

Tom Fargo reiterated his preference for locating the Dover Point connector road in proximity to the channel, if possible. He questioned whether or not the potential impact to parkland could be avoided if the GSB were either removed or rehabilitated for pedestrian/bicycle use only and the approach to the bridge narrowed. The project team will re-examine connector options at the channel both with and without the GSB.

Chris Cross asked if there were any additional questions. As there were none, the floor was turned over to Pete Walker to provide a summary of the potential wetland impacts and details on preliminary wetland mitigation. He explained that because the project will impact wetlands, NHDOT has to assess the wetlands in the project area and describe the impacts. He stated that from a permitting standpoint, wetlands can be one of the more significant issues in a project of this magnitude. Pete then spoke about the potential project impacts and said that because preliminary impacts have been estimated, they would be updated as designs undergo further refinement.

Pete summarized the impacts to Dover wetlands that would result from Alternative 3 and the Westerly Bridge Rehabilitation. Impacts include both palustrine (fresh water) and estuarine (tidal influenced) wetlands. He stated that in Dover the impacts to wetlands would be between 4 and 5 acres, and in Newington, impacts are about 2.5 times greater or between 11 and 12 acres.

Pete then explained the regulatory framework governing wetland protection. In New Hampshire, NHDES oversees wetlands and requires mitigation for certain wetland impacts. NHDES favors mitigation within the same watershed where possible, has established ratios for specific types of mitigation [e.g. 10 Ac of preservation per 1 Ac of wetland impact] and favors wetlands preservation. At the Federal level, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has jurisdiction by way of the Clean Water Act Section 404, and that ACOE cooperatively reviews projects with EPA, USFWS, and NMFS. As a matter of practice, the ACOE does not require specific mitigation ratios, although they have required specific compensation amounts for certain projects. The ACOE typically prefers restoration, then preservation, and allows creation in some cases.

Pete described recent examples and types of wetland mitigation – creation (Brentwood), restoration (Rye Harbor) and preservation (Tilton) – projects in New Hampshire. He also described the methodology and process to identify suitable mitigation parcels. The first step is to assemble GIS layers that show existing conserved lands and wetlands. Next, numerous existing publications and reports were reviewed and consultations were made with respective Conservation Commissions, the Nature Conservancy and Regulatory Agencies. Finally, parcels identified to have mitigation potential were field reviewed by biologists skilled in performing these types of assessments. He then described the possible mitigation sites in Dover.

Referring to a map that was distributed to attendees, Pete described the Blackwater Brook site (DR-8) located along the Rochester municipal boundary. He explained that this site was the preferred site for mitigation in Dover, as it would provide a preservation opportunity that Dover and the Nature Conservancy both favor. The site is undeveloped with a variety of upland and wetland habitat that is connected to existing conservation land. Blackwater Brook flows through the site from the east and drains to the Bellamy River. If selected for mitigation, NHDOT would conserve 40 to 50 acres of property, or approximately 10 times the 4-5 Ac project wetland impact in Dover.

Pete then described the remaining parcels, which include the Bellamy River (DR-4) site, Johnson Creek (DR-11) and Varney Brook sites. He stated that the Bellamy River site is less desirable as it is comprised mostly of wetlands and has encroaching development around it. Because it is mostly wet, the property is essentially "protected" from development. The Johnson Creek (DR-11) site is limited by the residential development that surrounds it. Use of the Varney Brook site for mitigation would involve upgrading culverts and removing invasive species. Pete indicated that such efforts might be more complicated than the ecological benefit and cost; as such, this site was not being recommended.

In Newington, Pete explained that restoration was being considered as the primary form of mitigation. In total, 18 sites have been reviewed, with 10 sites appropriate for restoration, and eight suitable for preservation and limited creation opportunities. With regard to restoration, the highest priority site includes the Flagstone Brook/Railway Brook/Pickering Brook stream system (NN-4/NN-8) and the adjacent former Drive-in Theatre site. Pete described the stream system as consisting largely of a straightened channel with heavy sediment loading. Although the stream is quite degraded, it is located within a land area that is considered high value for wildlife. Regarding the former Drive-in property, Pete explained that NHDOT might use the parcel during construction for staging, and that when complete, could potentially restore and preserve a portion of, or all of, this property in association with stream restoration. As for the Coastal Ponds that border the Piscataqua River, initial evaluation suggests that restoration of the ponds would involve dredging the ponds. After a field review, it was determined that the lower pond is actually in good health as it receives regular tidal flushing. The upper pond has now reverted largely to marsh as it has become laden with sediments. As such, it is now providing important water quality functions for Pickering Brook, which flows through it.

Pete then summarized the attributes and limitations of the remainder of the potential sites in Newington. He explained that some of these sites are less desirable or not recommended for further consideration for a number of reasons. With respect to preservation opportunities, the Knight Brook site (NN-3) and the Watson properties located near Fox Point and Tricky's Cove, respectively, were identified during earlier study efforts as opportunities to expand on existing conservation land located nearby. The Knight Brook property was field reviewed and consists of a variety of habitat including forest, wetland, and agricultural fields. The Watson properties have not yet been field reviewed.

The following sites were mentioned by Pete as being initially considered, but upon further assessment, are not likely to be pursued further. Paul Brook was thought to represent an opportunity for stream restoration, but upon field inspection, was determined to have limited opportunities, as the stream is in relatively good condition, considering its landscape amidst commercial and industrial development. Pete mentioned that it might be possible to restore the so-called "unnamed stream", but because of its location amidst extensive commercial development (i.e. pavement and buildings), restoration opportunities might be limited to improving storm water BMPs in upgradient areas that drain to the stream. With regard to Hodgson Brook, this stream is the focus of a current stream corridor study, so any opportunity for restoration will be identified (and undertaken separately from this project) when the study is complete. He also indicated that the circumneutral swamp site (NN-6), located in the northwest quadrant of the Exit 1 (Gosling Road) interchange, consists mostly of wetland, with very limited additional property available for preservation. As such, it was likely that no further action would be taken with this site.

Pete concluded his presentation of specific sites in Newington by describing the remaining locations, which include McIntyre Brook (NN-1, NN-2), Stubbs Pond, Thomas Family Tracts, and the Fabyan Point site. McIntyre Brook includes restoration opportunities similar to

Flagstone/Railway/Pickering Brook, while the latter two sites might be opportunities for preservation. (The Thomas Family Tracts and Fabyan Point sites have not yet been field reviewed.) Stubbs Pond is currently the focus of an environmental restoration project (by others), so no further action will be pursued at this time.

Pete closed by suggesting that, assuming Resource Agency concurrence, the appropriate mitigation package may generally emphasize wetland preservation in Dover, and wetland restoration in Newington. He then reviewed the next steps in the process for assembling an appropriate mitigation package. These include: a field walk with Resource Agencies scheduled for September 13, 2005; follow-up with communities; the development of a formal proposal in the Draft EIS; preparation and filing of an ACOE Individual Permit; and preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Following Pete's presentation, Tom Fargo, speaking as Chairman of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission Executive Committee and Dover Conservation Commission, stated that he strongly supports the recommendation to protect and preserve the Blackwater Brook site (DR-8). He noted that Dover is currently securing easements in the vicinity of a water supply well located to the east of the Turnpike, and also to the south of Blackwater Brook. Tom also stated that the City is working with landowners of the parcels that comprise the Bellamy Brook site (DR-4). He stated that, if possible, Dover would like to partner with NHDOT in preserving this site.

John Scruton asked whether anyone has considered the possibility of not building the bridge, but focusing instead on advancing outreach efforts and incentives to encourage ride sharing, carpooling, etc. Also, Mr. Scruton inquired why information on the Newington portion of the project is being presented in Dover. Frank O'Callaghan responded that employer-based TDM programs are in fact being considered as part of this on-going study. Expanded transit and ride-sharing programs will be part of the total improvement program and will have a positive effect on air quality in the highway corridor; however, such programs would not, in and of themselves, preclude the need to widen the Little Bay Bridges and Turnpike. With regard to presenting Newington information at this evening's meeting hosted in Dover, Chris Cross explained that it is appropriate information for the entire project at every ATF meeting, regardless of location, since the project affects portions of each community. Chris added that the ATF represents local and regional stakeholders, including representatives from Dover and Newington, and acts as a liaison between the project proponents and the public at large. Meetings are scheduled alternately in Dover and Newington for the convenience of residents, not to limit or focus discussion on a single community.

Chris Cross thanked all for attending the meeting. He noted that Phase 3 of the study is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year (2005). The goal is to have a preferred alternative, endorsed by the ATF, to present at Public Information Meetings later this fall. (Public Informational meetings are presently scheduled for November 7th in Dover and November 9th in Newington). The next ATF meeting has been re-scheduled for October 26th, 2005 at Newington Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
ADVISORY TASK FORCE (ATF) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
AUGUST 24, 2005

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
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DOVER CITY HALL
AUGUST 24, 2005

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
ADVISORY TASK FORCE (ATF) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
AUGUST 24, 2005

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Meeting Notes

Attendees: Chris Cross, ATF Chair, RPC
Steve Parkinson, Portsmouth
Tom Fargo, SRPC
Marlon Frink, Newington
Jack Newick, Dover
Maria Stowell, PDA
Cynthia Copeland, SRPC
Bruce Woodruff, Dover
Mel Jenkins, SRPC
Cheryl Phoenix, Seacoast Commuter Options
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA
Joe Moyer, FHWA
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Tom Wholley, VHB
Pete Walker, VHB
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB

Date/Time: October 26, 2005

Project No.: 51425.00

Place: Newington Town Hall

Re: Newington-Dover 11238
ATF Meeting #15

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

Chris Cross called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM. He welcomed all to the 15th ATF meeting; he noted that the purpose of the Advisory Task Force (ATF) is to provide input to the design team in developing improvement recommendations for the critical Spaulding Turnpike corridor. Chris stated that the project team was approaching the completion of Phase 3 of a 5 phase process and was looking for public input on the recommendations developed to date. He reiterated that the role of the ATF is to function as a liaison to the project team, funneling public input to the team, and disseminating project related information back to their respective constituencies.

Chris Cross then requested the ATF members to introduce themselves; following the self introductions, Chris explained that meeting minutes for each ATF meeting are posted on the project website (www.newington-dover.com). The website also contains project related plans and documents which reflect a wealth of data and issues relating to the environment and land use. He noted that this evening provided an opportunity to comment on the preferred alternative recommended by the project team. Their recommendation reflects engineering and environmental studies, public input and community support. Following review of the meeting agenda, Chris noted that Public Informational Meetings have been scheduled for November 7, 2005 in Dover and for November 9th in Newington. He next referred to the draft August 25, 2005 ATF meeting minutes and

asked the ATF members for any comments or notations. There being no comments, the draft meeting minutes were unanimously adopted as final.

Chris Waszczuk spoke next and stated that the project team would present the NHDOT's suggested preferred alternative. He noted that development of the suggested preferred alternative reflected a comprehensive public outreach process to date, which involved 5 public informational meetings, 14 ATF meetings, numerous meetings with federal and state Resource Agencies, and meetings with Town and City officials. The suggested preferred alternative is multi-modal in approach and reflects the consideration and assessment of such issues as system and local access, configuration of the interchanges, Turnpike profile, disposition of the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB), six versus eight lanes, environmental resource protection and property impacts. Chris concluded by introducing Frank O'Callaghan who would present a summary of the suggested preferred alternative; he stated that, upon review of the recommendations, he hoped attendees would agree that the project team was moving in the right direction and we were adequately balancing issues and impacts.

Frank O'Callaghan then initiated his presentation of the suggested preferred alternative. He began by focusing on the Little Bay Bridges (LBB), which are recommended to be rehabilitated and widened to four lanes in each direction. Frank stated that three general purpose lanes and one traffic management lane would be required between Exits 3 and 6 and would provide satisfactory level-of-service (LOS D) beyond the 2025 design year. He noted that three lanes in each direction, even if combined with the most aggressive combinations of travel demand management (TDM), would not provide a safe and adequate level of traffic service and would not meet the project purpose and need. The rehabilitation and widening of the LBB would maintain the existing 60 mph design speed profile and the existing vertical clearance over the channel. The bridge piers would be seismically retrofitted, and construction would be undertaken in two phases so that two lanes of travel in each direction would be maintained at all times. Bridge widening would be to the west to avoid impacting Hilton Park and to minimize impacts to the bay. Frank noted that four lanes in each direction between Exits 3 and 6 would provide future flexibility for lane management beyond 2025. Preliminary cost estimates are approximately \$55.5 million, which is approximately \$38 million less than a new bridge would cost.

With respect to the GSB, the project team recommended rehabilitation to six-ton loading, which would support maintenance and emergency vehicles, and use by pedestrians and bicyclists and for other recreation. Frank noted that the GSB is the second highest rated historic bridge in New Hampshire and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It is a 4(f) resource and afforded protection under federal regulations; it provides an important pedestrian and bicycle system connection and is utilized for recreational activities. He stated that these uses would be more pleasurable on the GSB in comparison to the multi-use path alternative attached to the LBB. The GSB would also provide future flexibility and redundancy with respect to incident management and transit use. The approximate cost of the GSB rehabilitation is \$23 million, approximately \$10 million more than its removal and replacement with a multi-use path would cost, not including the additional cost of mitigation likely to be required should the GSB be removed. Frank stated that the FHWA, NHDHR, SRPC and City of Dover support bridge rehabilitation, suggesting that it would be difficult, from a 4(f) perspective, not to justify the expenditure of funds given the feasibility of reuse and net cost difference (\$10 million) relative to total project cost (approximately \$174 million).

Frank next described Alternative 3 in Dover, which provides a full service interchange at Exit 6, improving both system and local connectivity. He noted major characteristics including the closure of Exit 5 and the Cote Drive on-ramp, the diamond-type configuration for northbound travel, two-way traffic flow on the overpass, the grade-separated connector between Spur Road and Boston Harbor Road that eliminates the need for a traffic signal at the Spur Road/Boston Harbor Road

intersection, a short on-ramp from the connector road to the southbound on-ramp which has the effect of maintaining the existing Boston Harbor Road ramp, and the local connector adjacent to the channel linking both sides of Dover Point and Hilton Park. Frank paused and compared existing traffic patterns with changes resulting from Alternative 3. With respect to the local connector abutting the channel, he noted that the roadway would be designed for 20 mph, two-way traffic, and that 14'-6" vertical clearance would be provided for trucks and boats. The existing pedestrian and bicycle connection between both sides of Hilton Park would also be maintained. He also pointed out that limiting the GSB to pedestrian and bicycle use allowed reconstructing the GSB approach for the local roadway connector and avoided impacting Hilton Park. An ADA-compliant ramp would be constructed for bicycle and pedestrian access to the GSB. By locating the local roadway connector adjacent to the channel, the Turnpike profile could be lowered which would reduce noise and visual impacts. Frank noted that two Dover Point Road businesses, K-9 Kaos and Adaptations, would be impacted, retaining walls on both sides of the Turnpike would be utilized to minimize impacts, and that the construction cost of Alternative 3 was approximately \$44 million, including the LBB approach.

Frank then proceeded to describe Alternative 13, which reconfigures Exit 3 as a full service interchange with both off and on-ramps in both northbound and southbound directions. A roadway connection to the Tradeport is provided at Exit 3, and the off and on-ramps to Nimble Hill Road (southbound) and Shattuck Way (northbound) are maintained, as well as the two-way Shattuck Way extension to Nimble Hill Road which is currently under construction as part of the Interim Safety Improvement project. Northbound Exit 2 would be closed with traffic re-routed through Exit 3. Alternative 13 allows for a future rail project to reconnect the Pease Spur and the Newington Branch Line by traversing above the Turnpike along the existing rail corridor. As part of the Newington-Dover project, it is recommended that the necessary right-of-way and easements be secured, a portion of the viaduct's pier foundation (located in the Turnpike's median) be constructed, and a memorandum of agreement between the NHDOT and PDA on future construction cost-sharing be secured. By carrying the rail connection over the Turnpike, the Turnpike's profile can be maintained at its existing elevation, thus reducing noise and visual impacts. The existing ExxonMobil facility would continue to operate at its current location via access from a local connector road extending from Nimble Hill Road as the fourth leg of the Shattuck Way intersection. The facility's existing driveway on Nimble Hill Road is proposed to be discontinued. Overall, local connections and Turnpike access are improved, and the service life of Exit 1 (Pease Boulevard/Gosling Road) would be extended due to the additional access to the Tradeport provided at Exit 3. Frank noted that the Woodbury Avenue cross-section had been reduced to avoid impacting the Isaac Dow House and Beane Farm structures. Alternative 13 is estimated to cost approximately \$47.3 million and impact approximately 25 acres of Tradeport property.

Frank then addressed Transportation Systems Management (TSM) recommendations that are generally low cost, short-term actions to improve existing safety and traffic operational conditions. He noted that improved directional signage at Exit 6, increased signage on the LBB approaches to remind drivers not to change lanes, and striping of the shoulder area to increase the northbound Exit 6 deceleration lane to exit westbound had already been implemented. The Interim Safety Improvement Project at Exit 4 in Newington is under construction and will be completed in 2006. This project eliminates deficient traffic weaving conditions between Exits 4 and 4N, improves local traffic connections between Nimble Hill Road and Shattuck Way/Woodbury Avenue, and improves the northbound merge condition at Exit 3 for Woodbury Avenue traffic. The restriping of the Exit 6 southbound on-ramp to reduce the merge of traffic from two lanes to one is also recommended to improve traffic flow in the short term.

Frank next described the recommended Travel Demand Management (TDM) program of alternatives to reduce the level of peak period traffic within the study area, and to give seacoast area commuters

more options as to how and when they travel. He noted that the TDM program encompassed new park-and-ride facilities, expanded bus service and rail service, and employer-based measures. With respect to park-and-ride, a new 416-space facility is currently under design at Exit 9 in Dover, and will be constructed in 2006 as a separate CMAQ-funded project. The facility will be serviced by the planned COAST express bus service (Rochester-Portsmouth), Dover's downtown transit loop service, and expanded commuter bus service proposed by C&J Trailways. A 200-space facility is recommended for the Exit 13 area in Rochester, and would likely be implemented under a separate CMAQ-funded project, and be coordinated with the Turnpike improvements currently being planned and designed for the Exit 13 area. A 50-space facility is also recommended for the US 4 corridor to be located in Lee in the vicinity of the US 4/NH 125 intersection and also funded under the CMAQ program as a future CMAQ project.

With respect to expanding bus service, Frank described three alternatives. Alternative 1 expands intercity service between Rochester, Portsmouth and Boston. C&J has filed a CMAQ application to extend service north to the proposed Exit 9 park-and-ride facility in Dover by providing 16 daily round trips from Portsmouth. This service would then be extended to Rochester by either C&J or another provider as soon as the Exit 13 park-and-ride facility is completed. The capital cost of extending the service to Rochester would range between \$2 and \$4 million, depending on the level of service and provider. Bus Alternative 2 involves adding a bus to the proposed COAST express bus service between Rochester and Portsmouth to reduce peak period headways. This service is programmed for 2006 and could be expanded as proposed for a capital cost of approximately \$400 thousand, and funded via a CMAQ grant or through project funding. Bus Alternative 3 involves expanding local service on COAST Route 2 (Rochester-Portsmouth), Wildcat Transit Route 4 (Durham-Portsmouth) and the COAST Pease Trolley by reducing headways during peak periods. In addition to adding additional buses, an improved transfer point for these three routes would be developed in the vicinity of Exit 1 and the malls. The capital equipment and construction cost of Bus Alternative 3 is approximately \$3.9 million.

From a rail perspective, Frank stated that NHDOT was supporting a joint MaineDOT/NHDOT/NNEPRA CMAQ proposal to expand *Downeaster* service between Portland and Boston. Expanded service would add a fifth daily round trip between Portland and Boston, and improve the peak hour schedule of commuter service through New Hampshire by constructing sidings in Dover and Newfields and replacing approximately three miles of track in New Hampshire. The total cost of this proposal is approximately \$6 million with the NHDOT CMAQ share approximately \$1.2 million.

The final element of the recommended TDM program would be extending the funding of Seacoast Commuter Options, the greater Portsmouth and seacoast regional transportation management association (TMA), that promotes employer-based options to commuting alone such as ridesharing and transit. Frank closed his presentation by stating that the overall total cost of the suggested preferred alternative is approximately \$174 million.

Tom Fargo stated that following the recent (October 5, 2005) Dover City Council workshop, the City Council tabled a motion to endorse Alternative 3 and maintain the GSB, pending further discussion of potential changes to traffic patterns and volumes along Boston Harbor Road and Dover Point Road. Chris Waszczuk responded that the relocated Boston Harbor Road ramp to the southbound Exit 6 on-ramp, as proposed, might address the Council's concern. Bruce Woodruff asked if VHB could provide a traffic volume comparison of the existing and future conditions on Boston Harbor Road and Dover Point Road. Frank O'Callaghan responded in the affirmative.

Chris Cross asked if the ATF could endorse or reach consensus on the preferred alternative as suggested, or possibly modified. In his view, the ATF and public have reached consensus on the need for eight lanes, rehabilitating both bridges and widening the LBB to the west. Bruce Woodruff offered that a new replacement bridge was too expensive, and that the recommended proposal was the best alternative for the available funding. Ray Bardwell asked if the piers of the LBB and GSB might be connected to reduce the existing turbulence in the channel. Chris Waszczuk replied in the affirmative, stating that the turbulence of the current could possibly worsen if the space between the piers were reduced, leaving a much smaller gap than presently exists, but not connecting the piers. Jack Newick concurred, stating that connecting the bridge piers eliminates the potential for boats getting trapped between the piers. Chris Waszczuk noted that UNH is conducting hydrodynamic modeling of the channel currents and conditions.

Chris Cross asked about the relocation of the local Dover Point connector abutting the channel. Tom Fargo responded that Bruce Woodruff and he had suggested the relocation, and that the City Council supports the location adjacent to the channel. Ray Bardwell asked if Exit 5 could be maintained. Chris Waszczuk responded that Exit 5 could not be maintained. In general, there is too much traffic entering and exiting the Turnpike within a very compact area between Exits 3 and 6. To provide a proper deceleration lane and entrance geometry at Exit 5 would severely impact Hilton Park; and the distance between an Exit 5 on-ramp and the off-ramp to Exit 6 is inadequate to provide safe and efficient traffic operations such as weaving and changing lanes. Tom Fargo asked if local traffic networks (Boston Harbor Road and Dover Point Road) could be provided to City officials. Frank O'Callaghan confirmed that the networks would be provided.

Chris Cross asked if there were any comments relative to Alternative 13 in Newington. Marlon Frink stated that the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Conservation Commission have endorsed Alternative 13 citing their concerns with the higher Turnpike profiles of the other alternatives. Maria Stowell stated that the PDA also endorses Alternative 13, subject to the drafting and approval of a memorandum of understanding among the NHDOT, FHWA and PDA regarding the future extension of the Pease Spur over the Turnpike. Chris Cross noted that Alternative 13 recognizes the future benefit of potential rail service.

Angela Carter, representing the Dover Point Road neighborhood, requested a brief review of the Turnpike profile so that she clearly understood the related issues. Frank noted that retaining walls are proposed in Alternative 3 adjacent to the Exit 6 northbound off-ramp to minimize impacts to the Dover Point Road property owners. Ray Bardwell stated that the geometry of the US 4/Spur Road intersection needs to accommodate westbound right turns of trucks. He suggested adequate acceleration and deceleration lanes be provided. Chris Cross concluded the discussion of Alternative 13 by noting the ATF's endorsement subject to the aforementioned comments.

Chris Cross requested comments on the recommended TSM alternatives, specifically the Exit 6 southbound on-ramp proposal. Bruce Woodruff inquired as to schedule. Chris Waszczuk replied that implementation could happen as soon as 2006. Bruce stated that, in his view, implementation of this action (Dover TSM 2) is needed immediately. Gail Pare asked the schedule for discontinuing the median turnaround at Exit 4N. Chris Waszczuk replied that he expected related work to be completed in the fall of 2005, which would coincide with the discontinuance of the turnaround. Bruce Woodruff expressed support for the *Downeaster* service expansion and suggested that the ATF express its support of the recommendation to the GACIT (Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation). Chris Waszczuk replied that approval of the CMAQ application is in progress, and that Commissioner Murray has endorsed the recommendation. Chris Cross inquired as to the potential of double tracking the Main Line West (which carries the *Downeaster*), which would potentially allow future expansion in service. Chris Waszczuk noted that such work would cost in

excess of \$100 million and was more regional in nature and beyond the scope of the Newington-Dover project. The recommended service expansion, as proposed, can be accomplished on the existing single track in New Hampshire with relatively minor improvements to the passing sidings in Newfields and Dover. At this point, Maria Stowell recognized Cheryl Phoenix, Executive Director of Seacoast Commuter Options. There being no further comments, the ATF endorsed the recommended TSM and TDM proposals.

Frank O'Callaghan next asked Tom Wholley to summarize the noise impact analysis and recommended mitigation. Tom reviewed the procedures, guidelines and criteria for conducting the analyses. He noted that existing noise levels were measured during the noisiest hours of the day to determine existing noise levels and to calibrate the FHWA Traffic Noise Model. Calibration reflects topography, traffic volumes and roadway features and allows the model to be used to compare the existing noise condition with future 2025 scenarios, which reflect the various alternatives. Tom noted that noise level criteria for potential mitigation include 66 dB for residential land use, or an increase of 15 dB between existing and future conditions. He stated that the project team did not expect nor did they find any significant differences in comparing existing and future conditions. Such differences ranged between 1 and 4 dB. However, some areas exceed 66 dB under future conditions, which coincidentally, are the same locations where noise levels presently exceed 66 dB. As such, the project will enable the mitigation of some existing study area noise conditions that, but for the project, would not be addressed.

Tom reviewed the criteria for noise barrier feasibility, such as constructibility without gaps and proper height that will achieve a 7-10 dB reduction or approximately a 50 percent reduction in noise. There is also a cost criterion that the cost of the mitigation not exceed approximately \$20,000 per protected residence (and still provide at least 5 dB of noise reduction). Tom then referred to the plan of Alternative 3, noting that approximately 4,100 feet of noise barrier (14' in height) is recommended on the west side of the Turnpike (Noise Barrier #1) and approximately 4,200 feet (14' in height) of noise barrier is recommended for the east side of the Turnpike (Noise Barrier #2). Tom next referred to another plan stating that noise barriers were being recommended for approximately 3,700 feet north of Exit 6, on both sides of the Turnpike. These barriers would range in height between 12 feet on the west side and 14 feet on the east side and extend beyond the Dover Toll plaza. He noted that the front row or those residences closest to the barrier receive more protection, but those residences located further away would still benefit. Tom concluded his presentation noting that no area in Newington met the noise mitigation criteria and that the lower Turnpike profile reflected in Alternative 13 would minimize noise. He also mentioned that NHDOT was researching the cost-effectiveness of "quiet pavement" design. General comments and questions followed.

Angela Carter was reassured that the east side barrier extended continuously from Wentworth Terrace to the intersection of Dover Point Road located to the east of the Exit 6 northbound exit ramp. Angela also asked if tree plantings adjacent to the barrier would be considered. Chris Waszczuk replied that tree plantings would be considered in the final design of the barriers, and that NHDOT would be sensitive to the appearance of both the front and rear of the barriers. Gail Pare echoed Chris' comments vis-à-vis aesthetics, noting the roadside color of the foliage surrounding the Exit 6 area. She stressed the need to provide landscaping as a means to avoid a stark non-descript corridor. Tom Wholley offered that the traditional concrete post and timber barrier look good, and there are also some good looking prefabricated materials available. Landscaping can make the barriers less conspicuous or "invisible". Stu Miller, Debra Lane, Dover, asked if there was sound barrier proposed for the Spur Road/Debra Lane area. Tom replied that no barrier was recommended since the area did not meet the criteria. Stu asked when the noise measurements were recorded. Tom replied that the noise measurements reflect the loudest hour. Chris Waszczuk added that noise levels reflect the average level of noise within the noisiest hour, recognizing that there may be instantaneous spikes of noise. Stu asked if the noise model considers changes in traffic volumes and different roadway

alternatives. Tom replied that the model considers both the 2025 traffic forecasts and the differences in infrastructure alternatives.

Ray Bardwell stated that better enforcement of existing noise regulations would reduce noise levels; he cited truck jake brakes and noisy motorcycles as two examples. Chris Waszczuk noted that those issues warrant legislative response. Ray cited toll plaza noise. Chris Cross replied that toll-related issues, and the toll plaza are beyond the scope and study area of the Newington-Dover project. Chris asked whether or not the NHDOT would mitigate noise to the north of Exit 6 as presented earlier by Tom Wholley. When Chris Waszczuk indicated that the NHDOT is recommending such mitigation as a project commitment, Chris Cross expressed his pleasure in the NHDOT's decision, and asked if the noise barrier locations would reflect a future widening of the Turnpike to the north of Exit 6 and the toll plaza. Tom Wholly responded that exact barrier location will be a final design consideration. Marlon Frink asked another design/construction related questions – where does the sound go? Is the sound retained or reflected? Tom replied that it depends on the type of material and whether the barriers are constructed parallel to each other or angled. Bruce Woodruff asked if the layout of Noise Barrier #1 would be modified to reflect the relocated Boston Harbor Road ramp to the connector road. Chris Waszczuk responded that it would be modified, extending north to the new ramp/connector road intersection.

Bruce Woodruff recommended that Noise Barrier #3 and #4, north of Exit 6 and the toll plaza, be incorporated into the total mitigation package. Chris Waszczuk stated that these barriers would be included, either as part of the project, or as a complementary project. Bill O'Donnell noted that separating a noise barrier project from the construction project might present funding problems. Chris replied that NHDOT would clearly define the limits of the noise mitigation. Tom Fargo added that there was discussion early on in the project that some issues, such as noise, may not be easily contained to a study area line drawn on a plan or map.

Chris Cross thanked Tom Wholly for his presentation and technical analysis. He noted that the ATF and public are engaged in a long process, and that noise mitigation is an important issue with many facets (e.g., construction materials, aesthetics, impact limits, etc.). Tom Fargo added that pavement surface treatment and materials could affect both noise and wetlands, vis-à-vis the porosity of the pavement and drainage runoff characteristics. Marlon Frink asked if rumble strips were planned for the edge of the median and shoulder areas. Chris Waszczuk replied that there is no FHWA requirement for such treatment and there has been no discussion to date; rumble strips will likely not be provided.

There being no further questions or comments related to noise mitigation, Pete Walker summarized the potential wetland impacts of the project and the proposed recommended mitigation program. He began by noting that there were approximately 15.5 Ac of wetlands impacted (11.2 Acres in Newington and 4.30 Acres in Dover) as a direct result of the project. However, the project would mitigate for approximately 17.90 Ac of impacts, taking into account approximately 0.64 Ac of impact in Newington related to the Exit 4 Interim Safety Improvement project, approximately 0.4 acres related to the Exit 9 park-and-ride facility, and approximately 1.30 Ac of impact in Madbury related to the NH 155 Bridge Replacement project. Pete summarized the regulatory framework, noting NHDES regulations and their preference for mitigating impacts within the same watershed, and federal ACOE regulations and their preference for wetlands restoration. He reviewed wetlands terminology such as "restoration" and "preservation". He reviewed the process of identifying potential wetlands mitigation parcels – review of published resources; development of a GIS database; consultations with local conservation commissions, the Nature Conservancy and state and federal resource agencies; and field review of potential sites. Potential sites are prioritized for preservation based on several criteria: contiguous undisturbed land at least 100 Ac in size, mix of

wetlands and uplands, proximity to conservation lands, level of disturbance or development and the upland buffer to a resource with functional value equal to or greater than the wetlands impacted by the project. The prioritization of potential mitigation sites for restoration is also based on criteria such as: suitable geomorphic setting, no conflicts with existing infrastructure/properties, preference to deal with as few property owners as possible, clear understanding of impairments of recent origin, and site relation to wetland systems impacted. Pete noted that wetland restoration is preferred to wetland creation.

Pete summarized the proposed wetlands mitigation package as follows: restoration of Railway Brook in Newington, preservation and restoration of the former Drive-In Theatre parcel in Newington, and preservation of 40 to 50 acres in the Blackwater Brook area of Dover. He noted that alternative mitigation elements have also been identified, including preservation of the Watson property in Newington, preservation of the Knight Brook area in Newington, and preservation at the Bellamy River west area in Dover.

Pete took questions and comments during his presentation. Marlon Frink asked if the value of the wetland is reflected in the impact and mitigation analyses. Pete responded in the affirmative, noting that a total of 24 potential mitigation sites (6 in Dover/18 in Newington) had been screened. Marlin asked if private property owners had been contacted. Pete responded that contact with property owners had been established by The Nature Conservancy. Marlon noted that the project was near the Piscataqua watershed in both Dover and Newington. He asked how the value of conservation easements would be determined. Pete replied that the NHDOT would conduct an assessment, and there would be a fee ownership transfer. Marlon asked how such easements are regulated. Chris Waszczuk responded that the deed would outline the conditions and rights of property owners after the easement is executed. Chris noted that there is some flexibility in imposing restrictions. Public access is also flexible, taking into account owner considerations.

Tom Fargo stated that Blackwater Brook hosts a number of rare or endangered species. The Dover Conservation Commission's goal is protection of these species. Public access is a lesser priority, because the Commission is more concerned with wildlife protection. The Blackwater Brook area also contributes to the City's water supply.

During the ensuing discussion, the following was noted: Railway Brook was formerly a branch of Flagstone Brook; the former Drive-In site abuts the Natural Resource Protection zone on the Tradeport, which would be an upland bird habitat for a restored Drive-In site; and the Knight Brook area has many property owners. Following this discussion, Pete Walker outlined the next steps in the wetlands mitigation process: meet with the resource agencies, follow-up with the local communities, develop a formal proposal in the DEIS, file an ACOE Individual Permit, and prepare the FEIS.

Chris Cross posed the question of the Preferred Wetlands Package as recommended. The ATF endorsed the proposed package noting the need to work with the PDA on Railway Brook, and assuming that the PDA supports the proposal. Gail Pare suggested supporting the restoration of Flagstone Brook as well. Chris responded that Flagstone Brook is not part of the mitigation package. Flagstone Brook is not as severely degraded as Railway Brook, and any modifications to the stream channel would be constrained by the abutting residential and industrial properties. Marlon raised the issue of oil separators and downstream property owner impacts vis-à-vis Railway Brook. Pete responded that the intent of the restoration would be to ensure there would be no additional flow beyond Nimble Hill Road.

There being no further questions or comments, Chris Cross thanked the project team for reaching out and working with the local officials. Marlon concurred stating, "good job". Chris Cross reminded all of the schedule for Public Informational Meetings – November 7, 2005, 7:00 PM in Dover City Hall and November 9, 2005, 7:00 PM in Newington Town Hall – and the next ATF meeting scheduled for January 18, 2006, 6:30 PM at Dover City Hall. Chris thanked the ATF for endorsing the suggested preferred alternative, which the ATF influenced. And Chris thanked the public for attending the meeting and being engaged in the project and in this meeting's discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.



Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

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Meeting Notes

Attendees: Chris Cross, ATF Chair, RPC
Jack Newick, Dover
Bruce Woodruff, Dover
Steve Parkinson, Portsmouth
Leon Kenison, PDA
Tom Fargo, SRPC
Tim Roache, SRPC
Cliff Sinnott, RPC
Steve Stancel, Dover
Marcia Colbath, Dover Open Lands
Cody Cartnick, 53 Boston Harbor Road
Carole Cartnick, 53 Boston Harbor Road
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Marc Laurin, NHDOT
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Pete Walker, VHB
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB

Date/Time: January 18, 2006

Project No.: 51425.00

Place: Dover City Hall

Re: Newington-Dover 11238
ATF Meeting #16

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

In the absence of Chris Cross, Tom Fargo called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. He welcomed all, noting they were attending the 16th Advisory Task Force (ATF) meeting. Following self-introductions of the ATF members, Tom noted the role of the ATF as a liaison to the project team, funneling public input to the team, and disseminating project related information back to their respective constituencies. Tom then turned to Chris Waszczuk who reviewed the meeting agenda. Following review of the agenda, Chris asked for comments or edits to the draft meeting minutes of October 26, 2005. He noted a typographical error on page 5 referring to the schedule of completion for discontinuing use of the median turnaround at Exit 4N on the Spaulding Turnpike (fall 2005). There being no further comments or edits, the draft meeting minutes of October 26, 2005 were unanimously adopted as amended. Chris then asked for any other comments or ideas. He stated that, in his view, the recommended preferred alternative addresses the project purpose and need while minimizing impacts to the environment and private properties. He also noted that while a couple of individuals continue to criticize aspects of the plan despite the project team's analysis and response to comments, overwhelming consensus has been expressed in support of the recommended preferred alternative. There being no further comments or questions, Chris turned to Frank O'Callaghan to summarize the main areas of comments received at the recent (November 7 and November 9, 2005) public informational meetings.

Frank identified three main areas of comment – noise mitigation, wetland mitigation and miscellaneous comments. With respect to noise mitigation, he noted that the proposed mitigation plan enjoys broad support and NHDOT is committed to its implementation. The visual impact of sound barriers is a concern; Frank noted that design of such barriers would need to balance appearance with effectiveness. “Quiet pavement” (which the NHDOT is researching) could complement, but would not replace the need for, the sound barriers. Sound-proofing of buildings is not a viable noise mitigation measure from an FHWA-funding perspective (sound-proofing of structures is used by the FAA as it is their only effective mitigation measure for airport and airplane noise.) Frank stated that there are no sound barriers proposed to be located on the Little Bay Bridges, and noted that the schedule for construction of the sound barriers would be contingent on the final design and right-of-way acquisition process, and the sequencing of construction.

With respect to wetlands mitigation, it is clear that Dover prefers wetlands preservation whereas Newington prefers wetlands restoration coupled with preservation. Several Newington residents raised concern over the potential involuntary purchase of development rights *vis-à-vis* potential wetlands preservation alternatives. Frank noted that Pete Walker would update the attendees later in the presentation on the most recent refinements and issues related to the proposed wetlands mitigation package.

Frank next touched on a number of miscellaneous items, which were discussed at the recent public informational meetings. He noted traffic operations, design issues and pedestrian needs in the vicinity of the Spur Road/US 4 intersection; a potential sidewalk extension along Dover Point Road (which Frank would address later in the presentation); changes in local traffic circulation, specifically Dover Point and the Nimble Hill Road/Shattuck Way Extension area; whether or not there were historic resource impacts in the vicinity of Bloody Point due to the construction of the Interim Safety Improvements (extension of Shattuck Way) in Newington (there were none); construction related issues – 5-6 year schedule with sequencing to be determined, two lanes of traffic to be maintained in each direction during construction, and staging areas to be determined during final design; and the means for the public to stay informed of the project – future ATF meetings, the Public Hearing targeted for May 2006 and the project website (www.newington-dover.com). Tom Fargo asked the status of the proposed hotel development located immediately south of the ExxonMobil station on Nimble Hill Road in the vicinity of the proposed local connector road. Chris Cross responded that the development site, due to its small size and proposed layout, did not have the flexibility to accommodate the local connector road as proposed, and that direct access to the Turnpike was infeasible from a traffic operations and safety perspective. As such, he believes that the proposal for the hotel site, as proposed, is not viable and will not be advanced. Chris Waszczuk asked if there were any further comments on the public informational meetings. There being none, Chris stated that he thought the meetings went well, and while there were ancillary comments and questions relating to various aspects of the plan, he felt that there was definite consensus on the preferred alternative as recommended by NHDOT. Tom Fargo noted that NHDOT and VHB have been very responsive to issues that have been raised during the course of the study, particularly the recent pedestrian issues along Dover Point Road. Chris Waszczuk responded that with respect to the potential for extending a sidewalk along Dover Point Road (which would be discussed later in the presentation), while the NHDOT had conducted preliminary engineering studies, the NHDOT is still considering whether the sidewalk extension should be a separate project, or incorporated into the Newington-Dover project, and whether or not the NHDOT should bear the total cost of construction.

There being no further comments, Chris Waszczuk distributed correspondence from the City of Dover and Town of Newington supporting the preferred alternative. He first referred to a Dover City Council resolution that passed by a 6-3 vote on November 9, 2005 and included support for Alternative 3 with the Dover Pont connector road located adjacent to the channel, support for rehabilitation and re-use of the General Sullivan Bridge as an alternative transportation facility, and a

request for state agency coordination, funding and implementation of improvements to boating infrastructure at Hilton Park. Chris noted that NHDOT is committed to coordination with the NH Fish and Game Department, but since the project avoids impacting Hilton Park, NHDOT cannot justify the expenditure of project funds at Hilton Park. The Council also endorsed and encouraged the proposed noise mitigation adjacent to the Turnpike both south and north of Exit 6, to which Chris remarked that NHDOT is committed to the proposed noise mitigation and that discussion on the noise barrier design will continue up to and after the Public Hearing. The City Council also endorsed and encouraged the provision of a sidewalk along Dover Point Road connecting the existing sidewalk on Boston Harbor Road with the proposed sidewalk along the Dover Point connector road adjacent to Hilton Park, and along the proposed connector road between Spur Road and Boston Harbor Road. They also encouraged the NHDOT to consider the Blackwater Brook area, as previously proposed, as a site for wetland mitigation. Chris noted that Pete Walker would touch on the Blackwater Brook area later in the presentation on updating of the wetlands mitigation package.

Chris next referred to the October 18, 2005 correspondence from the Town of Newington and signed by the respective Chairs of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Conservation Commission. In this correspondence the Town endorsed Alternative 13 noting that further refinements may occur. The Town noted that the increased elevation of the Turnpike (as proposed in Alternatives 10A and 12A) is the issue of greatest concern and would have a severe impact on Town residents. Alternative 13 minimizes those impacts. The Town reiterated its previous request (July 26, 2005) that the NHDOT reject plans that call for an elevated Turnpike, and looks forward to working with the NHDOT in refinement of Alternative 13. On December 21, 2005, the Town of Newington commented further by stating that the Town has no objection to an elevated rail spur connecting to the Tradeport along the existing Pease Spur rail corridor. The Town strongly supports a re-connection of the rail spur from a traffic mitigation and economic development perspective, and reiterated its willingness to work with the NHDOT in any refinement of Alternative 13. This letter was signed by the Chairs of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, and the Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission. Chris Waszczuk noted that elevating a future rail connection across the Turnpike was an issue for both the Town and the PDA. He stated that NHDOT is committed to cost-sharing with the PDA, if and when the rail connection materializes in the future. Chris asked if there were any comments on the correspondence of support. Leon Kenison stated that the PDA was pleased with the December 21, 2005 letter from the Town of Newington. Chris Cross, speaking as a member of the Newington Planning Board, stated that a future rail connection, as proposed, would be a benefit to all. Chris Waszczuk asked if there were any comments on the recommended preferred alternative. Tom Fargo noted that the Dover City Council has formulated a second resolution on wetland mitigation, which strongly encourages the DOT to consider the Tuttle Farm as the highest priority for the project's mitigation.

At this point, Chris asked Frank O'Callaghan to summarize the preliminary study of extending a sidewalk along Dover Point Road. Frank referred to a plan noting that the sidewalk extension would be approximately 2,700' in length running along the west side of the street between Hilton Park and the point on Dover Point Road (opposite the Division of Motor Vehicles building) where the existing sidewalk terminates. He noted that by holding the east side edge of pavement, a 4-foot shoulder and 11-foot wide travel lane could be provided in each direction with provision of a 5-foot wide sidewalk and 2-foot wide utility strip, without apparent impacts on wetlands and private properties. The preliminary construction cost estimate ranged from approximately \$315,000 (if constructed as part of the Newington-Dover project), to approximately \$430,000 (if constructed as a separate project). Drainage would be an issue given the floodplain elevation and existing flat topography, and the construction cost estimates reflect a pavement overlay of the roadway. Chris Waszczuk added that the initial reaction of the Front Office of NHDOT to the proposed sidewalk extension is that the cost should be shared between the State and the City. Tom Fargo asked if the wetlands depicted on the base plan of Dover Point Road reflected the latest available data. Frank responded that the wetland

areas reflect the resource mapping developed for the project study area. Tom suggested that there might be more recent data along Dover Point Road due to some recent activities. Jack Newick expressed concern for bicyclists traveling along Dover Point Road as a result of the proposed sidewalk plan. Frank replied that bicyclists would be accommodated on the 4-foot shoulders being provided in each direction. Bruce Woodruff stated that in light of the changes in local traffic patterns, which increase the traffic volume through the Dover Point Road residential area, the proposed sidewalk extension should be part of the Newington-Dover project and funded 100 percent by the project. He added that the benefit to commuters resulting from the Turnpike improvements should be balanced by addressing the added burden to the local Dover Point neighborhood resulting from the Turnpike improvements. In addition, the incremental project cost (\$315K) is very small in comparison to the total estimated project construction cost of approximately \$174M. Both Bruce and Tim Roache agreed that alternative funding through the Transportation Enhancement Program is highly competitive, with no guarantee of project approval. Chris Waszczuk acknowledged that while the estimated sidewalk construction cost is relatively modest, it still constitutes an additional demand on limited project funding. He reiterated that while the NHDOT was not closing the door on possible project funding, he was relaying the Department's initial thoughts *vis-à-vis* cost-sharing. In the absence of a sidewalk, pedestrians could utilize the shoulder areas. Cody Cartnick, 53 Boston Harbor Road, stated that the volume and speed of traffic along Dover Point Road would place pedestrians who walk in the shoulders at risk. Chris Waszczuk asked if the City would plow the sidewalk in winter, noting that a maintenance agreement with the City will be required assuming expenditures of federal funds on the local roadway. Bruce responded that the City would not plow the sidewalk under the current City policy.

Chris Cross asked if local funds could supplement the project's state/federal funds in the refinement of Alternative 13; more specifically, the Town of Newington may be interested in extending sidewalk along Woodbury Avenue, as shown on the Town's master plan. Chris noted that impact fees collected over time from local industries within the Woodbury Avenue corridor would be the source of the local funds. He asked if local Dover businesses could, in similar fashion, be the source of the City's local funding for extending the sidewalk along Dover Point Road. Steve Stancel replied that, unlike Woodbury Avenue, Dover Point Road is primarily residential which precludes the opportunity to cost-share with local businesses. Chris Waszczuk asked if the sidewalk extension was constructed as part of the Newington-Dover project, could the City provide the 20% (\$63K) match of state/federal funding. Bruce Woodruff responded that the City would need to take that question under advisement. Chris Waszczuk concluded the discussion on the potential sidewalk extension by stating that NHDOT would keep an open mind and work with the City to resolve the issue.

Pete Walker then referred to a table and briefly summarized some of the major impacts associated with the recommended preferred alternative. He noted that refinement of the impact assessment is an on-going process and reflects the continuing refinement of preliminary engineering plans. For example, he noted that there were no impacts to threatened and endangered species, and while there were no impacts to Hilton Park, there was a slight impact to Bayview Park in Dover. While there are no impacts to petroleum and hazardous waste sites in Dover, there are five such sites in Newington. Wildlife impacts are relatively small. Pete noted that noise impacts and proposed mitigation in Dover have been discussed at length; he added that wetland impacts in Dover had increased slightly due to the incorporation of and modifications to the layout of the southbound on-ramp from the connector road (Spur Road – Boston Harbor Road) to the southbound Exit 6 on-ramp as part of Alternative 3.

Pete then presented an update of the proposed wetlands mitigation package. He noted that preservation of the Tuttle Farm in Dover as part of a public/private partnership (State, City, Strafford Rivers Conservancy) was being contemplated as a substitute for preservation of 40 to 50 acres at Blackwater Brook, and that preservation at Blackwater Brook would be an alternate element. Pete explained that the Tuttle Farm was both an agricultural and wetland resource. While the wetland

value (Varney Brook) is not as rich and extensive as the Blackwater Brook area, the City of Dover and Strafford Rivers Conservancy (SRC) are currently negotiating with the owners of the farm for the sale of development rights, and the opportunity is at hand to bundle some of the project's mitigation funds with City and SRC resources to maximize the conservation of land at the farm site. Marcia Colbath stated that City of Dover resources (\$1.5M bond) would conserve approximately 60 Ac of the 125 Ac site. Chris Cross observed that substituting the Tuttle Farm for the Blackwater Brook site as the recommended mitigation required one to weigh farmland preservation versus wetlands preservation. Pete stated that the fact that agricultural lands had been lost to past transportation projects supports the value of this proposed agricultural preservation; however, he noted that Blackwater Brook is a more valuable wetlands system (than Varney Brook which borders the Tuttle Farm). The Resource Agencies will require justification for allocation of project mitigation funds and will need to reach consensus on the wetlands mitigation package. Chris Waszczuk added that USEPA and ACOE require documentation of function and value of the wetland resources impacted along the corridor, and the function and value of the wetlands proposed as mitigation.

With respect to the Tuttle Farm, Marcia responded that there is a willing owner, and a Purchase and Sale Agreement has been executed. The opportunity for conservation/mitigation is at hand for a unique resource – the Tuttle Farm is the oldest farm in New Hampshire, having been operated by 11 generations of the Tuttle family. Chris Cross noted that the farm's proximity to the study area is an advantage. Tom Fargo inquired as to the level of wetlands analysis. Pete Walker responded that a detailed field review of the farm property had been conducted on all of the farm parcels. Tom noted that there are flagged wetlands on the site, and there may be more wetlands on the site than previously depicted. Pete suggested contacting the owners to obtain the latest information. Marcia offered to follow up or request that the SRC follow up with the owner.

Chris Waszczuk stated that the City is supportive of the proposed mitigation at Tuttle Farm and has requested NHDOT to refocus on this site as the priority mitigation site in Dover. He added that he was wary of placing all the mitigation effort at this one site, and that it may be more prudent to share wetlands mitigation between the Tuttle Farm and the Blackwater Brook area. Tom Fargo estimated that 60 to 70 acres of preservation would be required to offset the wetland impacts in Dover. Marcia stated that it would be preferable to preserve the entire site (approximately 125 Ac); she noted the urgency of the situation – the additional acres could be sold tomorrow. Chris Waszczuk noted the need for consensus from the Resource Agencies prior to commitment of project funds to the farm preservation. He added that the resource agencies had reached consensus on the Blackwater Brook area; now we will be asking them to revisit that decision. Tom reiterated that if there are more wetlands on the Tuttle Farm than previously estimated, the justification to the RA's for switching priorities will be strengthened. Tim Roache offered the SRPC as a facilitator for hosting the next (February) RA meeting in Dover. Chris Waszczuk reiterated that NHDOT supports mitigation at the Tuttle Farm, but he is anxious about the risk involved in placing all the mitigation funding at one location. Bill O'Donnell suggested requesting a field walk of the Tuttle Farm with the resource agencies, and then a comparison of the sites (Tuttle Farm and Blackwater Brook). Cliff Sinnott asked if there were other potential funding sources for mitigation at the Tuttle Farm. Marcia responded that City sources were expended, and offered that there were advantages to using as few funding sources as possible. Additional funding sources typically result in additional monitoring requirements that could potentially impact the desire to keep the Tuttle property a working farm. Chris Cross asked if the City was asking, or interested in the Town of Newington waiving its mitigation funds and allocating those funds to Dover. Marcia replied, no, and Pete Walker stated that there is a need/preference to mitigate in the watershed areas of impacts. Cliff suggested that the leveraging of additional funds would allow greater mitigation and a feeling of accomplishment to be shared by more stakeholders. Marcia countered that more funding sources result in more site monitoring requirements which will burden farm operations. The City of Dover would prefer to use other funds, if available, on other potential sites. Tom Fargo noted that some organizations might aim their funds

at conserving resources with unanticipated consequences. For example, LCHIP's public access requirements can infringe on private property.

Chris Waszczuk closed the discussion by summarizing that Dover preferred to focus on the Tuttle Farm as the priority for mitigation, and that Blackwater Brook was the secondary site (if the Tuttle Farm mitigation effort is unsuccessful, or if the mitigation credit from the Tuttle Farm does not independently satisfy the requirements). Tom Fargo stated that the Dover Open Land Committee and Conservation Commission prefer the Tuttle Farm, and he assumes that NHDOT could participate in the Tuttle Farm preservation with some remaining mitigation funds for Blackwater Brook. Chris cautioned that one needed to remember that the cost of mitigation at Tuttle Farm (\$/Ac) would likely be more expensive than the Blackwater Brook area, which must be factored into estimating the remaining funds for additional mitigation.

Chris Waszczuk then reminded all that March 2006 has been targeted for publication of the DEIS, with the Public Hearing targeted to follow in May/June 2006. He noted the need for a location to host the public hearing that could seat up to 150 people, had additional space for tables, boards, plans and exhibits, and could support a PowerPoint presentation. He expressed concern over Dover City Hall (Auditorium) due to daylight intrusion effects on the presentation; he also expressed a desire to hold a single public hearing. Bruce Woodruff offered that Newington Town Hall would work and be a relatively easy commute (southbound) at 6:00 PM in comparison to a northerly commute along the Turnpike at that time period. Chris Cross confirmed that Newington Town Hall could accommodate the public hearing. Mike Dugas noted that NHDOT would provide the audio system. Tom Fargo suggested that a middle school auditorium in Dover might also work, but upon further discussion, the layout of space and seating was deemed infeasible. Steve Stancel suggested a neutral location be held instead of the Town or City Halls. In answer to a question, Chris Waszczuk indicated that the hearing location would be open to the public from approximately 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM to review plans and discuss the project with the project team. The hearing itself, would run from 7:00 PM to approximately 10:00 PM. He asked if there were any further comments or questions, and if the ATF felt there was a need for another ATF meeting. The feeling was that another meeting prior to the public hearing was unnecessary.

Chris Cross stated that ATF representatives have worked very hard with the design team to craft the preferred alternative. He noted that a successful public hearing is critical to project implementation, and that it is incumbent on the ATF representatives to bring out supporters to the public hearing, and to speak up at the hearing in support of the project. He anticipates that a well-organized business owner will oppose the project and could make a lot of noise at the hearing. Jack Newick added that he concurred with Chris – the ATF needs to generate supporters at the hearing and speak up. He added that in his experience, he has seen a vocal minority derail a project because the majority of supporters elected to stay home. Chris Waszczuk added that the public hearing is a critical project milestone. The communities and regulators need to hear the actual story of project development. He stated that the ATF has been great to work with and that Chris Cross' points were well taken. Bruce Woodruff offered that the EIS process has been well done, the Dover City Council is very supportive of the project, and the ATF has well represented the City's issues and concerns.

There being no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING (ATF) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
JANUARY 18, 2006

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING (ATF) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
JANUARY 18, 2006

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Name _____
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Meeting Notes

Attendees: Chris Cross, ATF Chair
Tom Fargo, SRPC
Sandra Keans, SRPC
Cynthia Copeland, SRPC
Cliff Sinnott, RPC
David Walker, RPC
Beverly Hollingworth, State Executive Council
Gary Kassof, USCG
Steve Bird, City of Dover
John Pelletier, 94 Back River Road
Jack Pare, Newington
Gail Pare, Newington
Deborah Finnigan, Portsmouth
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA
Marc Laurin, NHDOT
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Pete Walker, VHB
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB

Date/Time: July 26, 2007 - 6:30 PM

DRAFT

Project No.: NHS-027-1(37)/11238
VHB: 51425.00

Place: Newington Town Hall

Re: Newington-Dover
ATF Mtg # 17

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan
Peter Walker

INTRODUCTION

Chris Cross called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. He welcomed all, noting they were attending the 17th Advisory Task Force (ATF) meeting. After each member of the ATF introduced themselves, Chris reviewed the role and responsibilities of the ATF: 1) to act as a liaison to the project team; 2) serve as a conduit for public input; and 3) to disseminate project-related information back to their respective constituencies. He noted that notes on ATF activities and meetings are available through the project website (www.newington-dover.com) and that a public hearing on the project was held in September 2006. Chris welcomed public comment explaining that the EIS process is interactive involving refinements of plan development through the ATF and public informational process. He stated that despite the recent news and public discussion concerning constrained funding sources for statewide transportation system and infrastructure improvements, the Newington-Dover Spaulding Turnpike improvements are still needed and warranted. He also recognized Executive Councilor Beverly Hollingworth.

Chris Cross asked for comments or edits to the draft meeting minutes from the previous meeting (January 18, 2006). Tom Fargo made a motion to accept the minutes as drafted; Sandra Keans seconded. There being no comments or edits, the draft meeting minutes of January 18, 2006 were unanimously adopted.

Chris then asked the ATF to identify any specific comments to bring forward from the various towns, commissions, and organizations represented on the ATF. Cynthia Copeland asked whether the proposed mitigation projects would be discussed. Chris Waszczuk stated that mitigation would indeed be addressed as part of the meeting.

Chris Cross then turned the meeting over to Chris Waszczuk, Chief Project Manager for the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT). Chris began his presentation by providing an overview of the agenda for the evening's meeting. (Note: a copy of the slide presentation is attached to these notes). Chris stated that he would review the comments received at the Public Hearing and on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), with the Department's formal responses to each issue. Chris explained that the Department had finalized the formal "Report of the Commissioner" on June 25, 2007. Copies of the Report were distributed to members of the ATF and the audience. (See attached.) He also noted that he would review the updated cost estimates for the project.

PROJECT FUNDING STATUS

Chris Waszczuk began by noting rumors to the effect that the project has been eliminated from the Department's Ten-Year Plan, stating that, while the project's status in the Ten-Year Plan has changed, the project has not been eliminated. The first cut draft of the Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TYP) for 2009-2018 that was presented to Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) on July 18th proposes to change the project's funding from the Federal Program to the Turnpike Capital Program. Chris briefly reviewed the process used by GACIT to develop the TYP. A draft TYP is updated biennially and was recently submitted to GACIT by NHDOT Commissioner O'Leary at a July 18 meeting. The Spaulding Turnpike Improvement Project is proposed to be moved from the federal program (*i.e.*, project which are funded with an 80:20 split between federal and state funds) to the Turnpike program. This change was made with the recognition that there will need to be additional funding in the Turnpike Program to fund the project's final design, ROW procurement, and construction. Chris noted that he has been directed by the Assistant Commissioner to move forward with the project at least through the FEIS stage and secure the permitting and layout approval necessary to advance the project forward. The Department recognizes that a great deal of time and energy have been spent on developing the best alternative. However, there is a very serious funding crisis brought on by the recent rate of inflation (approximately 45% increase over the last 3 years) for construction materials such as steel and asphalt. The funding of transportation projects is a major issue and will need to be resolved at the state level with the Governor and Legislature.

Chris stated that there will be several meetings around the state with the GACIT over the next several months, and encouraged members of the ATF and the audience to attend. The GACIT is due to issue its report on the TYP to the Governor in December. Then the Governor will submit the plan to the Legislature. Until that happens, the existing TYP will remain in force.

Chris handed out a listing of the projects that was presented by the Commissioner to the GACIT on July 18 (*i.e.*, draft TYP). The Commissioner has presented the reality of the situation: Only \$2 billion in revenue is available, with \$4 billion in projects on the books. The Commissioner has said that it will take closer to 35 years to complete all of the current projects unless either revenue is increased or projects cut. This is a very serious issue that should not be taken lightly.

With regard to the Newington-Dover Spaulding Turnpike Improvements, Chris stated that a meeting has been scheduled with the Special Committee to formally act on the necessity of the project and to approve the layout on August 22, 2007 at 2:00 PM at the NHDOT Offices in Concord. He noted that while approximately \$32M was earmarked for design and construction, the Turnpike program will need additional revenue to support the Newington-Dover project and other Turnpike improvement projects. He stated that continued project development is warranted since the project is much needed from a safety and congestion standpoint.

Chris then reviewed the updated project schedule noting that the FEIS is targeted to be published in October 2007, the Record of Decision (ROD) is expected in January 2008, with both final design (July 2008 – June 2012) and construction (Spring 2010 – Fall 2010) funding dependent.

Chris asked if there were questions about the project status. Cynthia Copeland asked if earmarked money is a higher priority. Chris responded that the Draft Plan has no high priority project designations.

Cliff Sinnott noted that the Rochester Spaulding Turnpike project was also moved to the Turnpike Program. He inquired as to other projects which might have been moved and if there is any sense of priorities among the listed projects? Chris responded that the plan identifies four projects in the Turnpike Program that are already funded. There are about a dozen other projects listed under the Turnpike Program that will need additional funding (approximately \$500M), including the Newington-Dover project.

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

Chris Waszczuk provided a summary of the public comments received at the hearing and in subsequent written correspondence. A total of 73 individuals or agencies provided comment. Thirty of these comments were from concerned citizens, the largest category of respondent. Twenty-seven respondents supported the project, while five comments were received in opposition to the project. (See the attached slide presentation for more data on the breakdown and types of comments received.)

Chris then turned his presentation to a discussion of the main comments and issues that were related to the proposed layout. During his presentation, Chris paraphrased from the Report of the Commissioner, (ROTC) which is attached to these notes. He distributed copies of the ROTC to attendees. Tom Fargo asked if the ROTC is also available on the project website. Chris responded that it is posted on the website.

Issues Potentially Affecting the Roadway Layout

Issue 1: Concern with Scale of Proposed Improvements, Adverse Effects of Eight Lanes

Several comments were received on the fact that the preferred alternative, as presented at the Public Hearing, proposes a total of eight lanes. Although there was a great deal of support for the project overall, some of those commenting expressed concern over the scale of the project and on the character of the potential impact to Dover Point; they requested assurances that the number of lanes and width of shoulders were warranted.

Chris paraphrased from the Report of the Commissioner in response to this concern. Among the main points contained in the ROTC:

- The Draft EIS evaluated a number of different 6-lane alternatives and documented that a 6-lane alternative, even when considered in combination with all other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM) measures, would not be sufficient to meet projected 2025 travel demands. A 6-lane bridge would reach capacity by 2017.
- The cross-section of a 6-lane alternative is nearly as wide as the proposed 8-lane alternative. The reduction of environmental impact resulting from a 6-lane would be relatively small – typically on the order of about 5% less – in comparison to the 8-lane alternative.
- Right-of-way impacts would be relatively the same for either a six-lane alternative or an eight-lane alternative. Two (2) businesses in Dover and similar strip land acquisitions would need to be acquired as a result of either alternative.
- The Preferred Alternative provides three basic travel lanes and one auxiliary lane in each direction between Exits 3 and 6. The auxiliary lanes allow traffic to safely enter, exit and change lanes. The 10 to 12 foot shoulders are a safety improvement and are needed to allow vehicles to safely pull over in emergency situations and stop outside the travel lanes. Narrow shoulder areas are not deemed as being safe areas to stop due to their confining width and the relatively high travel speeds along the Turnpike.

Chris then asked the ATF for questions or comments on this issue.

Cliff Sinnott asked whether or not the redesign of Exit 4 would eliminate the need for the fourth lane in each direction, stating that he thought the need for the additional lanes was related primarily to the weave conditions created by the Exit, rather than traffic volumes. Frank O'Callaghan responded that the need for four lanes in each direction was related to the total volume of traffic entering, exiting and traveling on the Turnpike between Exits 3 and 6. He added that the redesign of Exit 4 as shown in the Preferred Alternative did not eliminate the weaving of traffic; it made the weaving safer and more efficient.

Tom Fargo asked whether NHDOT is counting traffic currently and if NHDOT had reviewed the traffic projections made in the Draft EIS against those actual counts. Chris Waszczuk responded that a permanent counter exists at both the toll booths and on the bridge. According to these counting stations, the growth in traffic has been slowing, and has been relatively flat over the last few years. The projections in the Draft EIS assume a 1.3% growth rate, which is less than the historic traffic growth that has occurred in the area. So the modeling has recognized that growth is slowing, but that traffic growth will still occur. Tom also stated that numerous major development projects are in the works – e.g., the Flatley Company is building a mall in Rochester and Liberty Mutual is moving about 1200 jobs from the Pease Tradeport to Dover. Frank O'Callaghan added that as the peak hour growth of traffic diminishes, the duration of peak hour traffic expands. He also stated that those major changes in land use such as Pease, Liberty Mutual, *etc.*, were built into the model.

Issue 2: Concern with Proposed Re-Configuration of Exit 6 and Added Traffic Signals

Some comments received expressed opposition to the proposed modification of the Exit 6W ramp from the existing free-flow loop to a diamond configuration under signal control. These individuals felt that the signal would operate inefficiently, resulting in congestion, traffic queues on the Turnpike and Dover Point Road, and increased traffic diversion onto City streets (e.g., Spur Road, Boston Harbor Road).

In response to this concern, Chris paraphrased from the ROTC, stating that the signalized diamond interchange configuration proposed for Exit 6, as part of the Preferred Alternative, provides a safer

and more efficient traffic operation in comparison to a free-flowing 2-lane loop ramp alternative for northbound traffic desiring to travel west on US 4. He noted that other interchange configurations were studied and found to be less desirable. The single lane loop ramp cannot accommodate 2025 travel demands. A 2-lane loop ramp is not recommended due to safety considerations. Such a design would also result in additional wetland impacts and impact a number of Homestead Lane residences. Not only is the 2-lane loop ramp alternative a safety concern, it is also unnecessary and would cost approximately \$2 million more to construct (primarily due to the increased span and width of the new bridge carrying US 4 over the Turnpike) than the signalized diamond interchange configuration (exclusive of right-of-way and mitigation costs).

Chris elaborated on the Department's response to concerns about potential traffic backups on the northbound off-ramp at Exit 6. As summarized in the Draft EIS, the proposed storage lengths on the northbound off-ramp will sufficiently accommodate the anticipated queues without vehicles backing up onto the Turnpike.

All three signalized intersections in the Exit 6 area are projected to operate at Level of Service (LOS) B or better during the 2025 weekday morning and evening peak hours, with the exception of the northbound ramps which will operate at LOS C. These anticipated levels of operation meet or exceed the Department's desired standard of LOS for new roadway facilities. With the facility operating at high levels of service with modest delays, motorists will have no reason to seek alternative routes. [This is more fully documented in Chapter 4 of the DEIS.]

Chris asked if there were questions on this issue or the Department's response. There were none.

Issue 3: Mixed Support for Elimination of Exit 5

A group of residents of Wentworth Terrace had expressed their support for the proposed elimination of Exit 5, but requested modification of Wentworth Terrace to create a loop at the end of this dead end street to facilitate movement of cars and trucks using the road. However, other comments were received in opposition to the closure of Exit 5, citing concerns about access to Hilton Park and increased traffic on Dover Point Road. One proposed modification to the Preferred Alternative suggested that the portion of Hilton Drive extending north from the existing ramps to the pump station be retained to create a loop road.

In response to these comments, Chris explained that the closure of Exit 5 is necessitated from a safety and traffic operations standpoint due to its proximity to Exit 6 and the projected increase in traffic (2025 travel demand) along the Turnpike between Exits 3 and 6. Insufficient distance (approximately 2,000 feet) exists between the on-ramp from Exit 5 and the off-ramp to Exit 6. Traffic safety and efficiency aside, reconstructing Exit 5 to minimum design standards would severely impact Hilton Park and the Wentworth Terrace neighborhood, and would preclude the opportunity to construct sound walls to reduce the existing and future traffic noise levels in the neighborhood that the Preferred Alternative provides.

Chris added that the potential traffic diversions to Hilton Drive, Dover Point Road and Boston Harbor Road resulting from the closure of Exit 5 have been analyzed. A portion of the existing eastbound traffic on US 4 that seeks to travel north on the Turnpike, and currently enters and exits Hilton Park and Wentworth Terrace *via* Exit 5, would be re-routed to Exit 6 and Dover Point Road. The overall re-distribution of traffic associated with the Preferred Alternative is anticipated to result in a modest increase in traffic along Dover Point Road in the vicinity of Boston Harbor Road. A detailed capacity analysis conducted for the intersection of Boston Harbor Road/Dover Point Road and the proposed local connector road shows LOS A operations throughout the year 2025.

Relative to commercial vehicles accessing and exiting the Wentworth Terrace neighborhood and Hilton Drive, Chris reviewed a plan of the proposed improvements to Hilton Drive in the vicinity of Wentworth Terrace and Hilton Park, stating that the roadway will be designed to accommodate tractor-trailer trucks. Also, as suggested, a portion of Hilton Drive extending north from the existing ramps to the pump station is proposed to be retained to create a loop road for trucks to more easily exit the neighborhood. Chris then asked for questions from the ATF.

Bill O'Donnell asked whether the elimination of Exit 5 would affect the configuration of the noise barrier planned for that location. Chris referred to a slide of the plan for that area, which indicated that there is no effect on the barrier. Following this clarification, there were no further comments or questions from the ATF or those in attendance.

Issue 4: Request for Sidewalks on Dover Point Road and Other Pedestrian and Bicyclist Accommodations in Dover

Several parties that either testified at the Public Hearing and/or submitted written comments requested the inclusion of sidewalks in several areas in Dover. Chris referred to a revised plan of Dover Point Road. The revised plan included a sidewalk on the west side connecting Hilton Park to the existing sidewalk on Boston Harbor Road; the Department intends to include these sidewalks in the project if several conditions can be met: 1) landowner easements can be obtained; 2) wetlands regulators permit a slight increase in impacts to wetlands; 3) the City of Dover agrees to maintain the sidewalks once constructed. As has become standard procedure over recent years, the Department will ask the City to execute a maintenance agreement prior to constructing the sidewalks.

Chris also noted that a sidewalk is proposed to be constructed alongside the proposed connector road connecting Spur Road with Boston Harbor Road. Lighting is proposed to be installed as part of the proposed underpass structure beneath US 4. New sidewalks are also proposed in the following locations: along the north side of Spur Road between the Bayview Park parking area and the Scammell Bridge; along the west side of the connector road between Spur Road and Boston Harbor Road; along the new two-way connector beneath the Little Bay Bridges; and along Hilton Drive. No other sidewalks are proposed in Dover as part of the project.

As part of the project, the Department proposes to build 4-foot wide shoulder areas, which will accommodate bicycles, along the reconstructed segments of Dover Point Road, US 4, Spur Road, Hilton Drive, and the two connector roadways.

Tom Fargo asked whether, with the sidewalks and shoulders as planned, a pedestrian could walk a loop around Hilton Park, across the Exit 6 area to Dover Point Road and back to Hilton Park. Chris Waszczuk responded that it would be possible, but noted that there would only be a 4-foot shoulder on the Exit 6 bridge, not a full sidewalk.

Issue 5: Request for Pedestrian and Bicyclists in Newington.

Comments were received which requested better accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians in Newington. It was specifically requested that the re-design of Exit 3 provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and bicyclist crossing of the Turnpike. In addition, sidewalks were requested to be constructed on both side of Woodbury Avenue north of Fox Run Road. Chris Waszczuk pointed out that, under the Preferred Alternative as proposed at the hearing, the reconstruction of Woodbury Avenue would include a seven (7) foot wide curbed panel, adjacent to the roadway, to accommodate both a future sidewalk and utilities. The Department considered the request for construction of sidewalks and, similar to the sidewalks in Dover, if the Town of Newington agrees to accept maintenance responsibilities for the new sidewalks, the Department will construct new sidewalks on both sides of Woodbury Avenue within the limits of the reconstruction project. Also, a new sidewalk

would be provided on the north side of the bridge crossing over the Turnpike and extending through the new Woodbury Avenue/Arboretum Drive/Exit 3 southbound ramps intersection. The sidewalk would then continue along the west side of Arboretum Drive to the first driveway, which is located at approximately Station 4055 of Arboretum Drive. Roadside shoulder areas (4 to 5 feet wide) to accommodate bicyclists are proposed within the limits of the project along Woodbury Avenue, the bridge over the Turnpike within the Exit 3 interchange area, and along the reconstructed sections of Arboretum Drive.

Chris then asked for comments from the ATF or public.

Gail Pare asked: "If you designate [sidewalks] as something other than a sidewalk, is it more accessible to bikes?" Chris Waszczuk responded that bicyclists would use a 4-foot shoulder adjacent to the raised sidewalk. It is generally unsafe for bicyclists to ride on a sidewalk unless the path is specifically designed to accommodate joint use. A discussion followed which considered the advantages and disadvantages of allowing bicyclists on sidewalks vs. requiring them to use the shoulder area. Tom Morgan offered that Newington has no local ordinance to prevent bicyclists from using the sidewalk.

Tom Morgan then asked about access for a pedestrian walking north to Arboretum Drive from the proposed ramp intersection. Chris Waszczuk reiterated that a sidewalk would connect the Woodbury Avenue area across the Turnpike to Arboretum Drive and along the improved section of Arboretum. In other places along Arboretum Drive, pedestrians would be able to walk in the existing shoulder area on a relatively low volume roadway. Tom Morgan said that he was surprised to hear that the state requires local maintenance of sidewalks adjacent to state roads. Chris replied that the Department simply does not have the resources to maintain local sidewalks. Tom Morgan asked: "In how many communities does NHDOT have this type of arrangement?" Chris did not have the exact number, but stated that there were numerous such agreements throughout the state. The responsibilities for maintenance of sidewalks were recently clarified in a court case involving the town of Tilton. He also noted that the Transportation Enhancement funding program requires local sidewalk maintenance. Chris Cross added that the Woodbury Avenue sidewalk adjacent to the Malls is not maintained by NHDOT. In summary, NHDOT will require the maintenance agreement, or the sidewalk will not be built.

Issue 6: Concern with Re-configured Access to the Exxon-Mobil Station on Nimble Hill Road

A representative of Cumberland Farms expressed concern that the Exxon-Mobil station at Nimble Hill Road would suffer negative impacts because the proposed project would eliminate its direct access to the Turnpike. The representative acknowledged that direct access from the Turnpike off-ramp would not be possible in light of the proposed raised median that will be constructed on the exit ramp, and that the proposed connector road and driveway to be constructed behind the business seek to mitigate the negative effect on the business. The owner of the facility has requested (through his attorney) that a direct access be provided from the site to the Turnpike on-ramp, noting that this access would involve minimal changes, have good sight lines, and the conflicting traffic approaching the on-ramp would be under signal control at the Shattuck Way intersection.

In response to this concern, Chris referred to the proposed plan and stated that NHDOT has reviewed the request and is amenable to maintain the existing driveways that service the property. The present driveway on Nimble Hill Road will not have direct access from the Turnpike off-ramp, as a raised median is proposed to be constructed as part of the project. The driveway would have access to the on-ramp leading to the Turnpike but would be restricted to right turns in and out from the on-ramp. The second driveway from the Exxon Station that presently has access directly to the Turnpike will be connected to a new local connector roadway that will be constructed south of the gas station and intersect Nimble Hill Road opposite Shattuck Way. Chris noted that the intersection of Nimble Hill

Road and Shattuck Way is not proposed to be signalized as part of the project. Conduit for future traffic signals had been installed at the intersection, as part of the interim safety improvement project at Exit 4, with the intent that traffic signals would be installed if traffic increases in the area to the extent that the appropriate signal warrants are met.

Cynthia Copeland asked for clarification of how the new access to the gas station would work. Chris stated that left-turns entering or exiting would be prohibited and that the geometry of the proposed alternative would be an improvement to the existing condition. The on-ramp to the Turnpike would be extended by approximately 150 feet to join the Turnpike mainline, which is proposed to be constructed in the existing median area.

Tom Fargo asked if the southbound lanes of the existing Turnpike are going to be dedicated as a town road. Chris responded that this has not yet been determined. The abandoned section of the Turnpike may provide access to the Drive-In, but details of that aspect have yet to be determined.

Gail Pare noted that a cemetery is located on the Drive-In property. Chris Waszczuk responded that the Department was aware of the cemetery, and stated that it would be shielded from disturbance.

Issue 7: Accommodation of Trucks to DMV

One comment noted that the proposed road reconfigurations in Dover would change the access to the Division of Motor Vehicles office on Boston Harbor Road. It was requested that the intersection designs make accommodations for truck access to the facility, particularly on US 4 westbound at Spur Road.

In response, Chris Waszczuk stated that the Exit 6 proposed improvements at the US 4/Spur Road, Spur Road/local connector, and local connector/Boston Harbor Road intersections will be designed to safely and efficiently accommodate heavy commercial vehicles including tractor-trailer trucks. There were no questions or further discussion from the ATF or audience on this issue.

Summary of Recommended Layout

After summarizing the issues related to the proposed highway layout, Chris Waszczuk asked if all members of the ATF were in agreement with the recommended modifications (*i.e.*, Wentworth Terrace, sidewalks in Newington and Dover, access to the Exxon-Mobil station, elimination of Exit 5, reconfiguration of Exit 6 with traffic signals and the scale of the proposed improvements).

Tom Fargo stated that he was not sure if residents of Wentworth Terrace were aware of the proposed change. Chris Waszczuk responded that the modification was made at the request of Wentworth Terrace residents with input from the City Planner. The change requires no new rights-of-way, so it is regarded as a minor change. Therefore, the Department does not plan any further public discussion on that change.

Chris Cross stated that the proposed modifications in Newington reflect requests made by the Town at the hearing. The access to Exxon-Mobil seems reasonable and due to the considerable input, discussion and review, resulted in an acceptable circulation pattern on the property and a longer on-ramp for acceleration. As such, he agreed that the proposed layout is acceptable.

Steve Bird, City of Dover, stated that he was very pleased that the sidewalk elements in Dover were added to the project, although he could not make any commitment on behalf of the City with regard to the required maintenance agreement.

Hearing no further comments, Chris Waszczuk continued his presentation of hearing issues.

Other Major Elements

Issue 8: Concern with Tree Clearing and Loss of Forested Median (in Newington)

Several residents, from both Dover and Newington, asked that the clearing of trees be kept to a minimum. Two comments were received that requested that NHDOT consider modifying the project to prevent the loss of the forested median area in Newington, noting that the median helps keep the area attractive. Some expressed the concern that the trees help to minimize traffic-related noise in their neighborhoods and suggested trees be planted to replace those removed to help dampen noise.

In response, Chris stated that the Department and FHWA will strive to minimize tree clearing to the extent practicable. To minimize noise, four segments of noise barriers are proposed in Dover totaling approximately 15,600 linear feet in length to mitigate for noise levels from the Turnpike. In addition, a comprehensive landscaping plan will be developed as part of the project's final design, and new trees will be planted in select locations to mitigate for the mature trees that will be lost.

However, the Department can not redesign the project to avoid impacting the forest median in Newington. As summarized in the ROTC, the Department and FHWA have held numerous meetings with the communities, Advisory Task Force, and resource agencies to build consensus on a preferred design. The Advisory Task Force, the Newington Selectboard, Newington Planning Board, and Newington Conservation Commission have endorsed the Preferred Alternative in Newington, which proposes to construct the Turnpike within the wooded median. This approach has a number of advantages, particularly with regard to constructability and maintenance of traffic during construction as well as minimizing right-of-way impacts to private property. Also by constructing the Turnpike within the wooded median, the facility is further removed from the residential area in Newington.

Chris then asked for comments and discussion from the ATF and the audience.

One resident asked whether trees could replace the noise barrier in the future (*i.e.*, after the trees mature)? Chris replied that, contrary to conventional wisdom, noise studies have proven that trees don't actually attenuate noise to any appreciable degree. A fairly wide (several hundred feet) and dense treed area is needed to appreciably reduce noise. He added that landscaping will be included where possible.

Sandra Kerns asked what the barriers will look like. Chris stated that the barriers will be designed as part of the final design for the project. They may be constructed of wood, precast panels, possibly plexiglass in some locations, or possibly other designs. These options will be considered more closely and discussed in community meetings as the project moves forward. Seventy-five percent of the benefited residents would need to agree to the barrier construction.

Tom Fargo asked about the fate of contaminated soil from the Interim Improvement Project that had been stockpiled in the median. Chris stated that the contamination was very low level and that the soil would be used as fill on the project.

Issue 9: Mixed Comments on the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB)

Several comments were received on the proposal to rehabilitate the General Sullivan Bridge as part of the project. Most supported the rehabilitation, although some questioned the value of the rehabilitation, indicating concern that the reconstruction of the bridge, and its future maintenance,

would be an unnecessary burden on taxpayers. Other comments on the bridge requested more detail on the rehabilitation, and requested that the rehabilitation be completed in a manner so as to allow emergency vehicles to use the bridge in the future.

Summarizing the Department and FHWA's response to the issue, Chris covered the following points:

- The General Sullivan Bridge, regardless of its present day condition, is a landmark structure, the second highest rated historic bridge in the state, and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The bridge offers a unique and important bicycle / pedestrian connection across Little Bay, as well as, other recreational activities, and is deemed a Section 4(f) resource with protection under Federal law.
- The Department has estimated the cost to rehabilitate the General Sullivan Bridge at approximately \$26 million dollars. This represents a net cost to the project of approximately \$10 million dollars taking into account the cost that would be required to dismantle and remove the structure, as well as the cost required to provide a replacement recreational connection across the Bay.
- The Preferred Alternative requires the existing approach embankment (on the Dover side) to be removed to accommodate a two-way local connector, and proposes to retrofit the end of the General Sullivan Bridge with a new pedestrian/bicycle structure. The two-way connector is required to provide access to the east side of Hilton Park and the Wentworth Terrace neighborhood. This local roadway is proposed to replace the existing one-way Hilton Park connector that is situated beneath the Little Bay Bridges. This underpass location provides the benefit of utilizing the existing grade-separated crossing and reconstructing the Turnpike on the same general grades as currently exist.
- Incident management and emergency response will be fully accommodated on the widened Little Bay Bridges once the bridges are reconstructed. Future incident management and response will be greatly improved over the current situation, negating the need to consider the General Sullivan Bridge for incident response or contingent emergency use.

Following Mr. Waszczuk's summary of the issue and the Department's response, the following points were discussed.

Mr. Jack Pare asked if it would still be possible for someone to ride a bike over the modified General Sullivan Bridge to access Dover Point Road. Chris Waszczuk explained that this will definitely be possible. The bridge will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and it will be unnecessary for the bicyclist to dismount.

Mr. Pare also suggested that since the intent is to rehabilitate the GSB only for bicycle/pedestrian, one could save money by not rehabilitating it to a 6-ton capacity. Chris Waszczuk explained that the bridge truss itself is in reasonably good shape and can accept legal loads. The 6-ton capacity would relate primarily to the design of the floor system which will need to allow emergency access (from Newington). Cliff Sinnott advocated that rehabilitating the GSB to carry legal loads would add redundancy (vis-à-vis the Little Bay Bridges), especially given the critical location of the crossing and the cost of rehabilitating to a 6-ton capacity. Chris responded that the need for redundancy was relatively low considering the widening proposed for the LBB, and the cost of rehabilitation to 6-ton capacity was approximately \$3-5M less than the cost to rehabilitate to legal load capacity.

Issue 10: Noise Barriers

Numerous comments were received on the level of noise experienced by local residents and the proposal to construct noise barriers to mitigate for future noise levels. Most comments were in favor of the barriers, although some comments objected to the barriers, citing their potential impact on the views associated with the area, including business exposure. It was also suggested that the barriers be constructed prior to bridge and roadway construction, and that "quiet pavement" be considered as further mitigation.

Chris summarized the response provided in the ROTC as follows:

- A detailed noise analysis was conducted for this project in accordance with NHDOT's and FHWA's guidelines and regulations on such analyses. Approximately 300 properties were included in the analysis.
- The Department proposes to construct four noise barriers totaling approximately 15,600 feet in length in Dover. The barriers were evaluated as to their feasibility and cost-effectiveness, and will be of sufficient height and length to reduce noise levels (at least 5 decibels) at exterior, ground level locations for approximately 170 residential properties.
- The noise barrier along the west side of the Turnpike in Dover is proposed to end at the Little Bay Bridge, which will provide a feasible and cost-effective termination for the barrier while providing a noise reduction benefit to the Dover Point Road neighborhood. Noise barriers will not be constructed on the bridge, which would eliminate potential impacts to views from the bridge.
- Additional meetings with the benefited property owners will be held to discuss the noise barriers and ascertain whether the barriers are desired or not. In accordance with the Department's Policy and Procedural Guidelines, a minimum of 75% of the first row property owners will need to support the installation of the barrier in order for it to be constructed. During these meetings with the neighborhoods, more detailed information on the type, height, special features, and length of the noise barriers will be discussed and input gathered.
- The Department will design the barriers to be as low as possible while still achieving the necessary noise reductions, and will consider various architectural treatments and landscaping during the final design phase to mitigate the visual impact of the barriers.
- The Department will review the project's constructability and advance the early construction of the proposed noise barriers, where deemed appropriate and practicable.
- As part of the project's final design effort, the Department will investigate the merits and feasibility of utilizing "quiet pavement" or "porous pavement" to reduce the effect of tire noise throughout the project area.

Following Mr. Waszczuk's summary, a general discussion of the noise barriers ensued, focusing on their visual impact. Chris pointed out that the barriers would be subject to approval of the residents closest to them and that 3-D models of the barriers had been prepared as part of the public hearing process. He noted the high level of support from Dover residents and City officials. Cliff Sinnott asked what the barriers would look like for motorists traveling the Turnpike. Would it create a tunnel-like effect? Chris explained that the Turnpike would be quite wide (approximately 150') in relation to the height of the barriers, which would be between 12 and 14 feet high. Thus, the barriers would not seem to create a "tunnel effect."

Issue11: Toll Related Concerns

Another major area of public comment related to the toll-related issues. All of the comments pointed to various problems that the commenters believed are related to the Dover toll facility, especially the creation of excessive traffic on Dover Point Road as a result of motorists avoiding the tolls. Various solutions were proposed in the comments including the permanent or temporary elimination of tolls at this location or the permanent relocation of the toll plaza.

In response to these concerns, Chris provided the following information from the ROTC:

- It has been consistently stated and acknowledged from the project's initiation that the Dover toll facility and toll-related issues fall outside the project study area and scope of study.
- The project's study area was identified and established following the 1998 Route 16 Corridor Protection Study and the 2000 Newington-Dover Feasibility Study by determining that the current and future Turnpike traffic operating conditions north of the toll plaza were satisfactory. In contrast, the section of the Turnpike between Exit 1 and the Dover Toll Plaza operates at a poor level of service, both in the current and future design year.
- Changes to the Turnpike tolling system require State Legislative and Executive Council approval, and may have revenue impacts. These are considered state-level issues potentially affecting the entire Turnpike system, not project level matters.
- The Department has reviewed the historic traffic data in the area. Since the early 1990s, the data shows an ever-increasing volume of traffic on the Turnpike, while traffic growth on Dover Point Road and US 4 has been relatively flat. This data, along with the regional travel demand projections demonstrate a greater regional use of the Turnpike over time as opposed to a large diversion of traffic to the secondary routes. The travel demand projections indicate that the design year (2025) volume of traffic between Exits 3 and 6 requires the type and scale of Turnpike improvements as reflected in the Preferred Alternative.
- The Department completed a rudimentary evaluation to identify possible alternative locations and the merits of potentially relocating the Dover Toll Plaza further north. The only potentially suitable location is situated north of Exit 9 and south of the Long Hill Road underpass. Toll revenue at this location would be considerably lower since traffic north of Exit 9 is roughly 35% lower than the traffic at the Dover Toll Plaza. Additionally, the construction cost of the toll plaza's relocation is estimated at approximately \$10 to \$13 million (including the removal of the Exit 6 facility). This new location would also be very close to the Rochester plaza and simply shift the noise and perceived toll effects onto a different neighborhood.

Due to the aforementioned reasons, the Department does not propose to relocate or eliminate the Dover Toll Plaza, nor implement a toll test and suspend toll collections.

Chris then solicited comments from the ATF and audience members. Tom Fargo asked if there had been any documentation of improvements in the level of service at the toll booths since E-ZPass was implemented. Chris responded that the LOS is indeed better than before E-ZPass. He noted that data indicates that 56% of the vehicles passing through the toll booths use E-ZPass. He also noted that historic traffic volumes data and regional travel demand projections demonstrate greater regional dependency on the Turnpike, i.e., more traffic uses the Turnpike, than diverts to secondary routes such as US 4 and Dover Point Road.

Frank O'Callaghan added that during the 1993-2003 period, daily traffic volumes along the Turnpike at the Dover toll facility increased by approximately 55 percent, while average daily traffic volumes along Dover Point Road (north of Exit 6) decreased by approximately 5 percent. During the same 10-year period, weekday PM peak hour traffic volumes (northbound) exiting the Turnpike at Exit 6 to travel eastbound on Dover Point Road decreased by approximately 7.5 percent. During the 7-year, 1996-2003 time period, weekday PM peak hour traffic volumes (northbound) exiting the Turnpike at Exit 6 to travel west on US 4 decreased by approximately 11 percent.

Issue 12: Stormwater Management

Several comments were received on potential water quality impacts to Little Bay. Among the concerns and recommendations outlined in public comments were requests for more detailed information on the stormwater management system, whether infiltration was incorporated into the management plan, and whether the temperature of the discharged stormwater had been considered. Concern about potential erosion and sedimentation problems during construction were also raised.

In response, Chris stated that additional details regarding the stormwater management system and treatment devices will be provided as the project progresses through the final design stages. At the EIS phase, the general drainage patterns and approximate locations for detention basins are identified. These locations and the estimated sizes of the areas are rough approximations. The presence of wetlands and other site constraints will be factored into the sizing and final layout of the treatment devices as the areas are refined during the final design process. Chris noted that the Department has worked with NHDES to develop the stormwater treatment needs and the available methods to assess the potential water quality impacts associated with roadway runoff. The Department has also collaborated with the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Stormwater Center to explore the latest in innovative treatment measures, such as gravel wetlands and infiltration measures that can provide a high level of treatment for the various pollutants associated with highway runoff. As a result of this effort with the University and coordination with NHDES, the most up to date best management practices and design guidance will be incorporated into the water quality treatment measures. A predictive modeling procedure provided by NHDES will determine the appropriate stormwater treatment measures. Additionally, the Department will evaluate and consider the use of infiltration devices for stormwater treatment as another option for advanced treatment in certain locations.

With regard to the comments pertaining to the potential for water quality degradation and the need for erosion control planning, review and inspection procedures, the Department will require construction contractors to provide detailed erosion control plans including contingency measures and periodic turbidity monitoring of the site discharge during wet weather events. The Department will also require the contractors to provide frequent inspections of construction sites to maintain compliance with permit conditions. Stringent requirements will be incorporated in the final design plans to minimize any movement of eroded sediment beyond the work area. These requirements are typically a condition of the Corps of Engineers and NHDES Wetlands Bureau permits, as well as part of the Section 401 Water Quality Certificate that will be required for the project.

The Department will also evaluate the potential impacts to wetlands and surface waters that may result from shading effects and will address these potential impacts in the FEIS. Cliff Sinnott asked for clarification as to whether the Department and/or FHWA would provide funding to assist the NH Estuaries Project (NHEP) in their monitoring efforts in the area. Chris indicated that the Department would be willing to coordinate with the NHEP, but it is questionable if NHDOT/FHWA would support the NHEP with funding. Chris indicated that the project would attempt to meet a no-net increase in pollutant loading, so it was not clear whether such monitoring would be justified. Chris asked Peter Walker for some clarification of the process of stormwater management analysis and design. Peter indicated that it would likely be very feasible to reduce the overall level of

pollutant loading from the highway – even with an overall increase in impervious surface area. This is because the highway was originally built before effective stormwater management practices were required. The Section 401 Certificate (issued by NHDES) would likely require a modeling and design effort to clearly demonstrate a reduction in pollutant loading. Peter noted that NHDES is in the process of updating its requirements for stormwater treatment and that a great deal of progress has been made over the last few years in the design of structural best management practices (BMPs) such as gravel wetlands, *etc.*

Cliff noted that both he and Cynthia Copeland are members of the NHEP management committee. He recommended cooperation with the NHEP so as to eliminate the potential for duplication of effort. If monitoring of water quality in the bay is a requirement of the project, Cliff believes that it would be most effective to take advantage of the monitoring stations/efforts already in place through the NHEP.

Tom Fargo asked about the design of updated BMPs - are they proprietary to VHB? Peter Walker replied that conceptual designs for improved BMPs are fairly widely available and are not proprietary. VHB has been active in working with the University of NH Stormwater Engineering Center to refine the design and the modeling of pollutant loading. Much of the updated information on this subject is available through the UNH website.

Issue 13: Implementation of TDM & TSM Measures, Long-term Funding Commitment for Bus Alternatives

Several public comments were received in support of the various TDM and TSM measures presented in the Draft EIS. Specific recommendations were made with regard to securing permanent funding of improved bus services in the region, or funding through the project's design year (2025), as well as several other possible TDM measures. The methodologies and assumptions to project ridership estimates of public transportation were also questioned. Other TDM/TSM suggestions included: coordination with NNEPRA in assessing potential small scale rail improvements along the Mainline; paying employees not to drive alone; offering employees "location-efficient" mortgages that provide incentives to employees to live closer to work; construction of housing within the Pease Tradeport; and improving the Lee traffic circle to enhance the viability of NH 125 as an alternate route to the Turnpike.

Chris summarized the Department's response to the issues as follows:

- The Department acknowledges that the City of Dover has initiated a CMAQ improvement project to connect the downtown area, Dover Transportation Center, and other prominent places of employment with the proposed Exit 9 Park and Ride facility, and acknowledges that this connection is an important link in the regional transit system and that the project may be underfunded. The Department will continue to support the City in pursuit of additional CMAQ funding for the project.
- The Department also acknowledges the support for the early implementation of the TDM and TSM elements of the Preferred Alternative and will strive to implement these elements prior to or in the early stages of construction. These TDM elements, which are intended as mitigation for the potential of increased congestion during construction, will provide a more balanced transportation system in the seacoast region and travel opportunities other than single occupant vehicles (SOV). These elements include new park-and-ride facilities in Rochester, Dover and Lee, expansion of bus and rail service, and support for employer-based measures. Although the suggestion of "location-efficient" mortgages to reduce commuter traffic within the project study area is a novel idea which private lenders in partnerships with municipalities may wish to explore, the Department proposes, as part of the Preferred

Alternative, to help fund the seacoast area Transportation Management Association (TMA), known as Seacoast Commuter Options, for the duration of the Turnpike's construction or a maximum five-year period to work with and encourage employers to promote employee travel by means other than SOVs.

- With respect to the suggestion that housing be constructed at Pease as a means to help reduce travel across the bridges, the Department acknowledges that mixed use developments offer opportunities to reduce daily vehicular traffic by combining trips and/or by substituting walking, bicycling and transit/trolley service for commuting and other travel purposes. At the Pease Tradeport, the generation of daily vehicular traffic has been reduced as a result of the implementation of transit service, employer-based strategies to reduce SOVs, the development of ancillary commercial activities (such as banking, convenience stores and restaurants) and the provision of pedestrian (sidewalk) and bicycle system connectivity. Since transit service within the study area and at the Tradeport will be expanded as part of the Preferred Alternative, additional reductions in vehicular traffic generated at the Tradeport can be expected. Since current zoning at the Tradeport does not allow residential use, further reductions in daily vehicular traffic resulting from some employees residing at the Tradeport appears infeasible.
- With respect to transit service, the methodology and assumptions which form the basis of estimating future transit ridership will be updated for presentation in the FEIS and will include recent ridership data, recent modeling enhancements and updated costs for parking, fuel and travel time.
- Developing and maintaining a sustainable funding source for the area's transportation system, transit included, is a challenge that transcends the Newington-Dover project. The need for sustainable funding has been recognized as an issue by both the Department during development of the New Hampshire Transportation Business Plan and by the State Legislature. The Department has proposed a maximum five-year commitment to fund the transit-related elements of the Preferred Alternative as mitigating elements to the potential for increased levels of congestion during construction and overall dependency on SOV travel in the region.
- The limited capacity along NH 125 between Exit 12 of the Spaulding Turnpike in Rochester and the Lee traffic circle diminishes the viability of NH 125 as a suitable alternative route to the Spaulding Turnpike, independent of traffic operations at the Lee traffic circle. In addition, commuters from the Rochester area traveling south to Portsmouth and communities along the I-95 corridor would not travel US 4 and NH 125 as an alternative route to the Turnpike.

Cynthia Copeland stated that COAST is concerned about the non-Federal match required by the CMAQ programs. She stated that the communities provide match wherever there is service. If NHDOT commits to only five years of funding, that would only guarantee increased bus services for those years. She reiterated the need for a longer-term funding commitment. Cliff Sinnott supported Cynthia's comments, and stated that a creative approach to sustainable funding would be needed. For example, he suggested that it may be time to consider park-and-ride fees. Chris Waszczuk noted that the problem of limited resources is prevalent, and not just restricted to bus services. The intent of the five-year NHDOT commitment was to mitigate the impact of construction (which is about a five year window) and allow COAST and Wildcat to build and maintain ridership. The question of whether to implement fees at park-and-ride sites is an issue that transcends this project, requires more discussion, and would require legislative approval.

Tom Morgan asked Chris Waszczuk to clarify his statement regarding trips to the Tradeport - are they not increasing? Chris stated that TDM actions at the Tradeport are reducing the potential travel demand at the Tradeport. He added that changing land use policies at the Tradeport is beyond the scope of the project. Since residential development is prohibited under the PDA development plan, it is not feasible. Frank O'Callaghan suggested that the Town could use its position on the Board of Directors for the PDA as a forum to raise and discuss this issue.

A member of the audience suggested that NHDOT could use the data generated by the E-ZPass system to collect information on commuting patterns to better plan a bus system. Chris acknowledged that this was a good idea. However, it does raise privacy issues. In order to develop the bus alternatives, NHDOT and FHWA coordinated with the local bus system operators such as COAST, C&J Trailways and the UNH Wildcat System. The system operators have a strong sense of which existing or new routes need to be expanded or created. Chris also pointed out that the first phase of the EIS process involved collection of traveler surveys, journey to work information, *etc.* Cynthia Copeland asked if the Lee park-and-ride site was still part of the TDM package. Chris confirmed that it was.

Issue 14: Secondary Growth Concerns

The Seacoast MPO noted general concurrence that the Newington-Dover project would not induce substantial growth. However, while concurring with the use of the Regional Economic Model, Inc. (REMI) model for making socioeconomic predictions, the MPO expressed concern that the modeling projected growth to be relatively negligible, and questioned with the manner in which the countywide model results (particularly the Rockingham County data) were interpolated to represent the project study area. The MPO suggested this methodology be reviewed. They also noted concern regarding the assumptions used in estimating the percentage of wetlands within the socio-economic study area and potential wetland impacts that could be caused by the induced growth. Finally, they recommended that a Community Technical Assistance Program be incorporated into this project.

Chris reviewed the ROTC in responding to this comment:

- The Department acknowledges the MPO's assertion that the project would not induce substantial growth. This is substantiated by the fact that growth has and continues to occur in the communities north of the Little Bay Bridges without regard for the congestion levels within the project area. While the delay associated with traffic congestion in the project area is certainly a factor in determining regional economic trends, the results of the REMI model suggest that other factors also influence growth in the area. Individuals and businesses make decisions based upon a complex set of factors related to economic benefit and quality of life such as housing costs, health care, environmental characteristics, safety/security, standard of living, shelter and social interaction. The EIS contains information about property values and local tax rates which are also critical factors used by people and businesses to evaluate options about how and where to locate. Thus, while anecdotal evidence may suggest that the chronic congestion on the bridges plays a role in people's economic decisions, traffic congestion is one of a number of factors, the balance of which likely outweighs the issue of congestion within the project area in determining regional growth patterns. It is also important to note that nearly all of the growth in the study area is expected to occur regardless of whether the Turnpike is improved or not, in response to other influences (such as the cost of housing) involving overall quality of life and continued economic prosperity found in New Hampshire. Further, it is not clear whether the additional growth that has been identified by the REMI model, and the associated land conversion, is growth that otherwise would not occur, or growth that would simply occur later in time if the project were not completed. A more thorough discussion of these factors (particularly housing costs) will be included in the Final EIS.

- With regard to the treatment of Rockingham County data, it is important to note that the REMI model was used to estimate population growth on a county basis. Due to how model input data is collected, the county level is the smallest unit for measuring possible social and economic impacts. The model does not allow for analysis of population, employment and housing below the county level. A simple proportional approach was therefore used to analyze potential economic impacts for the Rockingham County portion of the Socio-economic Study Area – which is a standard and accepted statistical practice for this type of analysis. However, given the concerns expressed by the Seacoast MPO and others, the sections of the Final EIS that discuss secondary growth issues will be updated to consider the effects of allocating 100% of the secondary growth to the Rockingham County communities within the Socio-economic Study Area. Also, the methodology used to allocate the projected future growth and corresponding potential wetland impacts will be re-assessed and data updated in the Final EIS.
- Due to the relatively minor level of secondary growth related to the project, the Department does not propose to incorporate a Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) for the communities in the area. The CTAP project established for the I-93 corridor has developed several practical resource booklets to help other communities statewide proactively plan and manage growth in their communities. These booklets, as well as other pertinent material are available on the Department's website at <http://www.rebuildingi93.com/content/ctap>.

Bill O'Donnell (FHWA) clarified that the analysis presented in the Draft EIS remains valid, but that the FEIS would present a "what if" analysis that uses some of the even more conservative assumptions suggested by the Seacoast MPO.

Issue 15: Mitigation

Many comments were received on the proposed natural resource mitigation package as presented in the Draft EIS and at the 2006 public hearing. Nearly all of the comments were favorable, especially with regard to the preservation of the Tuttle Farm and the Blackwater Brook area in Dover and the Watson Property in Newington. The Town of Newington commented that they did not highly value the preservation or restoration of the Drive-In parcel.

Chris reported that the Department acknowledged and appreciated the communities' support for the project's mitigation package. In response to the property owner's request and with the support of the public, NHDOT, in partnership with the City of Dover, has expedited the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Tuttle Farmstead to permanently preserve the 120-acre farm. The preservation was consummated on January 29th, 2007 with the conservation easements executed and property rights transferred to the City, the Department, and Strafford Rivers Conservancy. NHDOT is also working closely with the City to permanently protect the Tsimekles property, a 105-acre parcel located in the Blackwater Brook watershed that is undergoing the threat of development. Should an agreement with the City and developer to acquire the parcel or large portion thereof not be reached, the DEIS identified several other parcels in the Blackwater Brook area that are deemed worthy of preservation and permanent protection, which the Department will then pursue to fulfill the mitigation requirements of the project in Dover.

The Department will also continue to coordinate the restoration and preservation elements, as identified in the DEIS, with Pease, the Town of Newington, and the property owners of the mitigation parcels to finalize the mitigation requirements of the project in Newington.

Cynthia Copeland thanked Chris for the NHDOT's efforts to expedite the mitigation acquisitions.

Additional Comments on the DEIS

Chris next referred to a slide and enumerated a number of additional comments on the DEIS received from the ACOE, USEPA, NHF&GD and NHDES. Comments include requests for clarification or additional information on the following items:

- Water Quality Monitoring & Stormwater Management
- Mitigation (*i.e.*, restoration opportunities, functional replacement)
- Secondary and Cumulative Impacts
- Construction Impacts
- Air Quality Modeling and Air Quality Conformity
- More Detailed Information on Bridge Pier Construction
- More Detailed Information concerning work on Pease Property
- TDM Ridership Methodology
- Coordination and General Construction Requirements for USCG Permit

UPDATE OF PROJECT COSTS

Chris Waszczuk provided an update of estimated project costs of the Preferred Alternative. He referred to a graphic which summarized and updated the 2005 (DEIS) cost estimate to 2007 dollars (FEIS). The cost estimate has increased from approximately \$207.8 million (2005) to approximately \$236.0 million (2007). This increase, of about 15 percent, is primarily due to increased materials costs, such as steel and asphalt.

Tom Fargo asked if the Exit 9 park-and-ride project is included in the cost estimate. Tom noted that he had not seen any construction on the park-and-ride, although it was apparently pending. Chris indicated that the Exit 9 park-and-ride was indeed included in the cost estimate, that a construction bid was awarded to a contractor, and that construction would be going forward soon.

Cynthia Copeland asked for an update on the status of the proposed Dover TSM measures. Chris replied that the improvements to the Exit 6 northbound off ramp had already been completed. The proposed Exit 6 southbound on-ramp merge improvement/re-stripping is proposed to occur next year (2008) as part of a paving project.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Chris noted that an important meeting with the Special Committee (*i.e.*, the three Executive Counselors that will make the formal decision on the right-of-way) is scheduled for August 22nd at 2:00 PM in Room 114 at NHDOT Headquarters in Concord. At this public meeting, the Department will present the Report of the Commissioner, and will ask for formal approval of the proposed highway layout.

OTHER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

Chris Waszczuk asked for any remaining questions or comments before the closing of the meeting. Tom Fargo asked about the process for noise barrier neighborhood meetings. He stated his

recommendation that residents of Cote Drive should be treated as "first row" residences for purposes of deciding whether to construct the barriers. Chris replied that both the ATF and public would be invited to the neighborhood meetings to discuss the noise barrier design.

Chris Cross stated that the phasing of construction to minimize impacts on traffic was a major point of discussion during the previous ATF meetings. It now seems like the availability of funding may be the determining issue. In his opinion, it would be important to come back to the ATF if there is a major change in the phasing of construction.

Following this last comment, Chris Cross adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:45 pm.

NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING (ATF) MEETING
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
JULY 26, 2007

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
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ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING (ATF) MEETING
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JULY 26, 2007

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