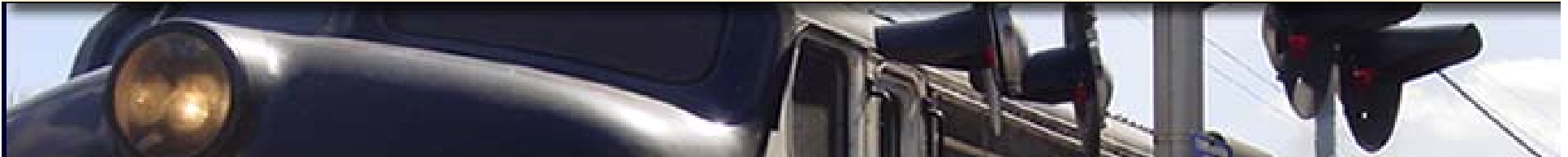


Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials  
**Update: Danbury Branch Improvement Program &  
Electrification**



**Washington Group International**

Integrated Engineering, Construction, and Management Solutions



**Connecticut Department of Transportation**

**February 15, 2008**



# **Study Purpose, Goals And Objectives – Phase I**

- **Study Purpose**
  - **Evaluate A Range Of Infrastructure And Service Improvements**
  - **Determine Potential To Enhance The Branch's Attraction**
  - **Alternative To Driving Route 7**
  - **Alternative To Commuting On The Harlem Line**
- **Goals And Objectives**
  - **Reduce Travel Time And Provide More Frequent Service**
  - **Explore Feasibility Of Passenger Service, Danbury To New Milford**
  - **Help Reduce Congestion On Route 7**
  - **Improve The Danbury Branch As An Alternative To The Harlem Line In New York State For Connecticut Rail Commuters**



# Public Involvement

- **Study Information Available on Website:**  
<http://www.danburybranchstudy.com>
- **Public Scoping**
- **Study Advisory Committee**
- **Meetings with Regional Planning Agencies, Federal and State Regulatory Agencies, Towns, and Stakeholders**
- **Public Information Meetings**
- **Public Hearing**



# **Danbury Branch Study Status**

## **Phase I – Completed May 2006 Report**

- Data Collection**
- Evaluation Of Preliminary Alternatives**
- Identify “Candidate” Alternatives**
- Alternatives Summary Evaluation Report**
- Final Report Phase I**

## **Phase II – Notice To Proceed November 2007**



## **“Candidate” Alternatives From Phase I**

- **Alternative A -No Build**
- **Alternative B – TSM**
- **Alternative C – Build Improvements**
- **Alternative D – Extension of Service**
- **Alternative E – Partial Electrification**



## **Alternative A – No Build**

- **Maintain existing service between South Norwalk and Danbury**
- **Assumption is CTC System is in place**
- **Georgetown Station will be developed**

### **POTENTIAL SYSTEM IMPACTS**

- **Operational - None**
- **Environmental - No New Impacts**
- **Fleet - Existing Fleet Retained**
- **Travel Demand – Ridership Will Continue to Grow Due to Regional Growth, 1133 Yr. 2000 growing to 1592 in Yr. 2020 (AM Peak Inbound Boardings)**
- **Time Savings – None**
- **Financial – No Capital Costs Associated With This Alternative**





## **Alternative B – Transportation System Management (TSM)**

- **Defined as Everything That Can Be Done Without New Construction or New Vehicle Procurement**
- **Some service improvements possible, including skip stop, express service or new outbound service**

### **POTENTIAL SYSTEM IMPACTS**

- **Operational – Possible Crew Changes If Service Frequency Changes**
- **Environmental – No New Impacts**
- **Fleet – Existing Fleet Retained**
- **Travel Demand – To Be Determined in Phase II**
- **Time Savings – To Be Determined in Phase II**
- **Financial – No Capital Costs Associated With This Alternative. Possible Increase in Operating Costs**





## Alternative C –South Norwalk to Danbury Improvements

- Minor Alignment Changes
- Addition/Upgrade of Passing Sidings
- Installation of New Electrification System Between South Norwalk and Danbury
- Use Electric Multiple Units (EMU's)

### POTENTIAL SYSTEM IMPACTS

- Operational – Crew Changes With Increased Service Frequency; Bi-directional Service and AM/PM Peak Changes Possible; Track Speed Increased in Limited Areas
- Environmental – Impacts at Sidings, Substations, and Overhead Catenary Wire
- Fleet – Yes, New Emus If Electrified, New Equipment Needed to Increase Service
- Travel Demand – Increases With Improved Travel Time; 12-minute savings shows approx. 80 additional AM Peak Inbound Boardings
- Time Savings – Yes, up to 12 Minutes
- Financial - \$6.5 Million Track; \$9-\$31 Million for Passing Sidings; \$75 Million to Electrify; \$90 Million for Equipment







## **Alternative D – Danbury to New Milford Extension and Improvements**

- **Extend Passenger Service From Danbury to New Milford**
- **New Stations at Danbury North, Brookfield and New Milford**
- **Improved Track Alignment to Allow Maximum Speed of 50 Mph**



### **POTENTIAL SYSTEM IMPACTS**

- **Operational – New Service; Crew Requirements; Track Speed Increases**
- **Environmental – Possible Impacts at New Stations**
- **Fleet – Additional Equipment Could Be Required; Equipment Conforms to Existing Fleet**
- **Travel Demand – Initial Estimates Show 800 New Riders by 2020 (AM Peak Inbound Boardings)**
- **Time Savings – Trip Time From New Milford to Danbury Would Be Approx. 38 Minutes With Alignment Changes vs. 48 Minutes On Existing Track**
- **Financial - \$11.5 - \$17.5 Million for New Stations; \$18.7 Million for Alignment Improvements; \$11 Million Per New Train Set. Total - \$41 - \$47 Million**





## **Alternative E –Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) Partial Electrification with feeder rail/bus service**

- **Requested by TSB**
- **Partial Electrification From South Norwalk to Vicinity of Route 15/merritt Parkway**
- **Feeder Bus/rail Service North to Danbury**

### **POTENTIAL SYSTEM IMPACTS**

- **Operational - Impacts to Be Determined in Phase II**
- **Environmental – Impacts Possible at New Substations; Catenary Visual Impact**
- **Fleet – To Be Determined in Phase II**
- **Travel Demand – To Be Determined in Phase II**
- **Time Savings – Travel Time Savings of Approximately 4 Minutes If Electrified Between Wilton and South Norwalk**
- **Financial – Capital Costs to Be Determined in Phase II; Electrification Estimated at \$3 Million Per Mile**





## **HVCEO Topics of Interest**

- **Evaluation of Transit Oriented Development Opportunities in Danbury Branch Corridor**
- **Identifying station and parking needs – possible expansion plans**
- **Transportation Alternatives Development and Evaluation**
- **Potential Social Impacts at rail station terminus in New Milford**



## **Evaluate Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Opportunities in Danbury Branch Corridor**

- **\$20 million in State Tax Obligation (STO) bonds for both FY08 and FY09 for state TOD grant program**
- **Consistent with State Plan of Conservation and Development**
- **Consistent with Local Municipalities Plan of Conservation and Development**
- **Conduct TOD evaluation in two stages**



# **Stage I – Identify TOD Opportunities and Constraints**

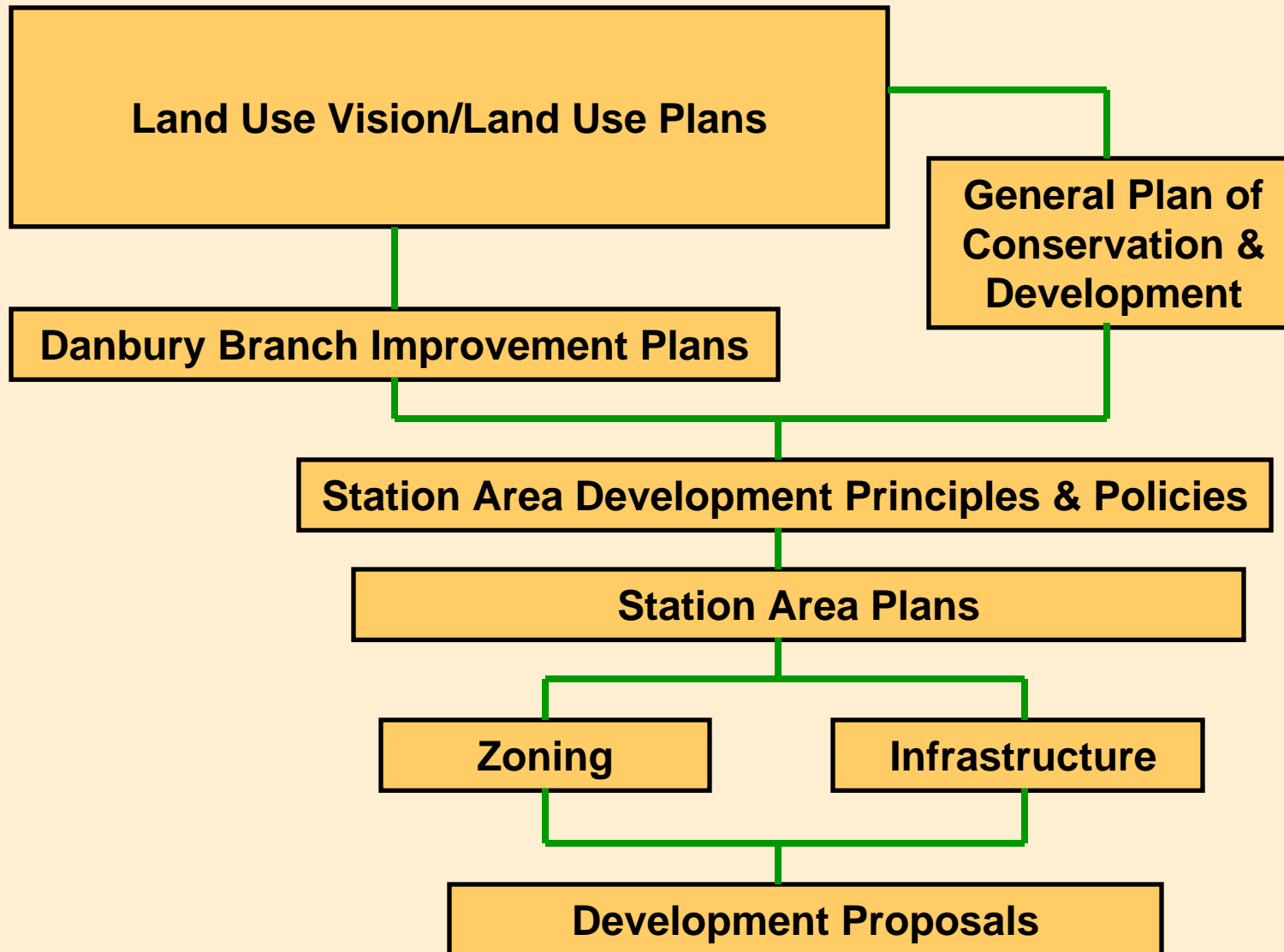
## **Opportunities**

- **Proximity to existing rail line and roadway network**
- **Compatibility with existing and future land use**
- **Potential ridership**
- **Demographics, market potential, multimodal access**

## **Constraints**

- **Noise, Wetlands, Watercourses, Hazardous Material Sites, Cost**
- **Institutional Barriers and Potential Social Impacts**

# Transit Oriented Development Framework





## **Stage I – TOD Report will:**

- **Identify range of TOD opportunities at stations within the corridor**
- **Document community policies and plans related to TOD**
- **Document status of station area planning efforts by local communities**
- **Document existing zoning and infrastructure**
- **Sketch plan of proposed growth options**



## **Stage II – Develop TOD Action Items List**

- **Action Item List will include description of proposed action, timeframe, responsible parties**
- **Identify Resources Supporting TOD**
- **Work jointly with local jurisdictions**
- **Work May Include: Station area planning, preliminary and advanced site planning, zoning and land use changes necessary, financial or regulatory incentive tools, identification of private sector partners**





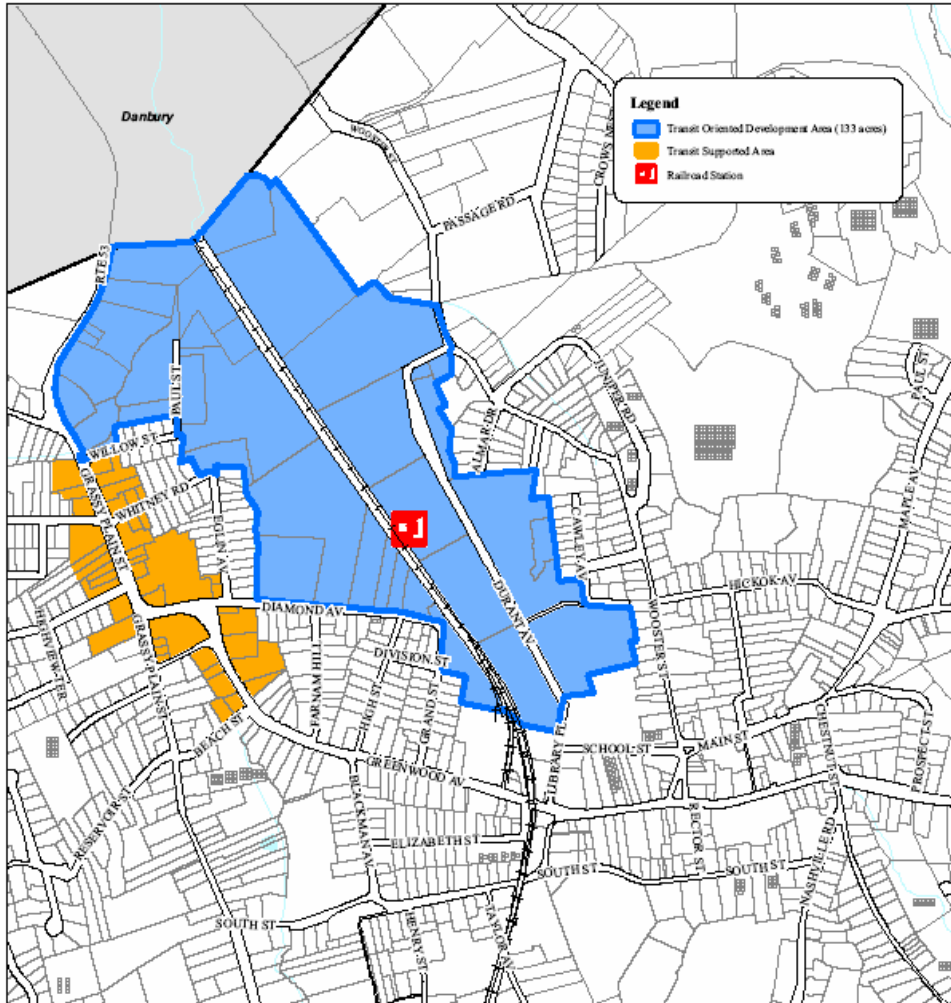
## **TOD Areas of Interest to HVCEO**

- **Bethel Station – Supported by 2007 Bethel Plan of Conservation and Development**
- **New Georgetown Station – ongoing TOD construction – 2005 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement**
- **Branchville (Ridgefield) Station – 2002 Branchville Village Plan multimodal transportation center with TOD at or near station**
- **Existing Danbury Station – High potential TOD due to Kennedy Place potential development and Western Conn. State University – walking distance to station**
- **Brookfield Station – potential Village Center mixed-use development**
- **Downtown New Milford Station – regional center designation by HVCEO**



# Proposed Transit Oriented Development

Town of Bethel, CT



400 Feet



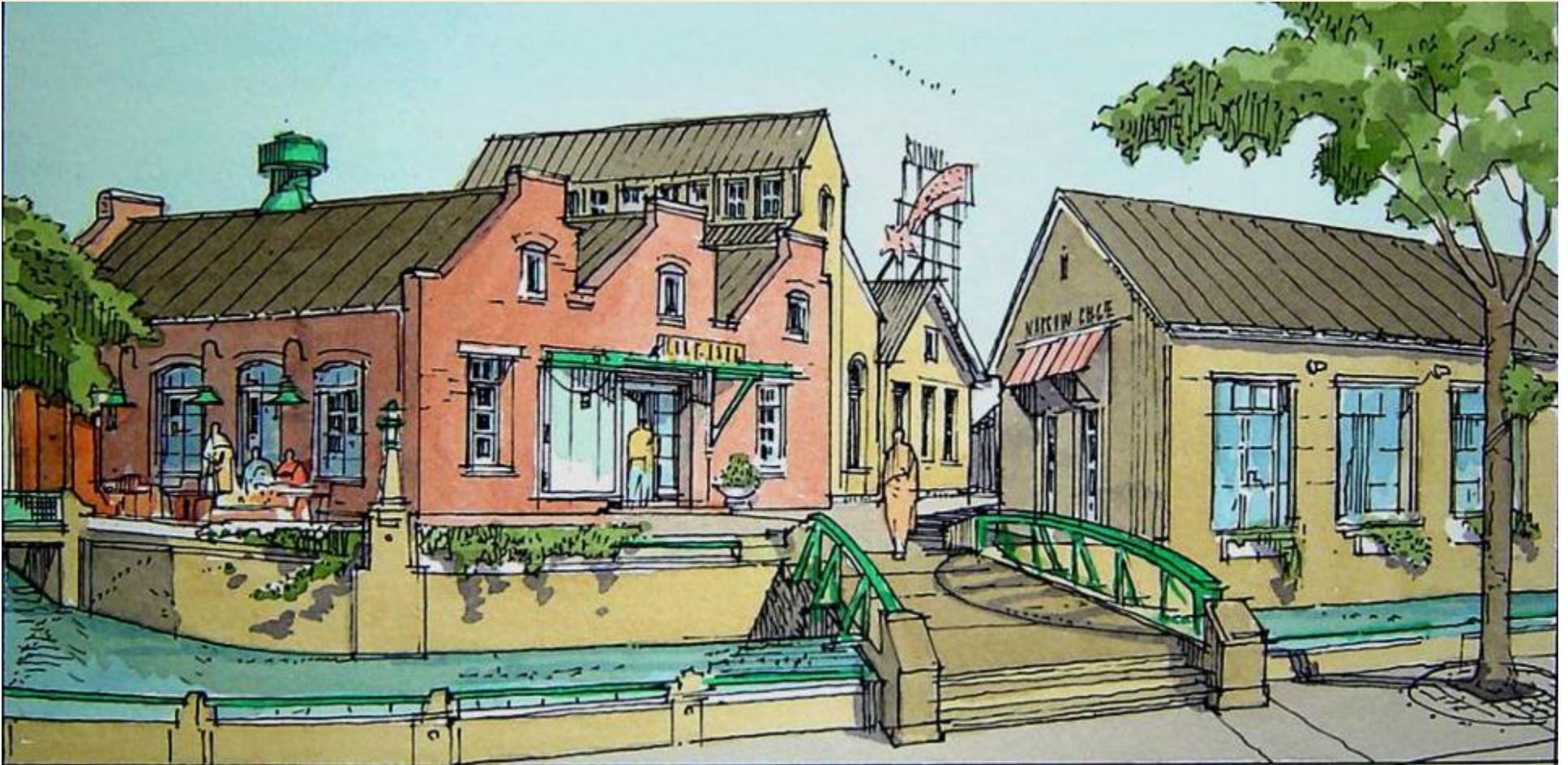
# Georgetown



GEORGETOWN SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT  
INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION HUB AND YMCA  
GEORGETOWN CONNECTICUT

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# Georgetown



# Commuter Rail and TOD

- **Service frequency – different than typical Light Rail or Streetcar systems but competitive with auto travel times**
- **Connecting Transit and Walkability Still Important**
- **Balance Parking Needs with Development Opportunities**
- **Platforms and Infrastructure Differ**
- **Financing TOD for Commuter Rail more challenging**



## **Parking Expansion Plans**

- **Bethel Station – West Side platform addition and parking expansion**
- **Branchville Neighborhood Area – proposed two deck garage to supplement commuter parking at station**
- **Georgetown station platform and parking**



# Potential Social Impacts of New Commuter Rail Service

- **Mayor Murphy's Concern at New Milford (terminus)**
- **Case Studies and Supporting Research**
- **Involve communities, ConnDOT and Metro-North**
- **Safety and Security in Planning Process**



# **Transportation Alternatives Development and Evaluation**

- **Refine and Confirm Purpose and Need Statement**
- **Evaluate Resource Impacts**
- **Validate with train performance model and simulations**
- **Update Travel Demand Forecasts**
- **Perform Existing and Potential Passenger Surveys (On-Board and Mail-Out)**
- **Perform Cost/Benefit Analysis and Economic Development Impacts**





# **Prepare Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS)**

- **Definition of Alternatives**
- **Perform Alternatives Screening and Evaluation Process**
- **Select Preferred Alternative(s)**



## **Next Steps - Phase II**

- **Meetings with Advisory Committee, Local Officials**
- **Public Scoping Meeting – mid 2008**
- **Complete Alternatives Analysis Process**
- **Prepare Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**
- **Develop Implementation Plan and Identify Funding Needs**
- **Approximately 3 years**



# Discussion