



Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

The Issue: Completion of Route 11 from Salem to I-95 in Waterford (Using the Preferred E(4)m-V3 Alignment)

Rte 11 is a major travel route between the capital region and the southeast shoreline area of Connecticut. Currently, Rte. 11 ends in Salem and at that point, traffic must divert to Routes 82/85 in order to connect with I-95. For decades, there has been concern that this travel corridor may be inadequate to safely and efficiently move the expected increased volume of traffic.

Routes 82 and 85 are, primarily, two-lane arterials that connect multi-lane, limited-access highways. These roads currently serve both long-distance and local-access functions. Since 1999, the extension of Rte 11 to I-95 has been studied and reviewed with the 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) designating a preferred alignment (E(4)m-V3). EPA reviews have shown that the extension of Rte 11 will have a significant environmental impact that will require a comprehensive mitigation plan that has not been completed or approved.

The Facts About the Rte 11 Extension (Based on the Preferred Alignment)*:

- Rte 11 extension will be an 8.5 mile, four-lane limited access roadway from the termination of Route 11 in Salem to the I-95/I-395 interchange in East Lyme and Waterford. [Map \(Fig. ES-1\), page 5, below.](#)
- Reconstruction of the new interchange for Rte 11 to I-95/I-395 plans for multiple structures and ramps, including a flyover ramp, and 3 miles of the I-95 highway. [Map \(Fig. 3\), page 6, below.](#)
- Additionally, fourteen bridges and structures would be built along the preferred alignment of the Rte 11 extension over streams, wetlands and roadways.
- The Rte 11 extension will cross through the pristine 40,000 acre Eightmile River watershed, an environmentally sensitive area that contains wetlands, watercourses, wildlife corridors and blocks of forest.
- EPA has stated that they do not agree with the Army Corps of Engineers determination that the preferred alternative is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA).
- The FEIS was not approved by the Federal Highway Administration, citing the lack of a viable financing plan and environmental mitigation plan.



- An environmental mitigation plan will need to include the full replacement of 20 acres of wetlands and preservation of a minimum of 686 acres of high value habitat.
- A 2000 ft. wide Greenway on both sides of the 8.5 mi. Rte 11 extension, is a separate proposal. Funding in the millions of dollars, will be required to buy the 2000 acres of property included in the Greenway plan. [Greenway Map 2, page 7, below.](#)
- The most recent study shows an average daily traffic count of 15,000 on Rte 85. This is expected to increase to 20,000 for a daily traffic count by 2020.
- The construction project costs, including the interchange, was estimated at \$924 million in 2007. If projected out to 2021 (the previously assumed midpoint of construction), the cost inflates to \$1.4 billion. These numbers are exclusive of the property acquisition costs for the Greenway plan.
- Currently, \$14.4 million of federal monies are earmarked for Route 11 and a bikeway. Of that, there is a possibility that \$10 million may be shifted to the Greenway (a distinctly different project than the earmarked bikeway). The remaining \$4.4 million will be used, along with matching state funds, to complete a \$5 million ConnDOT study for engineering, environmental and financing needs, including the feasibility of tolling to pay for the project.

*Facts are from Conn DOT and the Southeastern CT Council of Governments website:

- The July 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement
<http://www.seccog.org/EIS/index.html>
- The proposed FY 2011-2040 Long Range Regional Transportation Plan
<http://www.seccog.org/pdfs/ReglTransPlanFinal.pdf>

The Pending Legislation: HB 6200 - An Act Concerning The Establishment Of Tolls For The Extension Of Route 11

There is insufficient federal/state funding for the completion of Rte 11 so other sources of revenue are necessary or else the project will not be done. Tolls are one possibility, although a feasibility study will need to be done to see if tolls will cover the \$1.4 billion dollar project. Tolls will not provide revenue to acquire the property for the Greenway. There will need to be another source of funding for the Greenway.

So far this session, the proposed toll legislation has been approved by both the Transportation and Finance Committees along party lines with Democrats generally voting in favor of it and Republicans opposing it. This legislation must now be approved by both the House and Senate.



The Debate: Is the completion of Rte 11 justified considering environmental, social, and economic impacts?

CTLCV invited two representatives to present each side of the debate. Writing in support of the completion of Rte 11 is Peter Sielman, former First Selectman, Town of Salem and a member of Rte 11 Greenway Authority Commission, and in opposition of the completion of Rte 11 is Ryan Lynch, Senior Planner, Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Their cases are outlined below.

Support:

Peter Sielman, former First Selectman, Town of Salem, member Greenway Authority Commission

Transportation Need:

The current transportation route between New London and the southern terminus of incomplete Route 11 in Salem is Route 85. It has no shoulders, over 100 driveways and cross streets and 12 traffic lights. Traffic is congested and residents who live on Route 85 or in cul de sacs off of Route 85 cannot safely get out of their homes during peak traffic times. Level of Service in the year 2020 is projected to be “F” based on projected traffic volumes in excess of 20,000 cars per day.

Safety Need:

Route 85 is dangerous (as witnessed by its traffic accident history). It is designated as the emergency evacuation route in the event of a catastrophe at Millstone or the Sub Base- but would end up as a parking lot if an emergency ever occurred. Completion of Route 11 is projected to greatly reduce the number of accidents and to provide a viable emergency evacuation route.

Environmental Need:

The best and most locally knowledgeable environmentalists (Richard Goodwin and William Niering) wrote (in part):

“We believe that in the long run completion of Route 11 as a limited access arterial highway along Alternative E, with a greenway, will be the least damaging option, from an environmental standpoint.

The building of a highway can be done with minimal long term impact. We already have a “living laboratory,” a portion of Route 11 which was completed in 1971. All of the species mentioned in the DEIS Report are doing well in that corridor.

Since a completed limited access road with a greenway will protect the area from urban sprawl, this alternative will in the long run have a positive environmental effect as compared with widening of Route 85.”

Completion of Route 11 (E4m-V3), for which the proposed tolls would pay for the State’s share of construction costs, has been officially designated as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative.



Oppose:

Ryan Lynch, Senior Planner, Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Financial Cost:

The project will cost upwards of a billion dollars with no feasible way to pay for it. There is no indication that a plan to finance the project using toll revenues will be successful given the low traffic volume on the road, especially since multiple, free, alternative routes are available. In fact, a recent tolling study by Cambridge Systematics that looked at using tolls to widen I-95 from New Haven to the Rhode Island border showed that implementing tolls actually reduced congestion so dramatically that there was no longer a need to widen the road. A similar situation is likely to occur when tolling Route 11 leaving the full cost of the road project with Connecticut's residents. This would put pressure on the transportation capital program and leave limited funding for maintaining Connecticut's existing roads and bridges. This will saddle the next generation with a project the state cannot afford.

Land Use/Sprawl:

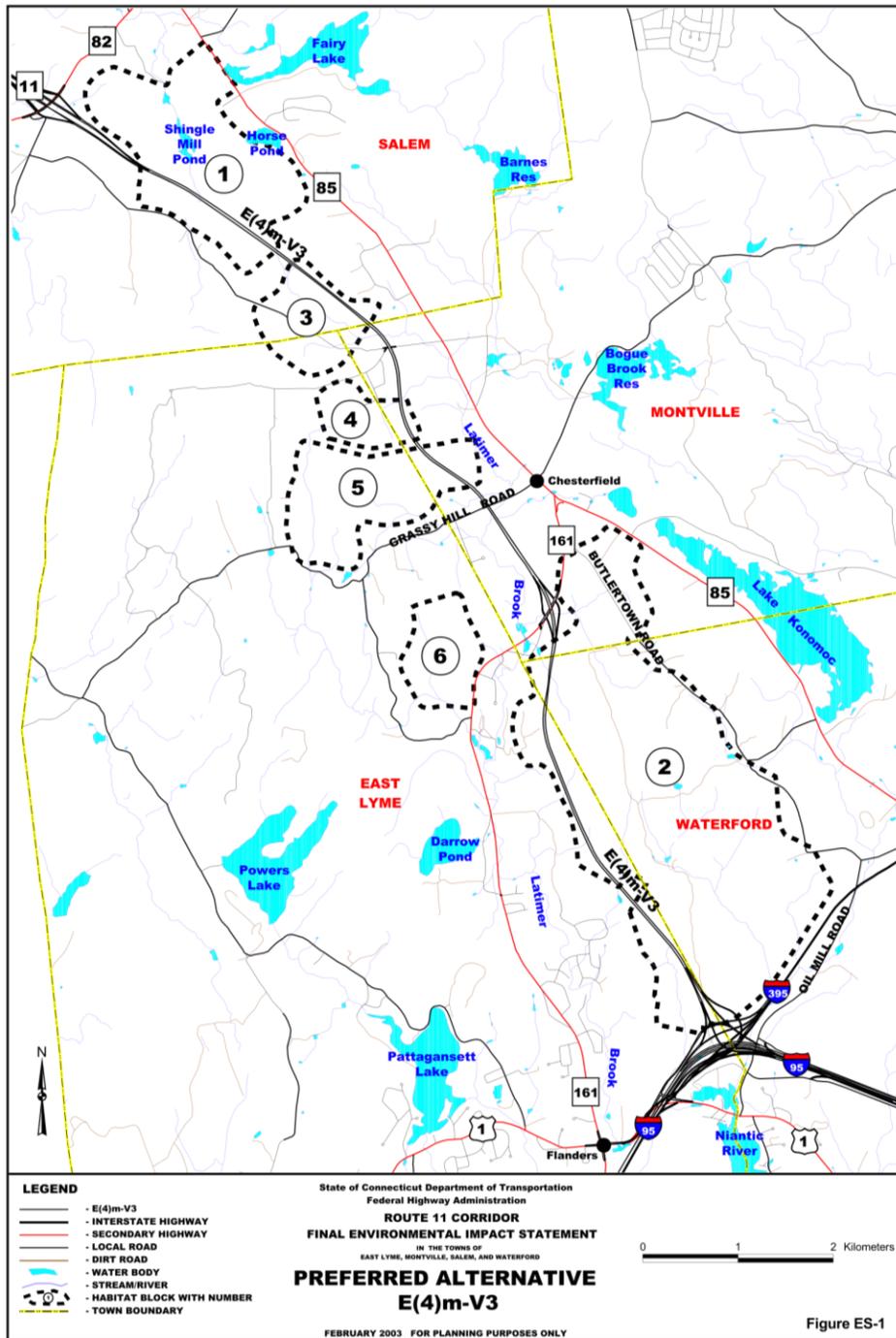
Building roads opens up land further from downtowns and main streets, eating up greenfields and creating sprawling development patterns dependent on automobile travel. Even if limited interchanges are built, pressure and demand for more in the future will build as more and more cars are put on the road as a result of open-space development. A better idea would be to use local zoning and regulatory measures to protect the open space that would be destroyed by building Route 11 and target building and development in the existing downtowns and along main streets in the region. This type of development would reduce congestion and make the area more viable for transit investment in the future.

Safety:

It is difficult to believe that building a road that will allow for higher speeds of travel will ultimately increase the safety of travel. If safety is an issue on Route 85/82, greater traffic enforcement should be pursued or Speed Camera legislation should be enacted to deter speeding on what is a rural road.



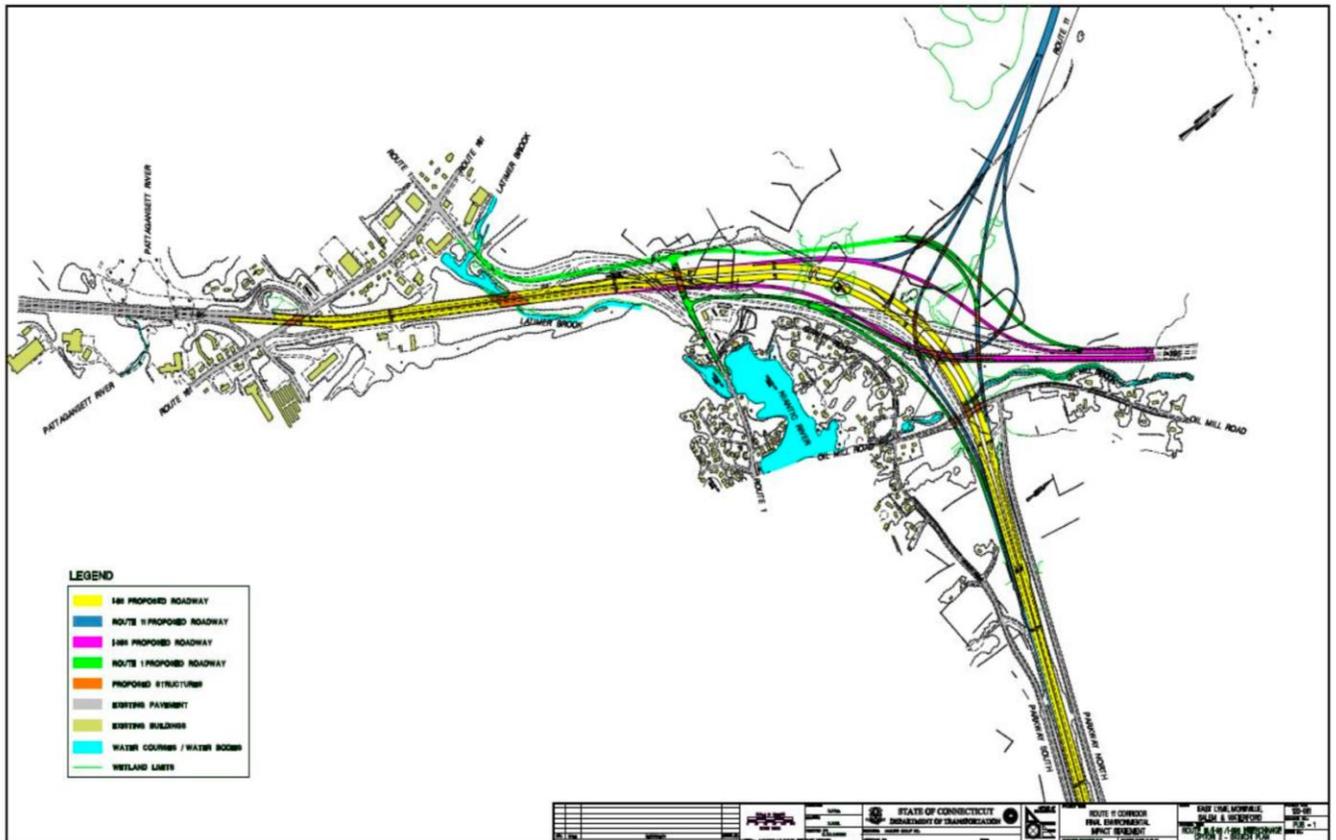
[back](#)





[back](#)

Figure 3 – Proposed Route 11/I-95/I-395 Interchange





[back](#)

