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# Appendix B – Public Meeting Notes





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# Appendix B1 – Advisory Task Force Meetings





Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

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**Meeting  
Notes**

Attendees: ATF Committee:  
Chris Waszczuk, ATF Member  
Chris Cross, ATF Member  
Tom Fargo, ATF Member  
Sandy Hislop, ATF Member  
Jim Campbell, ATF Member  
Marlon Frink, ATF Member  
Bill O'Donnell, ATF Member  
Jack Newick, ATF Member  
Bruce Woodruff, ATF Member  
John Burke, ATF Member  
Maria Stowell, ATF Member  
Steve Wells, ATF Member  
Rick Card, ATF Member  
Cliff Sinnott, Alternate ATF Member

Date/Time: April 30, 2003 6:30 PM

Project No.: 51425.00

Re: Newington-Dover (11238)  
Advisory Task Force  
Meeting No. 1

Others:  
Clifford Abbott  
Roy Josselyn  
Caroline Marshall, Portsmouth Chamber of  
Commerce  
David Walker, Rockingham Planning Comm.  
Cynthia Copeland, SRPC  
Michael Goot, Foster's Daily Democrat  
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB  
Bill Oldenberg, NHDOT  
Mike Dugas, NHDOT  
Mark Laurin, NHDOT

Place: Newington Town Hall

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

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Chris Waszczuk opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees. He thanked the Advisory Task Force (ATF) members for accepting the invitation to participate in the study and asked each ATF member to introduce themselves and to identify their respective special interests in the study and their constituencies. Following the ATF member introductions, Caroline Marshall introduced herself as representing the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce and sitting in on behalf of ATF member Peter Hamelin who was unavailable for the meeting. Chris Waszczuk distributed a Meeting Agenda, ATF membership list, a composite integrated time line schedule of the ACOE Section 404 permit process with highway projects and NEPA, a project schedule, a draft Project Purpose and Need Statement, a study area map and a Socio-Economic study area map. Utilizing

a power point presentation, Chris reviewed the meeting agenda and discussed the role and responsibilities of the ATF. The ATF will be a forum for providing input to the study team, and will provide a conduit for the distribution of study information to their respective constituents. The ATF is not a decision-making body, but is expected to review and comment on study materials, and forge consensus in advising the study team and in guiding the development of the project. Chris indicated that he expected the ATF to meet at least quarterly over the approximate 3-year study schedule, and that other public workshops and public information meetings would be held over the course of study. Chris also reviewed meeting protocol:

- Meeting would generally run from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM.
- Format will generally include a Welcome (from Chairperson), statement of the function and purpose of ATF, review and adoption of previous meeting notes, presentations/agenda items, questions and comments from ATF, and questions and comments from the public.
- Agenda items will be established by the Chairperson.
- The public can request an agenda item, through the Chairperson.
- Roberts Rules-of-Order will govern meetings.
- NHDOT/VHB will record meeting notes.

Bill O'Donnell inquired as to the notification of meetings. While not legally required to be publicly posted, Chris Waszczuk stated that a mailing list of interest parties would be developed, in conjunction with the project's web site, public posting at Town Hall and City Hall, and posting in local papers – *Fosters Democrat*, the *Portsmouth Herald*, and the local Hampton papers. Chris Cross suggested posting by the Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commission (web sites and newsletters) would also be appropriate. Marlon suggested that Southern Maine be included. [The Regional Planning Commission in southern Maine could be added to the mailing list for the project.]

Chris Waszczuk initiated the discussion on electing the ATF Chairperson. Both Marlon Frink and Chris Cross expressed interest in the chair; given the regional impact and importance of the project, Chris Cross suggested it was more appropriate for him, as the RPC representative, to chair the task force. Marlon stated that it was most important for the chairperson to be objective and to hold oneself in check. After some discussion, the task force unanimously elected Chris Cross as Chairman, and Marlon Frink as Vice Chairman.

Frank O'Callaghan then proceeded to describe the study area by referring to a number of aerial photographs and graphics. The study area extends along the approximate 3.5 mile section of the Spaulding Turnpike extending north from the Gosling Road/Pease Boulevard interchange (Exit 1) in Newington, across the Little Bay Bridges, to a point just south of the existing toll booth in Dover. He made reference to a 1996 summary of traffic flow and safety deficiencies that included Exits 3, 4, the Little Bay Bridges, Exit 5 and Exit 6 and which were identified in the recent Spaulding Turnpike Feasibility Study. He also stated that the average annualized daily traffic volumes on the Little Bay Bridges had increased by approximately 20 percent between 1996 and 2001. Frank also reviewed recent traffic accident experience within the study area noting that the total number of accidents (957) during the 1997-2001 period had increased substantially above the total number of accidents (575) for the previous (1992-1996) five-year period. He then described the Exit 4 Interim Safety Plan, a recommendation of the Feasibility Study, which addresses a number of current safety and traffic flow deficiencies associated with entering and exiting the Turnpike at River Road, Nimble Hill Road, the southbound to northbound turnaround (Exit 4N) and the southbound on-ramp from the grade separated turnaround from River Road. This plan is currently under design and scheduled to be constructed in 2005.

Frank then referred to a wall plan depicting issues and opportunities within the study area. In addition to the traffic flow and safety deficiencies which he had previously discussed, he noted the following: the sensitive environmental location including coastal wetlands and the marine ecology, potential historic and prehistoric resources, Hilton Park, the need to minimize impacts to residences and businesses – including noise, the potential for redevelopment, such as the former Drive Inn site, the new Industrial Connector roadway to River Road, and the state bicycle route along US 4 and Boston Harbor Road that traverses the General Sullivan Bridge to the Pease Tradeport via Nimble Hill Road. These are some of the issues and opportunities which will form the context within which the transportation improvement alternatives will be developed. Frank concluded his presentation by referring to a map of the Seacoast MPO communities which identified the 26 municipalities, including Dover and Newington, which would comprise the study area for the socio-economic impact study. This study would focus on the increment of future growth in population and employment that would be expected to occur as a result of the Newington-Dover project. At this point, Frank identified the subconsultant team who would be assisting VHB: RKG Associates would be conducting the socio-economic study; RSG would be responsible for the travel demand modeling; the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory at UNH would be responsible for the analysis of marine resources; the Mechanical Engineering Department at UNH would develop a hydrodynamic model of the current and tides within the general area of the existing bridges; Hardesty & Hanover would assist in the inspection and evaluation of the General Sullivan Bridge; Victoria Bunker and Associates would conduct the prehistoric/archaeological impact analysis; and the Preservation Company would be responsible for cultural and historic impact analysis.

A number of comments and questions followed Frank's presentation. Bruce Woodruff noted that the City of Dover was currently planning a bicycle route that would extend south from Spur Road, run along Boston Harbor Road, loop back under the Turnpike at Hilton Park, and run back north along the existing pedestrian/bicycle path adjacent to Dover Point and then proceed north along Dover Point Road. Bruce also underscored the importance of maintaining/enhancing the grade separated connection between Hilton Park on each side of the Turnpike. With respect to improving the navigability and reducing potential subsurface marine impacts, Tom Fargo suggested reducing the number of bridge piers by considering a new replacement bridge similar to the new Zakim-Bunker Hill Bridge in Boston. Chris Waszczuk responded that affordability would be one criterion that would determine the practicality of all alternatives, including the cable-stayed bridge type that Tom suggested. While these structures are very expensive, nothing at this point in time has been ruled out from consideration.

Tom also inquired as to the status of the Interim Safety Plan, stating that construction funding was proposed for 2002 as noted in the Feasibility Study. Chris responded that the funding had been secured, but that design development has taken longer than initially expected. The project is expected to be bid next year (2004) with construction beginning in the spring of 2005. Marlon Frink inquired as to the status of the ITS/Incident Management Plan for the Little Bay Bridges. Chris Waszczuk responded a project to install permanent and variable message boards was recently advertised. The Incident Management Plan should be up and running later this year.

Chris Waszczuk then resumed the presentation by referring to a number of slides that described the phases and schedule of the study. Project development usually proceeds from the planning stage, with input from the RPCs, through the MPO process, to include projects in the State's 10-Year Transportation Improvement Program. Conceptual design and feasibility studies follow to scope out or identify project development issues. Following the scoping stage, projects advance to a preliminary design and environmental evaluation stage– with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being the highest or most detailed evaluation. The project then advances to Final Design and right-of-way procurement with construction to follow. A study for the Newington-Dover project area was authorized by the state legislature in 1990 and subsequently halted to

allow the completion of the Pease Surface Transportation Master Plan. Following the Master Plan completion, a feasibility study was initiated in 1997 to identify the traffic and safety deficiencies in the area and develop both interim and long-term conceptual improvement plans for further consideration. The project development is currently in the Preliminary Design and Environment Evaluation stage beginning Phase 1 of the five phases of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Those phases are:

- Phase 1 – Project Scoping/Data Collection/Issue Identification
- Phase 2 – Conceptual Alternative Development and Screening
- Phase 3 – Preliminary Design/Impact Assessment/DEIS
- Phase 4 – Public Hearing
- Phase 5 – Final EIS

Marlon Frink inquired as to the future planning horizon year. Chris Waszczuk responded 2025. Chris then described the major elements of each phase of the EIS process. Phase 1 includes the collection of data, base mapping, assessing existing conditions, identifying the affected environment and issues of concern, establishing the Purpose and Need, projecting future travel demands, identifying a range of potential alternatives and developing a scoping report. Phase 2 involves refining and evaluating potential alternatives, screening alternatives and developing a constraints matrix, developing a reasonable range of alternatives and a rationale report. Phase 3 – the Draft EIS – includes further refinement and development of reasonable alternatives, the assessing of impacts, identification of a preferred alternative, the identification of mitigation, and the publishing of the Draft EIS. Phase 4 focuses on the joint public hearing which includes the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and NHDOT. Permit applications will also be submitted and the Commissioner's Report and Special Committee Report (of the Governor's Council) will be prepared subsequent to the hearing. Phase 5 involves the Final EIS which includes confirmation of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA), approval of the mitigation package, and publishing of the FEIS. FHWA's record of decision (ROD) and the ACOE permit decision follows.

Bill O'Donnell interjected that the mitigation package approved by the ACOE would be permit specific (Wetlands) and that other mitigation (i.e. noise mitigation, etc.) would also likely be included as part of the overall project development.

Chris Waszczuk then reviewed the project schedule:

- Phase 1: February 2003 -- December 2003
- Phase 2: January 2004 -- August 2004
- Phase 3: September 2004 -- November 2005
- Phase 4: February 2006 -- Public Hearing
- Phase 5: March 2006 -- December 2006 (It was noted that the slide contained a typographical error (December 2007))
- FHWA Record of Decision: March 2007
- Final Design: March 2007 to October 2011
- Construction: October 2008 to June 2014

Tom Fargo asked if the 5.5 year construction period reflected fiscal or physical constraints. Chris Waszczuk responded that at this time both were constraints but as the project evolved and details became known, construction phasing could allow some time savings and a more compressed construction schedule. Tom suggested that prefabricated modular construction – such as the Zakim-Bunker Hill Bridge – might reduce the construction schedule.



Chris Waszczuk then reviewed the Phase 1 Milestone Targets:

- Notice-of-Intent (Federal Register) – May 7, 2003 (targeted date)
- Scoping Meeting – June 25, 2003
- ACOE Confirms Project Purpose and Need – September 26, 2003
- Scoping Report – December 18, 2003

Anticipated Meetings include ATF meetings tentatively scheduled for July 30 and October 29, 2003, and a public information meeting in November 2003.

Marlon Frink inquired as to the location for the Scoping Meeting and if there was a scoping report available to review. Chris Waszczuk responded that the meeting would be at Newington Town Hall and that there is no report available – the scoping report would follow the meeting and is scheduled to be published in December 2003.

Chris Waszczuk then touched on the public participation process. In addition to the schedule of ATF meetings throughout the course of the study, other outreach efforts would include public information meetings, resource agency meetings, periodic newsletters, and a project web site – [www.newington-dover.com](http://www.newington-dover.com). The web site is active and will contain meeting minutes, plans, documents and other relevant project information as the study advances. A contact list will be developed from individuals who subscribe to the site's mailing list and wish to be informed of upcoming information. The site also offers the opportunity for public comment from which a commonly asked questions section will be developed.

At this point in the meeting, Chris Waszczuk solicited comments and questions from the ATF members. Bill O'Donnell confirmed the date, time and location of the Scoping Meeting – 4:00 PM, June 25, 2003 at Newington Town Hall. Marlon Frink requested that appropriate plans be posted at least one week in advance of the meeting at the Town Hall. Chris Waszczuk concurred. Marlon initiated discussion about the study area stopping short of including the Dover tollbooth, and questioned the soundness of not including toll related issues. Chris responded that the toll issues were not part of the study; the Department had conducted a statewide toll study. He emphasized that toll-related issues are very sensitive legislative level issues. The State's revenue loss due to toll elimination suggest an increase of state gasoline taxes to make up for the shortfall, a proposal that the state legislature has been reluctant to pursue. Tying the Newington-Dover project to the toll issues could indefinitely delay or derail the project. Bruce Woodruff stated that implementation of electronic toll collection scheduled for 2004 would help reduce the congestion at the tollbooth. Chris Waszczuk reiterated that we would work through the congestion problem, but would not be conducting another toll study. Bruce Woodruff suggested that Mike O'Malley of the Turnpike Bureau appear at the next ATF meeting to discuss the Turnpike Toll Study and toll related issues. [Agenda Item]

Tom Fargo noted the system constraint of US 4 being two lanes. Jack Newick stated that the cross-section of US 4 and the Scammell Bridge was contentious for the Town of Durham and others and reflected the concerns of many. Chris Cross suggested that the NHDOT discuss area system constraints at the next ATF meeting [Agenda Item]. John Burke asked if the travel demand model would reflect system constraints including Woodbury Avenue. Frank O'Callaghan replied that it would.

Chris Waszczuk then reviewed the project's purpose—to increase transportation efficiency and to reduce safety problems – and the project's need – current capacity constraints, substandard roadway geometry, a 20-year future traffic volume projection of approximately 100,000 vehicles

per day and a substantial number of study area traffic accidents. Jack Newick offered that the need for additional lanes on the bridge is apparent.

Bruce Woodruff emphasized that, based on his Exit 10 experience, the Purpose and Need Statement needs to be simple and strong. It is critical to the project's development. He also noted the following items should be included in the project need: Hilton Park is a destination, which is pedestrian oriented and needs to be connected to the bicycle system; the Turnpike and bridges are just as critical to the movement of freight and commerce as they are to commuter traffic; there is no other viable route; non-motorized traffic – pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations across the Bay and beneath the Turnpike – are also important.

Chris Waszczuk concurred with Bruce with respect to the importance of the Purpose and Need Statement. A well-defined justified purpose and need statement drives the process for alternative consideration, in-depth analysis, and ultimate selection. Chris suggested that members of the ATF review the draft statement, discuss it among themselves via e-mail if desired, and submit comments to him at their earliest convenience. The ATF will discuss the revised draft Purpose and Need Statement at their next meeting with the intent of adopting a final version.

Tom Fargo made reference to the Feasibility Study and stated that the average annual traffic growth rate assumption of 1.8 percent had been exceeded based on the increase of traffic between 1996-2001 (20 percent) that Frank had mentioned earlier. While underscoring the need for the project, he raised the question of model accuracy. Frank responded that the modeling conducted in 1997 was based on the best available information and was an average annual rate projected for 25 years. For example, traffic volume growth between 2000 and 2001 was 0.0%. As part of the current EIS study, the regional travel demand model is being updated based on 2003 traffic volume data and a current survey of seacoast residents on their travel characteristics. Cliff Sinnott added that recent 2000 census and journey-to-work data would also be used in the model's update and calibration to current conditions.

Marlon Frink asked if the ATF could meet more frequently than quarterly. Chris Waszczuk responded that a quarterly schedule was a guideline and that the ATF could meet more frequently on an as needed basis. Chris Cross suggested that, in addition to meeting, the use of e-mail be utilized to assist in sharing information among the ATF members and the Department. The schedule for the next two ATF meetings was confirmed – Wednesday, July 30, 2003, at 6:30 PM in Dover, and Wednesday, October 29, 2003, at 6:30 PM in Newington (in a larger room). Agenda will be mailed two weeks in advance of meeting. ATF meeting notes will be available, and posted on the web site, within 2-3 weeks following a meeting. Contact information on ATF members will be finalized and posted on the web site. E-mail addresses of the committee members will not be included on the project's website. In response to a question from Jim Campbell, it was agreed that ATF members would send comments on the Purpose and Need to Chris Waszczuk. John Burke asked if the Newington-Dover traffic projects would be coordinated with the US 1 project. Chris responded that the same traffic model will be utilized for both projects.

At this point, questions and comments from the public were solicited. Cynthia Copeland requested that the socio-economic study area be expanded to include the municipalities of Wakefield, Brookfield, Middleton and New Durham. While the population in these communities is relatively low, they are the fastest growing towns in the region and town officials are interested in the study. Chris responded that the socio-economic database for these communities is not readily available, as in the other communities. Further discussion with the modeling sub-consultant will be necessary to discuss this dilemma. Cynthia also inquired as to whether there would be an air quality and noise assessment as part of the study. Frank O'Callaghan stated that both air and noise analyses will be conducted.

It was noted that Fred Pearson and Cliff Sinnott were alternate ATF members representing, respectively, the SRPC and the RPC. Chris Waszczuk stated that alternates would fill in/vote in the absence of the designated ATF member. Alternates' attendance is welcomed, as is the public's. Alternates will be listed on the list of ATF members. Bill O'Donnell noted that ex-officio members, such as himself and Chris Waszczuk would not vote. Chris Waszczuk reminded the members that the ATF is an advisory group, not a decision-making body. He also clarified that reaching consensus on various issues is more desirable than voting.

Cliff Sinnott added some historical perspective to the previous discussion on toll issues. To the best of his recollection, the original 1989 legislation that authorized the feasibility study included a study area north from the Portsmouth Traffic Circle to a point beyond the Dover tolls. Subsequent legislation in 1990 reduced the study area from a point, south of the tollbooth to Exit 1 at Pease Boulevard/Gosling Road.

An attendee inquired as to the feasibility of rail alternatives. It was mentioned that potential rail alternatives will be assessed as part of the EIS process; for example, the rail connection to the Pease Tradeport will be considered, as well as passenger service alternatives, if any.

An attendee inquired as to the public availability of e-mails or other correspondence between ATF members. Chris Waszczuk explained that individual e-mails will not be posted on the website; however, a summary of ATF member discussion will be presented at future ATF meetings and noted in the ATF meeting minutes, which will be posted on the website.

Chris Cross concluded the meeting by stating that the communities have provided a group of talented, experienced, interested and committed individuals to the ATF who represent the values of their communities; the ATF will function as a viaduct for input and feedback to their respective constituencies.





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603 644-0888  
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**Meeting  
Notes**

Attendees: Chris Cross,  
Chair of the Advisory Task Force  
Marlon Frink  
Steven Stancel (for Bruce Woodruff)  
Bill O'Donnell  
Jack Newick  
Sandy Hislop  
Maria Stowell  
Tom Fargo  
Chris Waszczuk  
Fred Pearson (Alternate)  
Members of the Public (See Attached List)

Date/Time: July 30, 2003, 6:30 p.m.

Project No.: 51425

Place: Dover City Hall

Re: Newington-Dover (11238)  
ATF Meeting No. 2

Notes taken by: Peter Walker

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At 6:35 Chris Cross, Chair of the Advisory Task Force (ATF), called the meeting to order.

**COMMITTEE'S ROLE and RESPONSIBILITIES**

After introduction of the ATF members in attendance, Mr. Chris Cross, ATF Chair, reviewed the role of the ATF. He explained that the ATF is a citizens group, which serves as a conduit for local concerns and issues for the Newington-Dover study. The ATF will meet quarterly for the next three (3) years. Mr. Cross acknowledged that the EIS process is a long one, but explained that the process is designed to allow for input and proper study of all of the issues associated with the project. The ATF will alternate meeting sites between Dover and Newington. The Chair encouraged the ATF and members of the public to follow the progress of the project through the project's website ([www.newington-dover.com](http://www.newington-dover.com)). Throughout the EIS process there will be not only a number of ATF meetings but other public informational meetings and eventually the public process will culminate in a public hearing, which is currently scheduled for February 2006.

Mr. Cross explained the process for setting the agenda for the ATF meetings. About three weeks prior to the ATF's meeting a draft agenda will be circulated to the ATF. The agenda will be finalized approximately two weeks prior to an ATF meeting and will be circulated in a public announcement approximately one week to 10 days prior to the actual meeting. Members of the public who wish to have an item added to the agenda may contact DOT directly or may contact any member of the ATF to suggest the agenda item. The Chair indicated that ATF meetings will typically be scheduled to run for about two (2) hours and will be held in the evening.

any member of the ATF to suggest the agenda item. The Chair indicated that ATF meetings will typically be scheduled to run for about two (2) hours and will be held in the evening.

Mr. Cross asked Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT Project Manager, to add any additional thoughts on the role and responsibilities of the ATF. Chris Waszczuk stressed that the ATF is an important means for public feedback during the planning of the project. He mentioned that in the future, a bullet item for ATF committee feedback/questions/comments will be added to the agenda to solicit input and encourage discussion on type of feedback and comments the ATF has received from the community. Mr. Waszczuk explained that he understood many in attendance would like to know details of the final plan now, but he stressed that the project is still in its very early stages. Data is being gathered and a preliminary study of the area undertaken to support the development of any alternatives.

The Task Force then took up review of their April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes which had been previously circulated. Tom Fargo moved to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed on a unanimous vote.

Mr. Cross then solicited questions and comments from the ATF Committee Members. Hearing none, the Chair then turned the meeting to the next agenda item.

## **PROJECT UPDATE**

### **Environmental**

Peter Walker provided an update on the status of environmental studies. He explained that the EIS is currently in its first phase, which involves collecting all published information on environmental resources as well as conducting numerous field investigations. This information will be developed into an analysis of existing conditions in the project area this fall, and will form the basis for impact assessments in a later phase of the EIS.

During this data collection phase, VHB and NHDOT have contacted all of the local, state and federal resource agencies and community organizations that might have an interest in the project. Mr. Walker reported that approximately 90% of the published information regarding resources in the corridor had been obtained and reviewed.

On-going field studies include mapping of wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmlands in the corridor. Additionally, VHB is working with the University of New Hampshire to develop mapping of the inter-tidal and sub-tidal areas in the vicinity of the Little Bay and General Sullivan Bridges. Mr. Walker briefly reviewed a map depicting habitat resources in the inter-tidal zone. Mr. Walker reported that an early finding of the sub-tidal mapping indicates that the habitat in the vicinity of the bridges is more characteristic of offshore areas than estuarine habitat.

Other resources being investigated include threatened and endangered species. Mr. Walker reported that the State of New Hampshire has mapped three (3) state listed rare plant species including Bulbous Bittercress, Prolific Knotweed, and Small Spikerush as well as one population of a state listed bird species, Henlow's Sparrow. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated that Bald Eagle and New England Cottontail Rabbit may occur in the project study area. Additionally, the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory has mapped two (2) exemplary natural communities on the Pease Tradeport property.

The data collection phase includes looking for areas of potential contamination that might be affected by the project. VHB has consulted with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the EPA regarding contamination at the former Pease Air Force Base. Mr. Walker also briefly reviewed a map of the aquifers in the vicinity including a relatively high

yield area on Dover Point and the wellhead protection zone on the northwest portion of the study area. Other on-going investigations include inventories of the historic architectural resources and the historic and prehistoric archeological resources in the project area.

Mr. Walker then turned the meeting over to Frank O'Callaghan, VHB Project Manager, for an update on the traffic and engineering aspects of the project.

### **Traffic**

Mr. O'Callaghan reported that the Department of Transportation and the Regional Planning Commissions are currently conducting additional traffic counts. Since June, approximately 46 different data collections have occurred in the study area in order to provide current conditions for the traffic model.

Additionally, the project has conducted a stated preference survey, which will be used to update the travel demand model. Approximately 58,000 flyers were distributed in the project area including the Hampton tollbooths, the Dover tollbooths, and the Rochester tollbooths with the intent to receive 1000 responses. Information on the survey was also available at the City Halls in the project areas and at other locations. Approximately 1,444 responses were received. Data from the survey is currently being reduced with the results expected to be posted on the web by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. O'Callaghan reviewed some of the preliminary findings of the survey:

- 3 out of 4 of the respondents were residents of the area
- 75% of the trips started at home
- 60% of the trips ended at a work place
- 13% of the trips were work related
- 4% were for shopping
- 7% were recreational
- 78% of the respondents drove alone
- 2% of the trips were by bus
- 0.5% of the trips were on bicycle
- 0.2% were pedestrian trips

### **Scoping Meeting Feedback**

Mr. O'Callaghan reviewed feedback received from the public and resource agencies at the June 25<sup>th</sup> Scoping Meeting. Mr. O'Callaghan explained that minutes from the Scoping Meeting are currently posted on the project website.

The following issues were raised during the Scoping Meeting:

1. One participant asked why only the Dover portion of the Scammel Bridge and Bellamy River was included in the study area. The commenter inquired as to why the Durham portion of that area is excluded. Mr. O'Callaghan explained that no work is expected to occur on the Scammel Bridge or the Durham side of the bridge. This area is remote from the area where work is expected to occur under this project.
2. Others asked why the tollbooths and the area north of the tollbooths are not included in the study area. Mr. O'Callaghan explained that a long-range study of the Route 16 Corridor showed that the section of the Spaulding Turnpike north of the tollbooth would remain at a satisfactory level of service even 20 years into the future. This is in contrast to the conditions in the current study area. Mr. O'Callaghan also indicated that the

tollbooth issue is of statewide importance and indicated that further discussion on that subject would occur later in the ATF meeting.

3. Another comment relating to the study area recommended that Woodbury Ave. from Gosling Road to Market Street Extension be included in the current study. Mr. O'Callaghan indicated that the portion of Woodbury Ave. between the Turnpike and Gosling Road is included and that if the traffic analysis indicated a need that further areas of Woodbury Ave. may be included.
4. A representative of the Office of State Planning pointed out that the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department has plans to reconfigure the existing boat ramp at Hilton Park, and encouraged DOT to coordinate with Fish and Game. Mr. O'Callaghan indicated that the project team had met with the Fish and Game Department to review this issue.
5. Many residents inquired about the property impacts associated with the project. Mr. O'Callaghan indicated that the project has not progressed enough to make an accurate assessment of what property impacts might occur. He pointed out that the February 2000 Feasibility Study was very preliminary in nature and that the current study would reevaluate all prudent alternatives in much greater detail.
6. Another common issue regarded notification of project meetings. Mr. O'Callaghan reviewed the process for subscribing to an e-mail notification list. Alternatively, interested parties can leave their name with the ATF at current or future meetings. Mr. O'Callaghan explained that notice of future meetings would be issued 10 days prior to the meeting. He commented that the website seems to be a useful means for providing information about the project. The site has had over 2,600 visits by more than 2,000 different individuals since it was posted at the end of April 2003. The most frequently visited areas of the website include the photos and maps area as well as the summary of project highlights.
7. In response to comments at the April ATF meeting as well as at the Scoping Meeting, Mr. O'Callaghan pointed out the socio-economic study area had been extended to include the four (4) Strafford County communities of New Durham, Brookfield, Middleton, and Wakefield.
8. Other issues discussed included concerns regarding noise from the highway, which will be assessed in the Environmental Impact Statement.
9. The Army Corps of Engineers commented that project mitigation for wetlands impacts could include the removal of historic fill areas in the Little Bay Piscataqua River area.

### **Conceptual Alternatives**

Mr. O'Callaghan reviewed the potential range of alternatives that will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement including:

- No Build
- Transportation System Management improvements
- Transportation Demand Management measures
- Upgrade of the corridor
- Combination of the above



With regard to upgrading of the Little Bay Bridges, Mr. O'Callaghan reviewed five (5) conceptual cross sections of potential reconfigurations:

- Widening the existing Little Bay Bridges on both sides of the bridge
- Widening on the east side of the bridge
- Widening on the west side of the bridge
- Constructing an entirely new bridge
- Constructing an entirely new bridge with a multi use path

Mr. O'Callaghan indicated that alternatives that involve widening the existing bridges would need to consider the seismic condition of the study area. He pointed out that the original bridges were not designed to current seismic standards. Also, visibility over the crest on the bridge is limited and will be a consideration with the bridge alternatives.

Mr. O'Callaghan updated the ATF on the status of the regional travel demand model. Work on this model is ongoing at the Regional Planning Commissions and through VHB's subconsultant RSG. Mr. O'Callaghan expects that a calibrated model will be available during the first week of September and that the results of the model will be presented to the ATF at the next meeting scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was then opened to questions from the ATF on the project update.

#### **ATF DISCUSSION ON PROJECT UPDATE**

Marlon Frink inquired as to whether standard lane and shoulder widths are required for federal funding of the project. Bill O'Donnell indicated that the FHWA prefers standard lane configurations but there is a process for approval of lesser configurations. Marlon Frink suggested that the study consider the feasibility of constructing directional lanes to provide 4 lanes to handle the am/pm peak volumes of traffic and 2 lanes for the opposing traffic with the center two lanes reversible. This could potentially minimize the overall impacts and speed construction. He noted that the predominant traffic in the morning is southbound, whereas traffic is predominately northbound in the afternoon. He noted bridges in the New York/New Jersey area where the direction of travel in certain lanes changes depending on traffic conditions. Mr. Frink also suggested that the study address the reuse of the General Sullivan Bridge. After some discussion, Chris Waszczuk and Frank O'Callaghan indicated that both ideas would be considered during the alternatives analysis.

Tom Fargo explained that he has heard some discussion of bridge alternatives, but would like to know when decisions regarding the bridges (such as determination of bridge type) would be made, including the fate of the General Sullivan Bridge. He expressed some concern that decisions would be made behind closed doors. He stated that there are issues with the profile, navigation, and seismic vulnerability, which need to be considered. Chris Waszczuk replied that no decisions regarding the project would be made behind closed doors. He explained the Department has formed the Advisory Task Force explicitly to ensure public involvement in the decision making process. Over the next year, the project will be developing an alternatives analysis that would eventually lead to a preferred alternative. Public Informational meetings and Advisory Task Force meetings will be held at different stages of the project's development to discuss various issues and build consensus and community support. Chris Cross, ATF Chair, reiterated that the project is still in an early phase and that the intent is to have enough time to do a thorough analysis and adequate studies. He noted that if there is enough demand from the public that the project may develop solutions quicker.

Jack Newick commented that he believed that anything less than four (4) lanes in both north and south directions would be a disaster to the seacoast area. He stated that he could not support "a Band-Aid" solution. Chris Waszczuk replied that the project has \$100 million programmed for construction and that it is the Department's intent to find a solution that will handle the projected traffic, 20 to 25 years into the future.

### **PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT**

The discussion then turned to the project Purpose and Need Statement.

Mr. Cross stated that the Purpose and Need Statement has been posted on the web for the past several months. He gave some background on the Purpose and Need Statement indicating that it forms the basis for the evaluation of alternatives and later phases. He then opened the discussion to the ATF Committee. Chris Waszczuk indicated that he had received some comments from ATF and had made several changes accordingly. He suggested that the ATF review the changes made from the original April 25<sup>th</sup> draft and requested that the ATF adopt the Purpose and Need Statement as amended. He noted that resource agencies would still have an opportunity to comment and possibly make changes to the final Purpose and Need Statement.

Mr. Waszczuk explained that the Purpose and Need would be presented in the Environmental Impact Statement. Any alternative that does not meet the Purpose and Need would not be carried forward for impact analysis.

The ATF reviewed the substantive changes made to the April 25<sup>th</sup> draft Purpose and Need statement as follows:

1. The project purpose was amended to refer to transportation system management improvement as an option.
2. The term "enhancing" replaced the term "reactivating" in reference to rail service. In response to a question from Tom Fargo, Mr. Waszczuk explained that there is a commuter rail line in the vicinity. Service on the Portland to Boston Rail Corridor could potentially be enhanced should studies show a benefit towards reducing traffic on the Turnpike, but the basic purpose of the project is not directly related to rail service. There was also a discussion of the existing rail lines within the study area. Chris Waszczuk said that those rail corridors would likely be preserved but not necessarily reactivated.
3. Reference to the Spaulding Turnpike as a major artery for freight was added to the project need.
4. A Paragraph referencing the inefficient and circuitous use of the turnpike between residential and commercial/industrial areas was added.
5. A reference to the seismic performance of the Little Bay Bridges was added to the project need.

Following Mr. Waszczuk's summary, the ATF discussed the Purpose and Need Statement.

Tom Fargo commented that a constituent of his had suggested that the Purpose and Need Statement include a reference to the bridges as a gateway. The task force discussed a proposed change to the project purpose that would incorporate this idea. After some discussion the ATF agreed that the appropriate place for this change would be in the first sentence of the project need as follows:

*"The Spaulding Turnpike is eastern New Hampshire's major limited access north-south highway, servicing as a gateway linking the Seacoast Region with Concord, the eastern portion of the Lakes Region, and the White Mountain."*

Steve Stancel suggested that the Purpose and Need Statement be amended to reflect that the project has to minimize environmental, recreational and neighborhood impacts. Chris Waszczuk commented that he had never seen such a reference in a project Purpose and Need statement, presumably because that concept is so much a part of the environmental impact statement. Tom Fargo agreed with Mr. Stancel's comments and requested that the Purpose and Need statement be amended to incorporate the idea that the project will minimize impact to residential areas. The ATF considered tabling adoption of the Purpose and Need Statement in order to allow time to consider the issue. Jack Newick encouraged the ATF to resolve the Purpose and Need issue at the current meeting. He agreed with the idea of adding reference to minimizing property impacts to the project purpose.

Bill O'Donnell suggested the following revision to the project purpose statement, which the ATF eventually adopted:

*"The purpose of this project is to improve transportation efficiency and reduce safety problems, while minimizing social, economic, and environmental impacts, for an approximate 3.5-mile section of the Spaulding Turnpike extending north from the Gosling Road / Pease Boulevard Interchange (Exit 1) in the Town of Newington, across the Little Bay Bridges, to a point just south of the existing toll facility in the City of Dover."*

With the two changes made, the ATF voted to adopt the Purpose and Need Statement.

#### **TOLL STUDY**

Mike O'Malley of New Hampshire DOT's Bureau of Turnpikes briefed the ATF on issues relating to the Dover tolls. Mike explained that in February 2000, the Governor and Council had approved a study of the entire toll system in New Hampshire. The study looked at four main elements including:

- The Merrimack Tolls
- The Circumferential Highway in Nashua and Hudson
- Congestion at the Hampton Tolls
- Elimination of all statewide tolls over a period of 20 years.

Mr. O'Malley explained that tollbooths in New Hampshire raise \$64 million per year in revenue. \$30 million pays for operation of the highways including maintenance, salt, and equipment. At the Dover tolls, the Turnpike Bureau processes approximately 13 million transactions per year and takes in \$4.7 million in revenue.

Mr. O'Malley explained that improvements to the Dover tolls had recently been made, in part to prepare for a planned electronic toll system known as "E-Z Pass." The tollbooths in Dover can currently process between 450 and 600 cars per hour per lane. With the E-Z Pass system the tolls will be able to process as many as 1,200 cars per hour per lane. Mr. O'Malley reported that the Department of Transportation expects to have E-Z Pass at the Dover tollbooth to be in place by the end of 2004. There are no further improvements planned at the toll facility in the State's Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan. Mr. O'Malley also pointed out that no matter what happens to the tolls it will not solve the problems with the Little Bay Bridges. It is the Department's opinion that the Dover toll is adequate and will be adequate for the next 20 years.

The discussion was then opened to questions and comments from the ATF. Tom Fargo commented that he believes the main concern with regard to the tollbooths is the amount of noise generated in that area. Chris Waszczuk explained that as part of the environmental impact statement for the Newington to Dover project noise associated with the highway would be studied and that mitigation in the vicinity of the tolls would occur if warranted.

Marlon Frink expressed the concern that if the bridges and highway are improved then congestion in the corridor will move to the tollbooth. He asked why the tollbooth could not be moved north to the vicinity near an existing cemetery. Chris Waszczuk explained that capacity, safety, and noise concerns leading up to the tollbooths will be studied. Should capacity and safety issues be identified, a project may "spin-off" of the current project. He indicated that a proposal to move the tollbooths and the impact associated with moving the tollbooths would need to be further studied outside the scope of the current project.

Mike O'Malley suggested that moving the tollbooths to the cemetery area may be feasible but with the new expanded 8 lane tollbooths and the E-Z Pass system he believes congestion will not be a problem. Therefore, he does not anticipate a reason to move the tollbooths.

A member of the public suggested that the Dover toll be eliminated and that the 50-cent toll be added at the Rochester tollbooth. Mike O'Malley replied that directive would need to come from either the Governor and Council or through special legislation. Such a project would also need to be added to the Department's 10-year plan.

Kevin Smith, a Dover resident, asked if the tollbooths would need to be further widened in order to accommodate E-Z Pass. He also asked if the E-Z Pass system would work with motorcycles. Mike O'Malley replied that no further widening of the tollbooths would be necessary and that the system would work with motorcycles.

Roy Josselyn, a Dover resident, inquired about toll elimination costs. Mr. O'Malley replied that the toll elimination cost involves the fact that the Dover tolls raised \$4.7 million dollars per year that would be lost if they were eliminated. Additionally, there would be construction costs associated with the removal of the Dover tolls. The lost revenue would need to be replaced, presumably through the bonding of money for the highway system.

Chris Waszczuk stressed that tolls are a statewide legislative issue and need to be studied on a statewide basis in order to be fair. Other locales have expressed similar desires to eliminate or move toll plazas. Mr. Waszczuk reminded the audience that the core need for the project is to improve transportation efficiency and safety in vicinity of the Little Bay Bridges. He indicated that inclusion of the Dover tolls issue in the EIS would lead to delay of the project, which would not be good for Dover and Newington.

Marlon Frink commented that members of the public that are concerned about the tollbooths should contact their state representatives and the Governor and Council. Chris Cross, Chair of the ATF, suggested that the toll issues could be raised through the Regional Planning Commission.

Kevin Smith, Dover resident, commented that the Environmental Impact Statement should account for the pollution that is a result of the tolls.

In closing the discussion on tolls, Chris Cross acknowledged that the tolls will remain in place and that the EIS study should move forward acknowledging the constraint posed by the tolls.

#### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (GENERAL PUBLIC)

At 9:00 p.m. Chris Cross, ATF Chair, opened the meeting to other general comments from the public.

Alice Briggs, a resident of Cote Drive in Dover, expressed concern about Pomeroy Cove on the east side of Dover Point. She stated that as a long time resident she has seen the influence of freshwater and sediment on the cove. She pointed out that the cove is important ecologically as well as historically stating that in the past Pomeroy Cove was the landing site for ships. Peter Walker replied that Pomeroy Cove has already been acknowledged as a significant constraint to the project. The consulting team is mapping habitat in the cove. He stated that stormwater quality in the vicinity will undoubtedly become an important issue as the project moves forward and that a good engineering solution to this issue would be sought.

#### **NEXT ATF MEETING**

Mr. Cross announced that the next meeting of the ATF would be on October 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Newington Town Hall. He suggested that any member of the public could contact him to request that an item be added to the meeting agenda. Chris Waszczuk suggested that the bulk of the next meeting agenda would be a summary of the Scoping Report and data collection phases.

At approximately 9:10 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

NEWINGTON-DOVER  
NH 16/US 4/SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)  
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING  
DOVER CITY HALL  
JULY 30, 2003

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Name Elmer George  
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Name Sylvia Poser  
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NEWINGTON-DOVER  
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)  
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING  
DOVER CITY HALL  
JULY 30, 2003

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NEWINGTON-DOVER  
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)  
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING  
DOVER CITY HALL  
JULY 30, 2003

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please add us to your

(Mailing list :)

7/30/03

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Have no access to web site. ←





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## Meeting Notes

Attendees: Chris Cross, ATF Chairman  
Marlon Frink, ATF Vice Chairman  
Jack Newick  
Rad Nichols (Alternate)  
Maria Stowell  
Rick Card  
Tom Fargo  
Bruce Woodruff  
John Burke  
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA  
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT  
Mike Dugas, NHDOT  
Marc Laurin, NHDOT  
Jim Colburn, NHDOT  
Steve Lawe, RSG  
Pete Walker, VHB  
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB  
Members of the Public  
(see attached list)

Date/Time: October 29, 2003

Project No.: 5142500

Place: Newington Town Hall

Re: Newington-Dover (11238)  
ATF Meeting No. 3

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

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Chris Cross, ATF Chairman, opened the meeting at 6:40 PM.

### COMMITTEE'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chris welcomed the attendees and reviewed the meeting's agenda. He noted that there was no representative of the US Coast Guard (USCG) at this evening's meeting, but expected USCG representation at the next ATF meeting. He stated that ATF members have been conversing with study area business owners and residents soliciting input for the study, and that ATF meetings are an opportunity for the public to ask questions and offer comments. Chris then introduced Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT Project Manager, who in turn, introduced Frank O'Callaghan and Pete Walker from VHB, consultants to the NHDOT, and Mike Dugas, Marc Laurin and Jim Colburn

from the NHDOT. Steve Lawe, RSG, was also introduced as the subconsultant responsible for assisting the regional planning commission's update of the Seacoast regional travel demand model.

Chris Cross reminded attendees of the project's website (newington-dover.com) and noted that meeting minutes and study information were hosted on the website. He then requested comments on the draft meeting minutes of the previous (July 30, 2003) ATF meeting. Chris Waszczuk suggested that the meeting number (i.e. the second meeting of the ATF) be added to the cover/page 1 and that subsequent ATF meeting minutes note the meeting number. Chris' suggestion was adopted and the July 30, 2003 Meeting Minutes, as revised, were unanimously approved. Chris Cross then solicited comments or concerns from ATF members. There were no comments or concerns.

### PURPOSE AND NEED

Chris Cross then addressed the project's Purpose and Need (P&N) Statement. He reminded attendees that the P&N Statement is also on the website, and has been reviewed and revised by the ATF and distributed to all federal and state cooperating agencies for review and comment.

Chris Waszczuk updated the attendees on comments received from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The ACOE have crafted their own P&N statement which is not unusual. Chris read the ACOE statement - "the basic purpose of the proposed activity is to allow for the safe and efficient flow of present and future traffic along the Spaulding Turnpike from Pease Gosling Road to the Dover toll facility" which complies with the ACOE's Section 404 guidelines. Chris stated that while the NHDOT would prefer a single P&N statement, however the ACOE customarily crafts their own version to satisfy their regulations which, in the Newington-Dover case, is consistent with the NHDOT/FHWA statement. Bill O'Donnell added that ACOE P&N statements are typically narrow in scope and usually don't consider economic impacts, for example. He stated that in the Newington-Dover case, the ACOE's statement is consistent with the NHDOT/FHWA Purpose and Need Statement and, as such, should not be problematic.

Marlon Frink asked if the ACOE statement would potentially limit the bounds of the study area. Chris responded that the ACOE did not specifically reference the study area map (although the limits are consistent with what is depicted in the study area map). Chris added that the ACOE and others will review and comment on the Scoping Report scheduled to be published for distribution in December 2003.

Chris Waszczuk then distributed a copy of the project Purpose and Need Statement and noted a proposed editorial change under the Need section. He called attention to the first sentence of the third paragraph and stated that while the shoulder width on the Little Bay Bridges is substandard, the existing profile limits driver sight distance, which is not, in and of itself, a geometric deficiency. As such, he proposed changing the first sentence, third paragraph to read as follows:

*"The Turnpike has a number of existing geometric deficiencies including limited sight distance and substandard shoulder width on the Little Bay Bridges and substandard merge, ...."*

A motion was made and unanimously approved to edit the sentence as proposed. [The amended Purpose and Need Statement will be utilized in the study documents and displaced on the project's website.]

### PROJECT UPDATE

Pete Walker initiated the project update by stating that the aerial mapping of the study area was complete and that ground survey checks were in progress and are scheduled to be completed by November 3, 2003. Environmental resource mapping, such as wetlands, wildlife, marine habitat and cultural resources is also complete. He indicated that several of these maps were displayed on the walls. Pete then summarized the issues discussed by the Resource Agencies and public at the recent field meeting in the study area:

- wetland impacts and the need to avoid Pomeroy Cove
- historic structures including the DeRochmont Mansion and the General Sullivan Bridge
- noise impacts with respect to Dover Point residents
- mitigation suggestions including restoration of historic wetland/marine fill and potential water quality improvements to Paul Brook and Pickering Brook that will improve estuarine quality.

Chris Cross asked if the Bloody Point historic district had been acknowledged. Pete replied that the historic district had been noted.

Frank O'Callaghan then briefed the ATF on preliminary bridge investigations by contrasting the Little Bay Bridges with the General Sullivan Bridge. The Little Bay Bridges are characterized by substandard shoulder widths and a 3.5 percent grade which limits driver sight distance to a 60mph design speed (design speed being the maximum safe operating speed governed by the vertical alignment or profile). The 2-lane bridges have minor deterioration along girders and at the expansion joints and the substructure – composed of reinforced concrete – was designed and constructed in 1966 prior to seismic resistance requirements.

Frank then enumerated several factors which would affect the rehabilitation alternatives for the General Sullivan Bridge. The 4 percent grade limits driver sight distance to a 45 mph design speed. The cross-section is limited to 24' of pavement and 2'-11" sidewalks on each side. These geometric characteristics and the continuous truss nature of the structure will preclude the rehabilitation and reuse of the bridge to function as two freeway/turnpike lanes to complement the function and operation of Little Bay Bridges. In addition, the deck, girders and truss members exhibit major deterioration, and there is extensive substructure deterioration. He noted that the piers are composed of unreinforced granite block and mortar, and in conjunction with the low internal redundancy of the truss design and the fatigue associated with the age (1935 construction) of the structure, the General Sullivan Bridge is more vulnerable to a seismic event than the Little Bay Bridges. The General Sullivan Bridge is also historic and subject to lead paint removal and maintenance. Frank noted that the Kimball Chase 1991 inspection and evaluation estimated rehabilitation costs ranging from \$8 to \$16 million depending on the nature and extent of pier reconstruction or replacement. These 1991 cost estimates would be \$12 - \$20 million in 2003 dollars, and may underestimate the cost of painting. For example, the I-95 Piscataqua River Bridge was recently re-painted for approximately \$11.8 million.

Frank's summary precipitated a brief discussion on rehabilitation alternatives and costs for the General Sullivan Bridge to serve either as a local roadway or as an exclusive transit/high occupancy vehicle facility.

Bruce Woodruff stated the need to accurately represent the costs of rehabilitation or demolition since the bridge cannot be allowed to simply sit and deteriorate. Also, it was questioned whether additional in-depth inspections would be undertaken to better estimate the extent of deterioration and nature of rehabilitation. Chris Waszczuk stated that the previous extensive inspections (conducted in the fall of 1990) are sufficient to identify the nature of the rehabilitation effort required and develop reasonable cost estimates. Should a rehabilitation alternative for the General Sullivan Bridge be pursued, then an additional in-depth inspection will be undertaken prior to the development of contract plans. Marlon questioned that it may prove more cost-effective to rehabilitate the bridge than to remove it. Tom Fargo queried as to how one estimates a value on historic significance. Bill O'Donnell noted Section 4(f) requirements and stated that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) advocates keeping the structure as opposed to the USCG who view the structure as a potential threat to navigation and feel that it should be removed. Chris Waszczuk noted that the structure's design, construction and the crossing location contribute to the bridge being noted by SHPO as historically significant with the second highest historic rating in the state.

Chris also explained that the preservation effort of the General Sullivan Bridge must be feasible and prudent, which will be answered by the study. The issue of prudence is somewhat subjective – what level of investment is prudent in rehabilitating the bridge? Bill O'Donnell added that a transportation reuse of the structure would help justify the investment.

A resident inquired as to the original design life of the Little Bay Bridges. Chris Waszczuk responded that 50 years was typical for a 1966 design assuming normal maintenance. Current designs are typically for 50-75 years. The Little Bay Bridges are major structures, serving an important function and located in a moderate seismic area. The bridges are inspected every two years which, in conjunction with travel demand, determines the nature, extent and schedule of maintenance. The northbound and southbound bridges are separate structures and will require seismic retrofitting based on future evaluation.

Frank O'Callaghan then introduced Steve Lawe from RSG to summarize the travel survey and traffic model update. Steve began by reviewing the purpose of the stated preference survey: to assist in updating the regional travel demand model, to estimate Seacoast residents' sensitivity to different transportation mode alternatives, and to assist in developing recommendations on how to improve transportation in the seacoast area. He explained that the survey format was a series of computer-based dynamic questions whereby respondents "state" their preferences given a series of options, and that answers to a question are input to the next question. The survey was designed to support the understanding of potential transportation options. The survey was administered in June 2003 and included 1,537 respondents, approximately 50 percent higher than the 1,000 target response. The survey was computer-internet based with flyers containing the internet web address distributed at many public (toll booths, local transportation centers, city/town halls) areas and at local businesses and colleges. Steve summarized some of the survey findings: 74 percent of respondents were full time seacoast area residents; travel to/from work (60 percent) and work-related business (13 percent) were the most prevalent trip purposes; 78 percent of travelers drove alone; 19 percent shared a ride; and of those who choose not to use a car, cost, congestion and preference for transit were cited as reasons for not driving. The Rockingham and Stafford regional planning commissions are currently reviewing a draft summary report.



Frank O'Callaghan added that approximately 42 percent (660) of the respondents offered comments that he summarized as follows: 32 percent (214) supported implementation of E-Z Pass or electronic toll collection; 12 percent (80) identified the Hampton Toll area as a problem which Frank noted was prior to the recent one-way toll experiment; 26 percent (169) cited a need to widen the Little Bay Bridges and 5 percent (31) stated a need to accelerate the schedule; 7 percent (43) indicated that alternatives to driving alone must be competitive with respect to travel time, cost, and frequency and convenience of service; 6 percent (40) suggested train service alternatives; and 3 percent (22) stated the need for more bikeways and shoulder areas for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Steve Lawe then summarized the process to update the seacoast regional traffic model, the purpose of which is to estimate how future traffic patterns are impacted by land use and transportation policy alternatives, and to enhance the overall understanding of the transportation planning process. He identified data requirements such as seasonal and year round housing; auto ownership and household size; employment; roadway network characteristics such as functional classification, number of lanes, capacity, speeds, and intersection controls; transit routing and costs; tolls and auto costs; travel patterns, such as trip generation, length of trips, mode choice, and choice of travel route; traffic counts; transit ridership; the 1992 seacoast household survey; and the aforementioned 2003 stated preference survey. Steve touched on the sensitivity of the model with respect to infrastructure improvements and changes in land use, and noted that increases in capacity may attract new vehicle trips and that increases in vehicle cost may decrease vehicle trips. The results or output of the travel demand model include: roadway volumes and delays, transit ridership, shifts in travel patterns and shifts in land use patterns. Chris Cross asked as to when the future travel forecast would be available? Steve responded that following a coordination meeting scheduled for November 3, he expects the future (2025) base case (existing transportation system) travel forecast to be available before November 15, 2003. Chris asked if there were any questions from the ATF or public; there were none.

Frank O'Callaghan then continued the presentation by reminding the ATF that the project team was approaching the completion of Phase I of the 5 Phase Study, and that Phase 1, Project Scoping, established the database and identified the issues against which the quantity and quality of impacts associated with potential transportation improvement alternatives could be measured. He summarized a number of transportation inventories. With respect to traffic volumes, he reviewed seasonal variations, vehicle classification and traffic growth along the Turnpike. Average daily traffic on the Little Bay Bridges has grown from 30,000 vehicles in 1980 at an average annual rate of 4% to approximately 70,800 in 2002. Most recently, annual traffic growth has declined to approximately 1.8 percent (2001-2002). The analysis of 2003 peak hour traffic operating conditions revealed capacity constrained conditions in the AM peak hour extending south from the SB Exit 6 on-ramp to the Woodbury Avenue Exit 3 off-ramp; PM peak hour traffic conditions are capacity constrained NB from the Exit 4N turnaround to the Dover Point Road off-ramp at Exit 6, and SB from the SB on-ramp from the River Road turnaround to the Exit 4N turnaround. A number of geometric deficiencies (e.g. substandard turning radii, acceleration and deceleration lanes, and inadequate weaving distances) were also identified at Exit 2, Exit 4, Exit 5 and at Cote Drive. US 4 at the Scammell Bridge is also capacity constrained during both the AM and PM peak hours.

In response to a question from the public regarding the Exxon-Mobil Quick Mart access to the Turnpike at Nimble Hill Road, Chris Waszczuk replied that the interim safety plan for Exit 4, and scheduled for implementation in 2005, will improve safety, access and traffic operations at the service station location and other Exit 4 and 4N locations.

Frank noted that study area accidents (908) during the 1997-2001 5-year period had significantly increased (58 percent) over the number of accidents (575) that occurred during the previous 5-year period (1992-1996). He further noted that while traffic volume increased at 3% per year during the 1997-2002 period, traffic accidents increased by 11% per year, increasing from 144 in 1997 to 220 in 2001. The location of highest accident frequency is the Little Bay Bridges – 97 accidents (11% of total) in 5-year period, with 28 accidents in 2001.

With respect to transit and commuter bus service, Frank indicated that the current levels of service, routing, operations, ridership and planned service improvement data had been compiled for study area providers. The study team had recently met with or contacted representatives of COAST, Wildcat Transit, C&J and Vermont Transit. He noted that COAST was planning implementation of a new downtown Dover loop service in 2004, and express bus service between Rochester and the Portsmouth Transportation Center in 2006. Wildcat has plans to expand service on all its routes. Both C&J and Vermont Transit provide commuter service to Boston – C&J from Dover, Durham (weekends) and Portsmouth; and Vermont Transit from Portland, through Portsmouth to Boston.

Seven (7) rail corridors were also inventoried: Mainline West, running from Plaistow to Rollinsford, which provides freight and passenger service – that being the Downeaster operating between Boston and Portland with stops in Exeter, Durham and Dover; the East Main Line connecting the Portland Yard with Foss Manufacturing in Hampton; the Portsmouth Branch, connecting the Mainline West with the East Mainline; the Newington Branch which extends from the Portsmouth Yard 3.5 miles parallel to the Piscataqua River; the out of service Pease Spur; the abandoned Sawyer-Dover Branch; and the Conway Branch extending from Rollinsford at the Mainline West north through Ossipee to Conway. The East Mainline, Portsmouth Branch, and Newington Branch are active freight lines with track conditions limiting speeds to 5 mph. The Conway Branch is an active freight line (40 mph) between Rollinsford and Ossipee.

Ten (10) park and ride facilities were also inventoried with respect to location, access, parking supply, transit connections, utilization rates and amenities. The City of Dover has suggested the need for a new site in the vicinity of Exit 9 on the Turnpike, and COAST has suggested the need for a site on NH 125 in Rochester.

Frank offered several findings from the review of the socio-economic analysis of baseline conditions including recent 2000 US Census and Journey to Work Data: 76% of all study area workers work within the 30-community, tri-county study area; the number of Strafford County residents working outside Strafford County increased 20% from 1990-2000; as of 2000, 65% of outbound Strafford County commuters commute to Rockingham County. These findings are consistent with commuting travel patterns which are predominantly (70 percent) SB in the AM peak hour on the Turnpike and NB (65 percent) on the Turnpike during the weekday PM peak hour; they also support the fact that there has been more job creation to the south in Rockingham County (e.g. Pease Tradeport) and that the cost of housing is less expensive to the north in Strafford County in comparison to Rockingham County.

Frank concluded his presentation by enumerating the environmental inventories, such as wetlands, vegetation, hazardous materials and cultural resources which have been completed. He noted that a noise model had been calibrated to assess the potential future impacts of transportation improvement alternatives on study area businesses and residents.

Before proceeding to Miscellaneous Items, Chris Cross inquired as to the Agenda for the Public Information Meeting (PIM) scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2003 at 6:30 PM at Dover City Hall. Chris Waszczuk responded that the agenda would be similar to this evening's agenda that summarizes the Scoping Phase findings of the study to date and seeks additional public input. He noted that invitations to the PIM have been sent to all the abutting property owners in the project area and to the NHDOT's mailing list. Chris further noted that the draft Scoping Report is being internally reviewed and is expected to be made available to the public in December. It will also be posted on the project website.

### MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Chris Waszczuk introduced Jim Colburn from the NHDOT to update the ATF on the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) plan for the study corridor and surrounding region. Jim distributed a summary sheet which identified the incident management initiatives for both the Little Bay Bridges and the I-95 corridor. With respect to the Little Bay Bridges, the NHDOT is deploying 5 permanent and 5 portable remotely activated dynamic message signs (DMS) to advise motorists of incidents that occur on the bridges and allow motorists escape routes prior to becoming trapped or grid-locked on the Turnpike. Permanent sign locations include: SB Turnpike at the Sixth Street Bridge; SB Turnpike at Gerrish Road; EB US 4, prior to NH 108 interchange; NB Turnpike opposite Portsmouth Ford; and NB Woodbury Avenue at the Fox Run Mall. Operational protocols have been established among the NHDOT, DOS and local responders, and will be initiated by the State Police. The plan is scheduled for May 2004 implementation. Jim also mentioned that NHDOT, MDOT and State Police from both states have been meeting to develop a coordinated response to incidents that occur along the I-95 and Spaulding Turnpike corridors. This planning will resolve communication and operational issues and result in a future traffic management plan that also involves local agencies in responding to traffic incidents and regional security issues.

A brief Question and Answer session followed Jim's summary. Rad Nichols commended the plan and suggested the addition of a sign location on I-95 northbound south of Exit 3. Jim responded that the Department's consultant will be conducting additional studies and will review the Exit 3 location. Jack Newick inquired as to the use of radio for highway advisories, similar to Maine. Jim stated that the NHDOT is evaluating such a system. He also noted that NH is participating with ME and VT in developing a standard – one call system – to alert drivers of conditions throughout the region. Both Rad and Tom Fargo suggested the need for SB driver advisory/information prior to Exit 7 (NH 108 interchange) on the Turnpike, and possibly on the EB ramp at the interchange. Jim stated that a portable sign could be used at the EB ramp, if necessary, and stated that the technology will allow evaluation and testing of the incident management plan as well as the public's reaction to the messages. The duration of incidents will influence operations and response plans which may include temporarily shutting down interchange ramps and shifting traffic flows between NB and SB barrels of the Turnpike. Responders to incidents also need to be educated to work as teams to improve efficiency and reduce delays. Bill O'Donnell mentioned that video monitoring might also play a role in reducing response times. Jim noted that the NHDOT is evaluating video monitoring as part of its collaborative effort with the Department of Safety and Public Health as they plan and develop a centralized traffic management center. The discussion ended with Jack Newick stating that the NHDOT had improved their maintenance schedule along the Turnpike by avoiding holiday and other peak travel times.

### DRAFT 10-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Chris Waszczuk distributed the May 17, 2002, Ten Year Transportation Improvement Program, 2003-2012, summary sheet for the Newington-Dover project and the September 5, 2003, Draft Ten Year Transportation Improvement Program, 2005-2014 (which will be finalized in May 2004), summary sheet for the Newington-Dover project for comparison purposes and to identify funding implication changes due to the current draft program. As currently proposed, the draft Ten-Year Plan projects construction funding to be available during the 2010-2012 period, as opposed to the previous plan that projected construction funding during the 2008-2011 period. In addition, the total project cost has been increased from \$108 million to \$116.6 million, reflecting additional engineering and right-of-way cost estimates. Chris noted that a number of seacoast residents spoke at the recent Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) public hearing hosted in Portsmouth to review transportation issues and needs and identified the Newington-Dover project as a high priority for the seacoast. Tom Fargo, as a representative of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, stated for the record that the Newington-Dover project is the Seacoast MPO's number one priority, and that the Department needs to maintain the original schedule. Chris Waszczuk responded that the project team is reviewing the study schedule to identify elements which could be expedited and a public hearing targeted sooner. If funding is available sooner than expected, the Department desires to be ready to expedite construction. Jack Newick offered the Manchester Airport Access Road project as an example of how projects can be unexpectedly delayed. Tom Fargo stated that the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce is lobbying NH's congressional delegation for additional funding.

#### NEAR TERM OPTIONS

Chris Cross initiated discussion on the possibility of funding for near term, interim improvements which would improve safety or increase traffic operational efficiency. Chris Waszczuk mentioned that the Exit 9 park and ride site, which the City of Dover has proposed, could qualify for CMAQ funding which is programmed for \$6.5 million in FY-2007. Small (e.g. \$100k to \$200k) TSM type actions could be funded from betterment funds; the funding for the Interim Safety Improvements at Exit 4 - 4N in Newington is still programmed for FY-2005

In light of the 2006 CMAQ funding for the COAST express bus service, Rad Nichols questioned whether project construction funds could be utilized sooner to fund the express bus service. John Burke suggested that people at PEASE and in Portsmouth are asking that the express service be implemented now to aid commuting. He also inquired as to the availability of transit funding to relieve construction impacts. Chris Waszczuk responded that spin-off projects such as bus service are a possibility, but he will have to check on funding realities. This precipitated a discussion on transit usage of the General Sullivan Bridge in conjunction with HOV use and the related issues of access management of the bridge, local access connections, schedule of rehabilitation, neighborhood impacts from local connectors, and market demand for transit service. Bruce Woodruff and Chris Waszczuk summarized the transits options for the General Sullivan Bridge as: transit/HOV use only; local traffic including transit; and transit/recreation use. Chris stated that the Phase 2 Rationale Report would sort these issues out. Rick Card raised the issue of potential traffic diversion to alternate routes, such as ME 236, assuming that reconstruction of the Little Bay Bridges reduced the capacity of the bridges during construction. A resident also commented that the GSB, if rehabilitated early enough in the schedule could serve as part of the traffic management plan when the Little Bay Bridges are reconstructed. Chris responded that with respect to reconstruction of the Little Bay Bridges, two lanes of traffic in each direction (as in current conditions) would be maintained at all times to limit aggravating congestion, which would minimize the potential for added traffic diversion.

#### LONG TERM VISION

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Chris Cross posed the question, "How much are Newington and Dover willing to 'give up' to accommodate transportation improvements?" Tom Fargo referred to the 2000 Feasibility Study and suggested the need to advance to a conceptual design level to assess impacts and begin to answer Chris' question. Given the hour of the evening (9:30 PM), discussion of a long-term vision was continued to a future ATF meeting. Chris also stated that there would be more information to come on Future Topics, such as channel navigation issues and interim traffic management ideas.

The meeting adjourned with the scheduling of the next two ATF meetings:

- Wednesday, January 28, 2004, 6:30 PM at Dover City Hall
- Wednesday, April 28, 2004, 6:30 PM at Newington Town Hall

In response to Tom Fargo's inquiry, Chris Waszczuk stated that the Scoping Report will be available for distribution in December/January; the draft report is for NHDOT/FHWA review.





**Meeting  
Notes**

Attendees: Chris Cross, ATF Chairman, Newington  
Sandy Hislop, Newington  
Steve Wells, COAST  
Brian Mazerski, OSP/Coastal Program  
Jack Newick,  
Tom Fargo, SRPC  
Bruce Woodruff, Dover  
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA  
Peter Wellenberger, NHF&G  
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT  
Mike Dugas, NHDOT  
Marc Laurin, NHDOT  
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB  
Tim Roache, SRPC  
Jim Garvin, SHPO  
Linda Wilson, SHPO  
Members of the Public

Date/Time: January 28, 2004 / 6:30 PM

Project No.: 51425

Place: Dover City Hall

Re: Newington-Dover (11238)  
ATF Meeting No. 4

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

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Chris Cross, ATF Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. In his opening remarks, he reminded all in attendance that it was the role and responsibility of the Advisory Task Force (ATF) to provide a conduit for community impact and feedback on the project; the ATF meets quarterly, or as needed. Chris encouraged the public in attendance to share their ideas of improving the Turnpike with the ATF. He stressed the importance of the Spaulding Turnpike to the Seacoast region, and thus, the importance of the current study of Turnpike improvements. Chris then asked the ATF members to introduce themselves. Following the self introductions, Chris encouraged the public to not be bashful in suggesting ideas or asking questions. He made note of the project website, [www.newington-dover.com](http://www.newington-dover.com), which hosts a wealth of project related information and is another means of submitting comments on the project.

Chris then asked ATF members if they had any comments on the draft minutes of the October 29, 2003 ATF meeting. There being no comments, a motion was made and unanimously passed to accept the October 29, 2003 ATF meeting minutes.

Chris Waszczuk then updated the ATF on the status of the Scoping Report. He apologized that he was unable to distribute copies this evening to the ATF as previously scheduled. He explained that final calibration of the travel demand model by the RPC and consultants has taken longer

than expected, and that future traffic projections were available just this week. As such, allowing for analysis and documentation, the Scoping Report will be available in February, 2004. Tom Fargo inquired as to the distribution of the report. Chris responded that the copies would be distributed to each ATF member, and that the report would be posted on the project website. He added that copies would also be provided to resource agencies, municipal offices and public libraries.

Frank O'Callaghan then briefly outlined the contents of the Scoping Report including project purpose and need, the range of conceptual alternatives (TSM, TDM and infrastructure upgrade alternatives in addition to the No-Build condition), a summary of resource inventories which may be affected by the project, and study area issues and constraints.

Bill O'Donnell confirmed that distribution of the Scoping Report would include local officials, public libraries and Town/City Halls.

Chris Waszczuk then explained that due to the inclement weather conditions in New York City, Gary Kassof, Bridge Project Administrator, First Coast Guard District, was not available to attend this evening's ATF meeting, as previously scheduled. Chris then referred to correspondence (e-mail) from Gary that would shed light on the USCG's perspective and concerns. The USCG is responsible for oversight of bridges that traverse navigable waters of the US; he made reference to the USCG permit and amendments associated with the Little Bay Bridges, and specifically to Condition 4 of the 1982 amended permit which calls for the removal of the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB) since it was no longer in use. Such removal of bridges – whose use has been discontinued – is general policy given the potential threat to navigation. If the bridge – in this case, the General Sullivan Bridge – is proposed to be used, it is subject to the USCG's bridge permitting and public review process, along with the proposal to rehabilitate or replace the Little Bay Bridges. In this regard, the USCG acknowledges the FHWA as the lead federal agency with primary environmental review responsibility, and has accepted the cooperating agency invitation from the FHWA. In the USCG's opinion, unless the bridges (Little Bay and General Sullivan) are replaced, the vertical clearances (VC) are set. The USCG is also concerned with maintaining the current depth of channel. Gary's correspondence indicated that he would be willing to reschedule his attendance for a future ATF meeting.

Tom Fargo asked if the maintenance of the current vertical clearance was USCG policy or a requirement. Chris Waszczuk responded that if the bridges are rehabilitated, the VC in essence is set. If the bridges are replaced, the VC requirement would be revisited. In Chris' opinion, if the current VC is maintained, the USCG permitting should not be problematic.

Chris Waszczuk initiated a discussion of vertical clearance issues. Bruce Woodruff offered that maintaining the VC may restrict the feasibility of some of the bridge alternatives (e.g. double-decking); Tom Fargo offered that the VC affects the grade and related driver safe stopping sight distance on the bridges. Sandy Hislop stated that the marina business is contingent on maintaining the current VC and that many boats, such as the Thomas Leighton, traverse the channel on a daily basis and can just barely pass under the bridges at high tide. Current boaters are accustomed to the VC. Jack Newick concurred, stating that lowering of the VC would be a major impediment to many, including lobstermen. Chris Waszczuk asked if there was any data available on the type and frequency of boat traffic and their respective clearance requirements. Sandy stated that some data is available and he would collect and submit it. Bruce Woodruff offered that VC issues are important since every foot of clearance could affect the bridge and transportation alternatives vis-à-vis grade and profile.

In the spirit of brainstorming, Chris Cross asked if there was any possibility of relocating marina operations. Sandy responded that the permitting process for a new marina is next to impossible.



He also mentioned that the UNH marine laboratory operates large boats that require the current VC, in addition to a dozen or more boats moored at Adams Point.

Chris Cross asked if the USCG also has concerns about the depth of channel. [According to Gary Kassof's e-mail, the USCG is interested in channel depths and the ability for the channel depth to be self-maintained. It is the USCG's responsibility to ensure that any bridge alternative does not preclude future use of the waterway.] Jack Newick suggested that bedrock was close to the channel's surface. Chris Waszczuk referred to a bridge plan and confirmed that bedrock was located just below the surface. Such conditions would make tunneling (as was suggested at a previous Public Information meeting) very expensive; vertical clearance requirements would make the concept of placing a tunnel on the surface (and thus avoiding the tunneling) infeasible given the depth of structure (25'±).

Chris Cross asked if there were any other thoughts on the General Sullivan Bridge or vertical clearance. Bruce Woodruff asked if the Scoping Report would include cost estimates on the rehabilitation alternatives such as pedestrian/bicycle only, pedestrian/bicycle and transit, and local traffic including transit and pedestrian/bicycle. Chris Waszczuk responded that cost estimates would be included in the Phase 2 Rationale Report, not in the Scoping Report. He stated that updated cost estimates are currently being developed and that the costs appear to be relatively close in comparison of the different uses. This was due in large part to the deteriorated condition of the bridge and the cost of painting. Updated costs will be crucial to the cost-benefit analysis of alternatives. Tom Fargo asked if a no-action (i.e. leave the General Sullivan Bridge in its current condition) alternative was being considered. Chris Waszczuk replied that the project will address some action --either reuse in some fashion or removal. Costs of removal will include disposal.

Chris Cross asked if there were any questions or comments from the public. Brian Mazerski from the New Hampshire Coastal Program stated that a 1-3 foot rise in sea level due to global warming in the next hundred years is projected and would be relevant to the discussion of vertical clearance.

Jim Garvin, State Architectural Historian, representing the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), then distributed a handout summarizing the historical significance of the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB). [Handout attached]. He noted the uniqueness of the GSB's design that was a monument to structural design of the era (1935) and which also reflected the form of a celebrated wooden span of 1794 that had stood nearby; construction was the largest public works project in New Hampshire in 1935; the bridge significantly altered travel patterns that restored the Turnpike to its full use; that the federal War Department required the 53-foot vertical clearance (at low tide); and that the Level I historical significance assigned to the bridge merits total preservation *in-situ*. He stated that SHPO will argue for preservation through the environmental review process. He noted that the USCG's permitting process may be different from the customary Section 106 process.

Chris Cross noted that the historic nature of the bridge adds to the uniqueness of the bridge's location, but at the same time, the transportation solution is location specific given the narrowness of the existing crossing. The question is whether we rehabilitate the existing bridge or replace it with a new bridge and its own uniqueness. Bruce Woodruff reiterated the importance of updating cost estimates so that a cost/benefit analysis can be conducted to assist in the decision-making process. Tom Fargo asked if the cost estimates would include maintenance. Chris Waszczuk responded that cost estimates would reflect maintenance/life cycle costs.

Following the discussion on re-use alternatives and cost estimates for the GSB, Chris Cross initiated a discussion of TSM actions that might be feasible in the immediate or short term time

frame to improve traffic flow efficiency or safety in the study area, other than the Interim Safety Plan for Exit 4 in Newington scheduled for 2005 implementation. Frank O'Callaghan then reviewed several ideas that resulted from brainstorming with NHDOT staff, and suggestions from others. The TSM ideas included:

Extending the NB, Exit 6 deceleration lane to the US 4 westbound loop ramp by approximately 400' to prevent PM peak hour exiting traffic from backing up into the NB through traffic. This could be done within the existing shoulder area without affecting the bridge abutments.

Merging the 2-lane SB on-ramp at Exit 6 to a single lane prior to the merge with the main line to improve the AM peak hour main line weaving condition prior to the Little Bay Bridges.

Assuming implementation of the Newington Interim Safety Plan, extending the SB Exit 3 deceleration lane to Woodbury Avenue.

Assuming implementation of the Newington Interim Safety Plan, development of an auxiliary NB lane between the Exit 3 (Woodbury Avenue) on-ramp and the Exit 4 (River Road) off-ramp.

Ramp closures or metering during the PM peak hour condition at Exits 2, 3 and 4 to improve NB traffic flow. Traffic which currently enters the Turnpike at these locations would either be metered or re-routed to Exit 1 via Woodbury Avenue and Gosling Road.

Closure of the entrance to River Road from Woodbury Avenue, in conjunction with closure of the NB Exit 4 on-ramp and construction of a new on-ramp for industrial related traffic in the vicinity of Patterson Lane and the existing Woodbury Avenue/River Road intersection.

Chris Waszczuk stated that these ideas were preliminary in nature and that they needed further assessment and cost analysis to deem level of feasibility. There was general consensus that the Exit 6, NB, extension of the US 4, WB deceleration lane had merit. Bill O'Donnell asked if there was adequate shoulder width adjacent to the bridge abutments, and Frank confirmed that there was.

Tom Fargo and Jack Newick added that there may be a need for better signage at Exit 6, NB since some drivers mistakenly take the Dover Point Road, EB exit, when desiring to connect with either US 4, WB or Boston Harbor Road. This results in U-Turns occurring at the EB Dover Point Road ramp terminal area, a dangerous situation. Signage approaching the NB Exit 6 will be reviewed.

While Bruce Woodruff, Chris Cross and a number of the public also supported the southbound, Exit 6 concept to improve the merge and traffic weaving condition prior to the Little Bay Bridges, Tom Fargo questioned the operational impact on the SB ramp where AM peak hour traffic can queue back to the Spur Road traffic signal. Frank responded that the capacity of the ramp would not be reduced, but that the merge with the mainline Turnpike would be improved.

Other discussion at Exit 6 included the possibility of ramp metering, doubling-up the Exit 6 WB/US 4 ramp, and converting Dover Point Road to 2-way flow over the Turnpike. With respect to ramp metering, the traffic signal at Spur Road, and potentially new signals at the River Road/Exit 4 interchange could be timed to meter on-ramp volumes. Traffic delay and queuing on the local roads will increase. A double loop ramp for WB, US 4 traffic, and the possibility of converting Dover Point Road (over the Turnpike) to two-way traffic will be contingent on the width of the overpass and a traffic operations analysis. These ideas are more long-term

permanent solutions and not relatively low-cost TSM measures. A resident in attendance suggested adding a one-lane Bailey-type bridge to immediately add Turnpike capacity that is needed from Exit 6 (US 4) to I-95. He also questioned when the project's construction was scheduled to begin. Chris Waszczuk responded that the use of a very long (1,500'+) temporary bridge would be very expensive and beyond the scope and funding of a short-term solution. Increasing capacity at the bridges is viewed as more of a permanent and long-term solution. Construction of the project could begin as early as 2008 if funding becomes available sooner than currently programmed for 2010.

With respect to PM peak hour traffic flow, Frank described a suggestion by a State Representative to restrict NB access to the Turnpike at Exits 2, 3 (Woodbury Avenue) and 4 (River Road), and reroute traffic along Woodbury Avenue and Gosling Road to Exit 1. In this manner, Exit 1 would meter the entering traffic and NB traffic flow would be uninterrupted as it approaches the Little Bay Bridges. Frank indicated that preliminary assessment of this idea under existing 2003 PM peak hour traffic conditions resulted in failed traffic operations (LOS 'F') at Exit 1 due to the increase in traffic. He further stated that traffic operations at the Gosling Road/Woodbury Avenue intersection and at the other signalized intersections along Woodbury Avenue, north of Gosling Road, would also be problematic, not to mention the management of peak hour restrictions at Exits 2, 3 and 4, and the anticipated problems associated with traffic attempting to avoid the resulting congestion on Woodbury Avenue and Gosling Road by short-cutting to Exit 1 through the Malls.

Sandy Hislop observed that the closing of the Exit 4/River Road on-ramp was inconsistent with the Newington Interim Safety Plan. Jack Newick concurred stating that re-routing industrial related truck traffic to Exit 1 was a poor idea. There was a general consensus that the idea of re-routing on-ramp traffic from Exits 2, 3 and 4 to Exit 1 was counter-productive. Tom Fargo raised the question of dropping the third NB lane on the Turnpike between Exits 2 and 3 from the inside (median side), which is currently done today, versus dropping the lane on the outside or to the driver's right side. Bill O'Donnell responded that dropping the lane on the inside, or on the driver's left side, is common practice and avoids driver confusion at interchange areas where Exit Only lanes may exist. A member of the public identified the Exit 4, SB weave area between the on-ramp from River Road and Nimble Hill Road as a very dangerous location. Chris Waszczuk responded that the Newington Interim Safety Plan, scheduled for 2005 construction, addressed that very situation. Frank also noted that implementation of the Interim Safety Plan would allow an extension of the SB deceleration lane to Woodbury Avenue. [It was noted that the Exit 4N median turnarounds would remain gated, and available for traffic use only as part of an incident management event.]

Chris Cross then suggested that while the re-routing of NB Exit 4 traffic to Exit 1 may be infeasible, perhaps a re-routing of such traffic to a new on-ramp from Shattuck Way in the vicinity of Patterson Lane to a merge with the Exit 3 on-ramp from Woodbury Avenue would be more practical. It would remove the turbulence of merging traffic at Exit 4 which is very close to the Little Bay Bridges, discourage NH 33 traffic that cuts through Newington via Nimble Hill Road to head north on the Turnpike, and discourage Woodbury Avenue traffic that currently diverts to Shattuck Way/River Road via Old Dover Road and Avery Road to jump ahead of queued or slow moving traffic on the Turnpike. Frank indicated that this concept was being evaluated in conjunction with the development of an auxiliary lane between the Exit 3 on-ramp and the Exit 4 off-ramp. In response to Bruce Woodruff, Chris Cross responded that the new on-ramp concept has not been discussed with area businesses. Chris Waszczuk added that the costs and benefits of this concept, and others, need to be evaluated further; he also noted that right-of-way acquisition vis-à-vis the location of the proposed new ramp could delay implementation and add to the total cost (R.O.W. and construction) which could deem the proposal infeasible from a short-term, TSM implementation perspective.

Frank then briefly described the Park and Ride site at Exit 9 that the City of Dover has suggested as part of the overall TDM-related project alternatives. This 3.4 acre site would be accessed from Indian Brook Drive and abuts residential property (Wilbrod Avenue) on the east and a privately-owned 3 acre undeveloped lot of land to the west. The land is City-owned (originally conceived as a possible fire station location) and is the recommended site of a study of potential park and ride sites by City planning staff. The land is zoned residential which does not preclude the park and ride use. Bruce offered that when the Wilbrod Avenue residential area was developed, residents were made aware of the potential future non-residential uses of this site. Preliminary concepts developed by the City would accommodate over 300 cars. If realized, the site would be serviced by COAST's new 2004 downtown loop service [providing connection to the Downeaster rail service], and probably by COAST's planned express bus service between Rochester and Portsmouth scheduled for 2006. Frank noted that intuitively, the site appears to be feasible; potential demand for such service at this location, and other locations such as Rochester, would be determined when the regional travel demand model is finally calibrated. Frank added that the NW quadrant of the Exit 9 interchange could also be considered a potential park and ride site, to which Tom Fargo replied that the NW quadrant area contains substantial wetlands. Bill O'Donnell asked if COAST currently services the Liberty Mutual complex located to the west of the proposed park and ride site at the Indian Brook Drive/Sixth Street intersection. Steve Wells stated that service is not currently provided, but could be considered. Bill noted that, in general, park and ride sites are more successful when serviced by transit, and since Liberty Mutual is nearby and such a large employer, it may make sense to consider extending service from the Park and Ride site to Liberty Mutual. Steve agreed in principle, but noted that the potential impact of intermediate stops on express bus travel times and schedules would need to be reviewed.

Following the park and ride discussion, Chris Cross initiated a brief discussion on a long-term vision for the study area. He noted that the study area will always be a major transportation corridor, and that while many Seacoast residents are currently calling for immediate action, some fail to recognize the need for taking a long-term perspective. The seacoast region and the Spaulding Turnpike/NH 16 corridor will continue to grow. Given limited financial resources, and the need for a long-term transportation solution to be affordable, what is the priority? Enhanced parkland, a signature bridge, increased mobility, relocation of residents and businesses, sound barriers? Planning must look beyond the affordability and timeframe (design life of improvements) of the project. Jack Newick offered that trying to plan for 50 to 100 years in the future will be extremely problematic and difficult to predict. With respect to the project at hand, anything less than a 4-lane bridge in each direction will be obsolete on opening day. Bruce Woodruff commented that people continue to move north (affordable housing) while major employment growth is to the south of the corridor. Unfortunately, the Tradeport's land development plan does not include housing. Bruce also suggested that bridge alternatives should be able to accommodate future light rail service in 50 or more years. Chris Waszczuk noted that a rail link along an existing rail corridor to Pease may be more feasible vis-à-vis affordability, than a new rail service across the bridges.

Tom Fargo stated that east-west connectivity is important, and that the Turnpike presents a barrier to this linkage. He suggested extending the approaches to the bridges to provide grade separated (Turnpike over local connection) connections, and substituting columns for retaining walls. This would provide open space and urban design options to expand the Hilton Park area. Tim Roache commented potential investment in TDM strategies combined with employer-based programs (such as flexible work hours, ride-sharing and employee transit support) will extend the life of infrastructure improvements. Bill O'Donnell stated that a 20-year design life is traditional planning, but looking out 30-40 years, to the extent possible, makes sense. Chris Cross suggested that the nature and scale of the project, its benefits and costs may need to be considered as phases of a longer term solution. Bill O'Donnell questioned whether or not the state had the