 2011
Steering Committee Alternatives Review Meeting:	January 10, 2012
Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce Presentation:	January 12, 2012
Rocky Hill Town Council Presentation:	February 6, 2012
Rocky Hill Mayor's Report:	March 15, 2012
Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting:	February 14, 2012
Steering Committee Final Alternative Review Meeting:	September 12, 2012
Steering Committee Final Report Review Meeting:	October 31, 2012
Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce Presentation:	November 8, 2012
Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting:	November 13, 2012
Rocky Hill Town Council Presentation:	December 3, 2012

1.4.3 Outreach Initiatives

In addition to the steering committee meetings and public meetings, a Public Survey following the completion of the Assessment of Existing Conditions was distributed in the Town to residents to facilitate input into the existing perceived issues and deficiencies. During the Analysis of Existing Conditions, Public Survey 1 was conducted. A copy of the survey and tabulated results are available in the Appendix.

The Study Area extends south, just over the Cromwell Town Line. During the data collection phase of the Project, the Study Team and Town of Rocky Hill staff met with staff from the Town of Cromwell's Engineering, Planning, and Economic Development departments. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain information related to future developments planned along the Town Line with Rocky Hill, understand planned infrastructure improvements in the area, and discuss the overall growth and economic development experience in Cromwell to help the Study Team understand some of the regional activity.

1.4.4 Project Website

CRCOG is hosting a Route 3 Study webpage on the CRCOG website:

http://www.crcog.org/transportation/current_stud/Route3.html

The website provides information related to past and planned meetings, a link to subscribe to a project mailing list, and Study Publications as they become available.

