

included in the State's Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Program and was the highest long-term transportation priority of the Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization. He stated that as the area continues to develop and traffic volumes increase, traffic operations and safety conditions would worsen. If nothing is done to improve the Turnpike, it is estimated that 2025 weekday periods of traffic congestion will lengthen to more than three times the existing congested periods.

Chris then reviewed the five (5) phases of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) noting that the EIS is the highest order of study required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The project Scoping Report, published in March 2004, summarizes the Phase 1 activities, which included the project's purpose and need statement, inventories of environmental resources, analysis of existing traffic conditions and projections of future travel demands, and the identification of the range of typical alternatives that would be considered. The Rationale Report, published in January 2005, and available on the project website, summarizes the development, screening and range of reasonable alternatives to be carried forward into Phase 3 of the study. Current Phase 3 activities include the detailed evaluation and impact analysis of alternatives, and the identification of a preferred alternative. At the conclusion of Phase 3 in February 2006, a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be published. A joint FHWA/ACOE/NHDES/NHDOT Public Hearing (Phase 4) on the Preferred Alternative is targeted for May 2006 and is a critical project milestone. Phase 5, which is scheduled for September 2006 – June 2007, will focus on finalizing the EIS by responding to comments on the Draft EIS and comments from the Public Hearing. The FHWA Record of Decision is another milestone (June 2007), which will allow final design and right-of-way acquisition to be initiated. Assuming the availability of funding and procurement of the necessary approvals and permits, construction could begin as early as fall of 2008 and would likely require five or six construction seasons.

Chris concluded his introductory remarks by noting the importance of public participation, and the openness of the process. He explained that a project Advisory Task Force – comprised of representatives of the municipalities of Newington, Dover, Portsmouth and Durham, the Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions, COAST, the Pease Development Authority, the Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Greater Dover and Portsmouth Chambers of Commerce, FHWA and NHDOT – has met 15 times during the course of the study and acts as a forum for communication, providing early and continuous input to the project team and feedback to their respective constituencies. In addition, five Public Information Meetings have been held to date during each phase of the project in both Dover and Newington locations to solicit input from abutters and public officials, and a project website, www.newington-dover.com, is maintained that provides a wealth of project related information such as reports, plans, meeting minutes, and frequently asked questions. The website is also another means of public input to the project team. Chris concluded by stating that the public participation process will culminate in the Public Hearing which will seek to garner approval for the layout. A special committee, comprised of three Executive Councilors, will oversee the Hearing and accept testimony, and the project team will address all comments.

At this point, Chris introduced Frank O'Callaghan to review the project background. Frank began by describing the project study area as extending north from Exit 1 (Gosling Road/Pease Boulevard) of the Turnpike on the south and traversing the Little Bay Bridges to a point just south of the Dover Toll Plaza and bounded by the Piscataqua River on the east and Little Bay on the west. He noted many study area resources and issues such as marine habitat, navigation, water quality, tidal and surface wetlands, floodplains, ground water, hazardous materials, visual resources, park and recreational activities, historic and cultural resources and potential residential and commercial property impacts. He stated that air quality analyses have determined that the project will comply with state and federal air quality requirements. He noted that his colleague, Tom Wholley, would present findings on noise impacts and proposed noise mitigation later in the presentation. He also noted that direct

and indirect and cumulative socio-economic impacts have been assessed for a 33-municipality study area. A draft report summarizing the analysis of direct, indirect and cumulative socio-economic impacts is currently being reviewed by state and federal resource agencies. He stated that the March 2004 Scoping Report summarized many of the inventories of environmental resources.

In summarizing safety conditions, Frank noted that study area traffic accidents during the 1998-2003 period totaled 1,119, and increased by approximately 55 percent in comparison to the previous 6-year, 1992-1997, period (719 total). During the 1998-2003 period, accidents increased at approximately 9.3 percent per year in comparison to the average annual traffic volume growth of approximately 2.4 percent per year. He also reviewed traffic volume growth where average daily traffic (ADT) volume on the bridges has increased from approximately 30,000 vehicles in 1980, to over 70,000 in 2003, and is projected to grow to over 94,000 vehicles per day by the year 2025. This 33 percent growth in traffic above 2003 levels will require the equivalent of four travel lanes in each direction across the Little Bay Bridges (LBB). He noted that current weekday peak hour capacity constraints extend from Exit 6 southbound to Exit 3 (Woodbury Avenue) in the morning, and from Exit 3 northbound through Exit 6 in the evening. These capacity conditions are compounded by a number of geometric deficiencies including substandard shoulder width on the Little Bay Bridges, substandard turning radii at many of the interchange on and off ramps, and inadequate weaving distances in both the northbound (Shattuck Way) and southbound (Nimble Hill Road) Exit 4N - Exit 4 area. As traffic volumes grow, the safety and traffic operational conditions, which are currently constrained, will worsen. For example, if the Turnpike is not improved, current weekday peak hour periods of congestion will double in the morning and more than triple in the evening by 2025.

Frank then presented some general bridge information for both the Little Bay Bridges and the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB). The Little Bay Bridges are characterized by substandard shoulder widths and 3.5 percent grades on a crest vertical curve, which restricts driver sight distance to a 60 mph design speed (design speed being the maximum safe operating speed governed by the vertical alignment or profile). The 2-lane bridges have minor deterioration and the substructure for both bridges – composed of reinforced concrete – was designed and constructed in 1966 prior to the current, more stringent seismic resistance requirements. Frank then enumerated several factors that would affect the rehabilitation alternatives for the General Sullivan Bridge. Four percent grades on a crest vertical curve that limits driver sight distance to a 45 mph design speed. The cross-section is limited to 24' between the curb lines and 2'-11" sidewalks on each side. In addition, the deck, girders and truss members exhibit major deterioration, and there is extensive substructure deterioration. The General Sullivan Bridge is also historic – being the second highest-ranking historic bridge in the state -- and subject to lead paint removal and re-painting.

At this point, Frank paused for questions and comments. Andy Swett, a Boston Harbor Road resident, asked if the EIS would address issues such as noise during construction. Frank replied that it would.

There being no further questions or comments, Frank proceeded to present the suggested preferred alternative. He noted that the suggested preferred alternative resulted from the analysis of impacts and evaluation of the range of reasonable alternatives that were carried forward from Phase 2 of the study, including the No-Build, Transportation System Management (TSM), Travel Demand Management (TDM), Bridge and Roadway/Interchange Improvements and combinations thereof. 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, which would provide a satisfactory level of service (LOS D) beyond the 2025 design year. He noted that 3 lanes in each direction 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 hold the existing 60 mph design speed profile and the existing vertical clearance over the channel. The bridge piers would be seismically retrofitted, and the bridge construction would be completed 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 General Sullivan Bridge (GSB), the project team is recommending 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 project cost of the GSB rehabilitation is \$23 million, approximately \$10 million more than its removal and replacement with a multi-use path, not including the additional cost of mitigation likely required should the GSB be removed (*i.e.*, if the GSB was removed, additional mitigation cost would be incurred which would reduce the \$10 million cost differential between bridge rehabilitation and bridge removal). Frank stated that the FHWA, NHDHR, SRPC and City of Dover support bridge rehabilitation, and suggested 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 closing 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 road 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 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 which included the LBB approach.

Frank then proceeded to describe Alternative 13 in Newington, which reconfigures Exit 3 (Woodbury Avenue) 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 Exit 4 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 kept at its existing elevation, which reduces noise and visual impacts as compared to previous alternatives that had proposed to elevate the Turnpike over the rail corridor. The existing ExxonMobil facility would continue to operate at its current location via access from a new local connector road at its rear that would intersect Nimble Hill Road opposite Shattuck Way. 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 historic 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) alternatives, described as relatively 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 restriping of the shoulder area to increase the northbound Exit 6 deceleration lane to US 4 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 is envisioned to 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 traffic circle 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 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 region transportation management association (TMA), which 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. He then paused for questions and comments.

Ray Bardwell, 199 Spur Road, Dover, expressed concern for traffic exiting Spur Road and the need to accelerate on US 4 westbound. He suggested deceleration and acceleration lanes be added on US 4 to improve entering and exiting Spur Road. Frank replied that there would be adequate gaps in the US 4 traffic stream for the Spur Road traffic to enter safely. The merits of adding acceleration and deceleration lanes will be investigated. State Representative Jennifer Brown asked if the existing walkway adjacent to Pomeroy Cove would remain. Frank replied that the walkway would be perpetuated. City Councilor Matt Mayberry suggested that a sidewalk should be extended along Dover Point Road, south of Boston Harbor Road to account for the pedestrian activity and the potential increased volume of traffic. Frank replied that extending the sidewalk from Boston Harbor Road along Dover Point Road could be considered. Carole Cartrick, 53 Boston Harbor Road, asked the purpose of the Spur Road/Boston Harbor Road connector. Frank replied that it improves local connectivity for both motorized and non-motorized traffic. A resident asked how one would bike to Newington from Dover on the east side of the Turnpike and Dover Point Road. Frank replied that one would travel along the Pomeroy Cove/Wentworth Terrace path to Hilton Park, cross under the Turnpike in the park at the channel, and then travel across the GSB to Shattuck Way and Nimble Hill Road. Ray Bardwell asked how traffic would be controlled at the Spur Road/Connector Road intersection. Frank replied that the intersection would be under stop sign control. Gordon Smith, 14 Boston Harbor Road, questioned the effectiveness of the proposed Dover TSM2 action, citing the current morning peak hour backup from the southbound Exit 6 on-ramp to the Scammell Bridge. Frank replied that converting the existing 2-lane merge to a single lane merge will diminish the current level of traffic turbulence and result in a smoother traffic operation and less delay. It will not eliminate the existing capacity deficiency on the LBB. A Dover resident agreed with Frank, and endorsed the Dover TSM2 proposal, noting that the proposal will not impact many Boston Harbor residents. Frank added that reconfiguration of the merge of the southbound on-ramp and the closing of the Boston Harbor Road on-ramp could be implemented on a temporary trial basis.

John Scruton asked if the LBB would be wide enough to accommodate a future rail line. Frank responded that a number of rail alternatives were considered, and expanding existing Downeaster service appears the most feasible and least impacting. A rail alternative running parallel to the

Turnpike between Rochester and Portsmouth would divert relatively few vehicles from the Turnpike, would cost in excess of \$140 million to construct and would have extensive property and environmental impacts. Ray Bardwell reiterated his concern about the Spur Road/US 4 intersection, noting the need for intersection design to accommodate the turning of trucks, and the crossing of US 4 by pedestrians. Chris Waszczuk replied that pedestrians could be accommodated along the connector road between Spur Road and Boston Harbor Road. Ray responded that such routing of pedestrians would be inconvenient for some. Chris replied that a pedestrian signal at the Spur Road/Boston Harbor road intersection, if warranted, could be considered.

There being no further questions or comments, Frank introduced Tom Wholley to discuss noise impacts and proposed mitigation. Tom reviewed the procedures, guidelines and criteria for conducting analyses and developing mitigation. He 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. Tom stated that 14 noise sensitive areas were identified and monitored during the noisiest hours of the day to determine existing noise levels, and to calibrate the FHWA Traffic Noise Model. Traffic model inputs reflect topography, traffic volumes and roadway features (such as profile), and allow the model to be used to compare existing noise conditions with future 2025 scenarios and various alternatives.

Tom noted that noise levels of 1 to 3 dB are barely perceptible, and that a change in noise of 10 dB is the equivalent of doubling the noise level. With respect to the comparison of future study area conditions to existing noise levels, impacts generally ranged between 2 and 6 dB, substantially less than the 15 dB criterion for requiring noise mitigation. However, some study area locations in Dover exceed 66 dB under future conditions (the other criterion for mitigation), which coincidentally, are the same locations where existing noise levels 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. The goal of such mitigation is to reduce sound levels by 10 dB or more.

In presenting the proposed noise mitigation, Tom referred to a plan of Alternative 3 in Dover and noted that the proposed mitigation was the result of a rigorous assessment of design performance criteria including engineering, constructability, safety, acoustic performance, cost, land use and residents' opinions of the proposed noise barriers. With respect to Alternative 3, Tom stated 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) extending north from the Little Bay Bridges to Exit 6. 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.

Representative Brown asked if the proposed mitigation could be implemented. She stated that she supported the proposed noise mitigation plan and was encouraging her constituents to submit letters of support to the NHDOT. Chris Waszczuk responded that letters would be an appropriate way of expressing support, and that the NHDOT was committed to the noise mitigation plan as proposed. Dover City Councilor Matt Mayberry stated that the Dover City Council will support the entire mitigation plan (Noise Barriers #1, #2, #3 and #4) as proposed, and asked about the schedule for

implementation. Tom responded that every effort will be made to accelerate the schedule so that benefits would be realized both during and following construction. He added, however, right-of-way acquisition can always be an issue that will hopefully be resolved during final design. Councilor Mayberry inquired as to the determination of the height of the barriers. Tom Wholley responded that the height of the barrier reflects a cost-effectiveness analysis, and that the proposed height of the barrier will achieve a 10 dB reduction in noise to the closest abutters. Kevin Thompson, 86 Marsh Road, Dover, asked for a description of the 66 dB noise level criteria. Tom suggested imagining the noise of traffic passing by as one changes a flat tire on the side of a roadway. John Scruton, 99 Sixth Street, Dover, stated that some cars are quieter than others *vis-à-vis* engine, tire and exhaust noise. Tom concurred, noting that the sound barrier addresses engine, tire and exhaust noise, and that "quiet pavement" research could possibly address tire-related noise. Cheryl Mackey, 343 Dover Point Road, Dover, stated that it is so noisy today, she has to yell when speaking to someone in her backyard or on her deck. Tom responded that the proposed mitigation will provide a dramatic improvement, and the noise barrier will also block out the headlights from passing vehicles. Rich Sirois, 397 Dover Point road, inquired as to the appearance of sound barriers, and what types of barriers were under consideration. Tom replied that the typical barriers that are in place around the state are constructed of concrete bases and posts with wooden slats. Gordon Smith stated that the stops and starts at the Dover Toll Plaza are noisy. Tom replied that the proposed noise barriers will reduce that noise, as will the gravitation of more travelers to EZ Pass, which will reduce the portion of traffic that would need to stop at the plaza.

There being no further questions or comments on noise impacts and mitigation, Frank O'Callaghan introduced Pete Walker to summarize the wetland impacts and proposed mitigation. He began by noting the environmental sensitivity of the study area with respect to both tidal and freshwater wetlands, and stated the philosophy of avoiding impacts where possible, minimizing impacts where they are unavoidable, and mitigating for those unavoidable impacts. Pete noted that there were approximately 15.5 Ac of wetlands impacted in Newington (11.2 Ac) and Dover (4.30 Ac) 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 Improvements project, approximately 0.4 Ac of impact related to the Exit 9 park-and-ride facility, and approximately 1.30 Ac of impact related to the NH 155 Bridge Replacement/Intersection Improvement project in Madbury. He 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, noting that the Resource Agencies will determine the acceptability of the proposed mitigation package. General guidance is to keep mitigation appropriate to impacts. He reviewed the process of identifying up to 24 potential wetland 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. Following the summary of impacts, and background description of the regulatory framework and the process of identifying potential wetland mitigation parcels, Pete summarized the proposed wetland mitigation package as follows: restoration of Railway Brook in Newington, preservation and restoration of the 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 referred to a comparison of 1986 and 1956 USGS maps in Newington to demonstrate that the proposed restoration of Railway Brook would realign the brook into a more natural configuration, resembling its original configuration prior to construction of the Pease AFB. He noted that preservation and restoration of the Drive-In site abutted the Natural Resource Protection Zone of the Tradeport, and could be restored to support upland habitat. He concluded his presentation by

outlining 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.

At this point, Pete paused for questions and comments. A resident asked if there was a difference in definition between the terms "mitigation" and "compensation." Pete replied that the terms, in the context of wetland impacts and mitigation, were essentially the same. There being no additional wetland mitigation related questions or comments, Chris Waszczuk solicited general comments and questions on any project related issue, and/or follow-on comments and questions related to earlier elements of the evening's presentation. A resident asked if placing barriers on the Little Bay Bridges to prevent driver distraction and prevent accidents was being considered. Chris Waszczuk replied that placing barriers on the bridges was not under consideration at this time. A resident asked if navigational impacts resulting from bridge reconstruction have been considered in light of the strong currents in the channel. Chris responded that UNH has modeled the existing currents and current changes due to bridge reconstruction. It is expected that the existing cross turbulence between the LBB bridge piers will be reduced by connecting the LBB piers to the GSB piers. Sam Bittner, 346 Dover Point Road, expressed concern for pedestrians crossing US 4 at Spur Road assuming the existing traffic signals were removed. While a pedestrian overpass is not being considered, Chris Waszczuk replied that pedestrians could be accommodated along the connector road, either within the shoulder area or by means of a sidewalk, or a pedestrian signal, if warranted, could be retained at the Spur Road/US 4 intersection. Kevin Thompson asked if modifications to toll plaza operations would be required. Chris responded that future toll plaza operations have been reviewed and deemed satisfactory. Carole Cartnick, Boston Harbor Road, asked if the proposed sound barriers are guaranteed to be part of project implementation. Chris replied that the sound barriers, as proposed, are viewed as a project commitment. Councilor Mayberry inquired as to the proper process for requesting consideration of constructing a sidewalk along Dover Point Road. Chris replied that the City could either petition the NHDOT, or pursue a Transportation Enhancement project through the SRPC and Seacoast MPO.

Brian Greene, 393 Dover Point Road, asked what the maximum noise levels measured were during the 2003 inventory of existing conditions. Tom Wholley responded that measurements were recorded during the weekday morning, just following the AM peak hour, and during the afternoon, just prior to the PM peak hour to record the loudest hours. The highest noise level recorded was 69 dB, and the lowest level recorded was 54 dB. Tom noted that the sound barriers will provide a 10 dB reduction in noise, 24 hours a day.

Gordon Smith, Boston Harbor Road, suggested it was noisier in the AM than the PM. Tom responded that it was noisier in the AM on the southbound side of the Turnpike and noisier in the PM on the northbound side. This corresponds to the predominant commuter flow of traffic – heavier southbound in the AM and heavier northbound in the PM. Chris Waszczuk offered to measure noise at residential properties; he suggested that interested abutters contact the NHDOT. Gordon Smith asked if the NHDOT would monitor noise following the construction of improvements to see how accurate the estimate of noise levels was. Chris replied that future noise monitoring, post construction, could be done. Brian Greene asked about the difference in elevation between Spur Road and the Exit 6 overpass at the grade-separated connector road location. Chris Waszczuk replied that the difference in elevation was approximately 20 feet. Andrea Poliquin, 20 Wentworth Terrace, asked if Exit 5 could be maintained. Chris explained that providing the minimum geometric standards for the Exit 5 off-ramp (similar to the minimum standards employed at Shattuck Way, Exit 4 in Newington) would severely impact Hilton Park and Pomeroy Cove. The proximity of the Exit 5 on-ramp to the Exit 6 off-ramp, coupled with the increase in traffic, will not allow for safe and efficient traffic operating conditions. With respect to the location and operation of the local Dover Point/Hilton Park connector, Frank O'Callaghan added that going under the Turnpike in the vicinity

of Exit 5 required elevating the Turnpike with greater noise and visual impacts. Traversing over the Turnpike at this location resulted in substantial property impacts along Dover Point Road. The proposed 2-way traffic operation under the Turnpike adjacent to the channel reduced noise impacts and eliminated the visual impact. Frank noted the change in traffic patterns for Wentworth Terrace residents would be balanced by the reduction in noise levels. Louise Kelley, 31 Wentworth Terrace, acknowledged that the changes in traffic patterns were a little bit more circuitous, but acceptable from her perspective, given the fact that the pedestrian/bicycle path adjacent to Pomeroy Cove will be preserved, that Pomeroy Cove will not be disturbed, and that the sound barriers will be constructed. A final question pertained to the travel of bicyclists along the Exit 6 overpass. Chris Waszczuk replied that shoulders would be provided on the overpass, which could accommodate bicyclists.

There being no further questions or comments, the public informational meeting ended at 9:45 PM.

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
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NOVEMBER 7, 2005

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
NOVEMBER 7, 2005

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
NOVEMBER 7, 2005

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
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NOVEMBER 7, 2005

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**NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
DOVER CITY HALL
NOVEMBER 7, 2005**

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**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Marc Laurin, NHDOT
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA
Joe Moyer, FHWA
Pete Walker, VHB
Tom Wholley, VHB
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB

Date/Time: November 9, 2005

Project No.: 51425.00

Place: Newington Town Hall

Re: Newington-Dover, 11238
Public Informational Meeting

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT Project Manager, called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. He welcomed those in attendance and requested those in attendance to sign-in. He noted that this evening's public information meeting was part of a substantial public outreach program; over the course of study there have been 15 Advisory Task Force meetings, 5 Public Information Meetings and 12 Resource Agency meetings to date. The project team, with input from the public, local, state and federal officials, has attempted to identify a preferred transportation improvement alternative for the Newington-Dover study area. Chris then introduced project team members Frank O'Callaghan, Pete Walker and Tom Wholley from VHB. He reviewed the meeting agenda noting that the project team was looking for input, and that there would be three (3) scheduled breaks in the approximately 90 minute presentation for public comment and questions. The presentation would include a description of a suggested preferred alternative.

Chris reviewed the project's purpose which is to reduce safety problems and improve transportation efficiency for an approximately 3.5 mile long section of the Spaulding Turnpike beginning at the Gosling Road Interchange (Exit 1) in Newington and extending across the Little Bay Bridges to a point just south of the toll plaza in Dover. Chris then reviewed the project need citing the importance of the Spaulding Turnpike from commuter, commerce, and tourist perspectives; its designation as part of the National Highway System (NHS); and its function as a limited access highway linking the seacoast region with I-95, Concord, the Lakes Region and the White Mountains. He cited the historic growth of traffic and future travel projections, the poor levels of traffic service, existing geometric constraints and deficiencies and the history of traffic accident experience. He noted that the incidence of traffic accidents is growing at a higher annual rate than the rate of traffic growth. He stated that the compactness of the 3.5 mile study area and short spacing between the six (6) interchanges within this section of the Turnpike constrain traffic operations, and exacerbate the impacts of a traffic accident, given the lack of suitable alternate routes to the Turnpike. Chris also noted that the Turnpike bisects local residential, recreational and commercial areas, and that there exists a need for local connectivity of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists between the east and west sides of the Turnpike in both Newington and Dover. He stated that the Little Bay Bridges are major structures

located on an important highway in a moderate seismic area and were not designed to meet the current seismic criteria for this region. He noted that the Newington-Dover Spaulding Turnpike project was included in the State's Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Program and was the highest long-term transportation priority of the Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization. He stated that as the area continues to develop and traffic volumes increase, traffic operations and safety conditions would worsen. If nothing is done to improve the Turnpike, it is estimated that 2025 weekday periods of traffic congestion will lengthen to more than three times the duration of existing congested periods.

Chris then reviewed the five (5) phases of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) noting that the EIS is the highest order of study required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The project Scoping Report, published in March 2004, summarizes the Phase 1 activities, which included the project's purpose and need statement, inventories of environmental resources, analysis of existing traffic conditions and projections of future travel demands, and the identification of the range of typical alternatives that would be considered. The Rationale Report, published in January 2005, and available on the project website, summarizes the development, screening and range of reasonable alternatives to be carried forward into Phase 3 of the study. Current Phase 3 activities include the detailed evaluation and impact analysis of alternatives, and the identification of a preferred alternative. At the conclusion of Phase 3 in February 2006, a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be published. A joint FHWA/ACOE/NHDES/NHDOT Public Hearing (Phase 4) on the Preferred Alternative is targeted for May 2006 and is a critical project milestone. Phase 5, which is scheduled for September 2006 – June 2007, will focus on finalizing the EIS by responding to comments on the Draft EIS and comments from the Public Hearing. The FHWA Record of Decision is another milestone (June 2007) which will allow final design and right-of-way acquisition to be initiated. Assuming the availability of funding and procurement of the necessary approvals and permits, construction could begin as early as fall of 2008 and would likely require five or six construction seasons.

Chris concluded his introductory remarks by noting the importance of public participation, and the openness of the process. He explained that a project Advisory Task Force – comprised of representatives of the municipalities of Newington, Dover, Portsmouth and Durham, the Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions, COAST, the Pease Development Authority, the Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Greater Dover and Portsmouth Chambers of Commerce, FHWA and NHDOT – has met 15 times during the course of the study and acts as a forum for communication, providing early and continuous input to the project team and feedback to their respective constituencies. In addition, five Public Information Meetings have been held to date during each phase of the project in both Dover and Newington locations to solicit input from abutters and public officials, and a project website, www.newington-dover.com, is maintained that provides a wealth of project related information such as reports, plans, meeting minutes, and frequently asked questions. The website is also another means of public input to the project team. Chris concluded by stating that the public participation process will culminate in the Public Hearing which will seek to garner approval for the layout. A special committee, comprised of three Executive Councilors, will oversee the Hearing and accept testimony, and the project team will address all comments.

At this point, Chris introduced Frank O'Callaghan to review the project background. Frank began by describing the project study area as extending north from Exit 1 (Gosling Road/Pease Boulevard) of the Turnpike on the south and traversing the Little Bay Bridges to a point just south of the Dover Toll Plaza and bounded by the Piscataqua River on the east and Little Bay on the west. He noted many study area resources and issues such as marine habitat, navigation, water quality, tidal and surface wetlands, floodplains, ground water, hazardous materials, visual resources, park and recreational activities, historic and cultural resources and potential residential and commercial property impacts.

He stated that air quality analyses have determined that the project will comply with state and federal air quality requirements. He noted that his colleague, Tom Wholley, would present findings on noise impacts and proposed noise mitigation later in the presentation. He also noted that direct and indirect and cumulative socio-economic impacts have been assessed for a 33-municipality study area. A draft report summarizing the analysis of direct, indirect and cumulative socio-economic impacts is currently being reviewed by state and federal resource agencies. He stated that the March 2004 Scoping Report summarized many of the inventories of environmental resources.

In summarizing safety conditions, Frank noted that study area traffic accidents during the 1998-2003 period totaled 1,119, and increased by approximately 55 percent in comparison to the previous 6-year, 1992-1997, period (719 total). During the 1998-2003 period, accidents increased at approximately 9.3 percent per year in comparison to the average annual traffic volume growth of approximately 2.4 percent per year. He also reviewed traffic volume growth where average daily traffic (ADT) volume on the bridges has increased from approximately 30,000 vehicles in 1980, to over 70,000 in 2003, and is projected to grow to over 94,000 vehicles per day by the year 2025. This 33 percent growth in traffic above 2003 levels will require the equivalent of four travel lanes in each direction across the Little Bay Bridges (LBB). He noted that current weekday peak hour capacity constraints extend from Exit 6 southbound to Exit 3 (Woodbury Avenue) in the morning, and from Exit 3 northbound through Exit 6 in the evening. These capacity conditions are compounded by a number of geometric deficiencies including substandard shoulder width on the Little Bay Bridges, substandard turning radii at many of the interchange on and off ramps, and inadequate weaving distances in both the northbound (Shattuck Way) and southbound (Nimble Hill Road) Exit 4N - Exit 4 area. As traffic volumes grow, the safety and traffic operational conditions, which are currently constrained, will worsen. For example, if the Turnpike is not improved, current weekday peak hour periods of congestion will double in the morning and more than triple in the evening by 2025.

Frank then presented some general bridge information for both the Little Bay Bridges and the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB). The Little Bay Bridges are characterized by substandard shoulder widths and 3.5 percent grades on a crest vertical curve, which restricts driver sight distance to a 60 mph design speed (design speed being the maximum safe operating speed governed by the vertical alignment or profile). The 2-lane bridges have minor deterioration and the substructure for both bridges – composed of reinforced concrete – was designed and constructed in 1966 prior to the current, more stringent seismic resistance requirements. Frank then enumerated several factors that would affect the rehabilitation alternatives for the General Sullivan Bridge. Four percent grades on a crest vertical curve that limits driver sight distance to a 45 mph design speed. The cross-section is limited to 24' between the curb lines and 2'-11" sidewalks on each side. In addition, the deck, girders and truss members exhibit major deterioration, and there is extensive substructure deterioration. The General Sullivan Bridge is also historic – being the second highest-ranking historic bridge in the state -- and subject to lead paint removal and re-painting.

At this point, Frank paused for questions and comments. Lulu Pickering, a Newington resident asked if the project had any historic impacts in Newington. Frank responded that potential impacts to the Isaac Dow House and Beane Farm located on Woodbury Avenue were minimized. He added that he would touch on this location during his presentation on the suggested preferred alternative. A second resident noted that she read in the newspaper that \$20 million in federal funds had been secured by U.S. Senator Gregg to accelerate the project, yet the project schedule appears to have not been affected. Chris Waszczuk replied that the "earmarked" funds referred to in the newspapers are considered part of the Department's anticipated federal program funds and not additional federal funds. Chris noted that the goal from the onset of the study was to try to complete the documentation for the EIS, secure all the necessary permits and approvals, acquire the necessary right-of-way and design the project, for a construction start in the fall of 2008, should funding be available. Presently, funding is included in the draft 10-Year Plan beginning in 2010.

There being no further questions or comments, Frank proceeded to present the suggested preferred alternative. He noted that the suggested preferred alternative resulted from the analysis of impacts and evaluation of the range of reasonable alternatives that were carried forward from Phase 2 of the study, including the No-Build, Transportation System Management (TSM), Travel Demand Management (TDM), Bridge and Roadway/Interchange Improvements and combinations thereof. 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, which would provide a satisfactory level of service (LOS D) beyond the 2025 design year. He noted that 3 lanes in each direction 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 hold the existing 60 mph design speed profile and the existing vertical clearance over the channel. The bridge piers would be seismically retrofitted, and the bridge construction would be completed 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 General Sullivan Bridge (GSB), the project team is recommending 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 project cost of the GSB rehabilitation is \$23 million, approximately \$10 million more than its removal and replacement with a multi-use path, not including the additional cost of mitigation likely required should the GSB be removed (*i.e.*, if the GSB was removed, additional mitigation cost would be incurred which would reduce the \$10 million cost differential between bridge rehabilitation and bridge removal). Frank stated that the FHWA, NHDHR, SRPC and City of Dover support bridge rehabilitation, and suggested 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 closing 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 road 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 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 which included the LBB approach.

Frank then proceeded to describe Alternative 13 in Newington, which reconfigures Exit 3 (Woodbury Avenue) 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 Exit 4 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 kept at its existing elevation, which reduces noise and visual impacts as compared to previous alternatives that had proposed to elevate the Turnpike over the rail corridor. The existing ExxonMobil facility would continue to operate at its current location via access from a new local connector road at its rear that would intersect Nimble Hill Road opposite Shattuck Way. 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 historic Isaac Dow House and Beane Farm structures. Alternative 13 is estimated to cost approximately \$47.3 million (which includes the LBB approach) and impact approximately 25 acres of Tradeport property.

Frank then addressed Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternatives that are described as relatively 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 restriping of the shoulder area to increase the northbound Exit 6 deceleration lane to US 4 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 is envisioned to 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 traffic circle 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 costs of Bus Alternative 3 is approximately \$3.9 million.

From a rail perspective, Frank stated that NHDOT was supporting a joint MaineDOT/NHDOT 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 to extend the funding of Seacoast Commuter Options, the greater Portsmouth and seacoast region transportation management association (TMA), which 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. He then paused for questions and comments.

A resident inquired as to traffic management during construction and length of construction. Frank replied that two lanes of traffic flow on the bridges would be maintained in each direction during construction and that construction would last approximately five to six years. The sequence of construction has not been finalized. Another resident inquired as to the location of construction staging areas. Chris Waszczuk responded that staging areas are typically identified during final design. Lulu Pickering, 339 Little Bay Road, asked if the old historic railroad station at Bloody Point would be subject to mitigation. Chris replied that if there were a need to mitigate historic-related impacts, Bloody Point would be an area to consider. However, neither the historic General Sullivan Bridge nor Hilton Park will be adversely impacted. As such, there is not a need to mitigate historic impacts at Bloody Point. Gail Pare, 188 Little Bay Road, stated that the rail depot was recently stabilized and inquired as to who funded that effort. Chris responded that he believed Turnpike funds might have been utilized for that effort. Jack Pare, 188 Little Bay Road, asked about the rationale for rehabilitating the GSB to a 6-ton load capacity. Chris replied that cost is a factor and the 6-ton load capacity would be adequate for pedestrian, bicycle, emergency vehicle and maintenance vehicle use, and noted that vehicular access would be limited to the Newington side (the Dover approach to the GSB is proposed to be reconfigured to accommodate the local connector roadway). Lulu Pickering asked if the sidewalk installed on Shattuck Way, which impacted Bloody Point, is part

of the Newington-Dover project. Chris replied that the sidewalk was installed as part of the Interim Safety Improvements project and was constructed within the NHDOT right-of-way; thus there was no impact to Bloody Point. Gail Pare noted that some shrubs that provided a visual buffer to Bloody Point have been removed as construction of the Interim Safety Improvements project has advanced. She asked if replanting is included in the extension of Shattuck Way. Chris responded that some plantings are planned for the west side, e.g., by Tricky's Cove.

There being no further questions or comments, Frank introduced Tom Wholley to discuss noise impacts and proposed mitigation. Tom reviewed the procedures, guidelines and criteria for conducting analyses and developing mitigation. He 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. Tom stated that 14 noise sensitive areas were identified and monitored during the noisiest hours of the day to determine existing noise levels, and to calibrate the FHWA Traffic Noise Model. Traffic model inputs reflect topography, traffic volumes and roadway features (such as profile), and allow the model to be used to compare existing noise conditions with future 2025 scenarios and various alternatives.

Tom noted that noise levels of 1 to 2 dB are barely perceptible, and that a change in noise of 10 dB is the equivalent of doubling the noise level. With respect to the comparison of future study area conditions to existing noise levels, impacts generally ranged between 2 to 6 dB, substantially less than the 15 dB criterion for requiring noise mitigation. However, some study area locations in Dover exceed 66 dB under future conditions (the other criterion for mitigation), which coincidentally, are the same locations where existing noise levels 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. The goal of such mitigation is to reduce sound levels by 10 dB or more.

In presenting the proposed noise mitigation, Tom referred to a plan of Alternative 3 in Dover and noted that the proposed mitigation was the result of a rigorous assessment of design performance criteria including engineering/constructability, safety, acoustic performance, cost, land use and residents' opinions of the proposed noise barriers. With respect to Alternative 3, Tom stated 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) extending north from the Little Bay Bridges to Exit 6. 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 two potential areas in Newington – the church located on the east side of the Turnpike near Exit 2 and a residence on Shattuck Way – met noise level thresholds, but exceeded noise mitigation cost criteria of \$30,000 or less per residence/receptor by a factor of ten. As such, no area in Newington met the noise mitigation criteria. He added 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.

Randy Watson, 271 Nimble Hill Road, Newington, asked if the bridges required barriers to lessen the impact of noise to nearby residences. Tom replied that the noise model considers how noise travels over water, and the analysis did not reflect a reduction in noise due to wind factors. Tom stated that residential areas were not impacted due to the proximity of the bridge area. While noise is perceptible in these areas, levels do not meet mitigation criteria. Jack Pare asked if soundproofing of

buildings, similar to FAA programs to address aircraft noise, is a possible noise mitigation alternative to sound barriers. Tom replied that soundproofing of buildings is the FAA's primary form of mitigation (for lack of other practicable alternatives), and is not available to FHWA as a means of noise mitigation. Gail Pare raised concern over the visual impact of the sound barriers to Turnpike travelers, and asked if existing buffer areas that are impacted to construct the sound barriers would be replanted to screen the barriers from one's view. Tom responded that during the design development process, 75 percent of the affected residents must support implementation of the sound barriers; assuming the necessary support, resident's input will be solicited during the process of designing the barrier and landscape aesthetics. The ultimate goal over time is for the barriers to become "invisible" or unnoticeable. Lorna Watson, 127 Fox Point Road, Newington, noted that she enjoys the view of Hilton Park from Shattuck Way, and the view of Pomeroy Cove from Dover Point. Such views could be affected by construction of the sound barriers. Tom replied that potential impact of view sheds would be assessed during the design process, assuming that 75 percent of the affected residents support implementation of the sound barriers. Assuming design and development of the sound barriers as proposed, effort would be made during the design process to minimize visual impacts without compromising the effectiveness of the noise mitigation. Lulu Pickering acknowledged that highway noise is substantial and noted that highway travelers will be subject to tunnel vision *vis-à-vis* the proposed sound barriers on both sides of the Turnpike. She asked if there are any alternatives to the proposed sound barriers. Tom Wholley responded that final highway alignment will affect both noise levels and visual impact, and that "quiet pavement" is being researched, which in some instances has reduced noise levels by approximately 4 to 5 dB. Tom encouraged attendees to participate in the design process and contact the NHDOT to express their interest in this issue and to affect future decisions related to the noise issue. Lulu noted that the recently repaved section of I-95, south of the NH-MA stateline, is markedly quieter than other sections of I-95 in New Hampshire.

Gail Pare asked Tom Wholley if he was up to date on the acoustics state-of-the-art. Tom responded in the affirmative, noting his participation in the Transportation Research Board, a national collaboration of state transportation officials, academics and practitioners who are at the forefront of highway related noise issues. A Newington resident inquired as to the Dover residents' reaction to the proposed sound barriers, as expressed at the previously held public informational meeting in Dover on November 7, 2005. Tom replied that the Dover residents and city officials expressed overwhelming support for the sound barriers, as proposed, and raised similar questions (as to this evening's meeting) *vis-à-vis* aesthetics. Richard Stern noted late night truck noise along Shattuck Way and its impact on nearby residents. Chris Waszczuk acknowledged that noise during off peak traffic times or quiet times is annoying, but does not meet the threshold warranting noise mitigation.

There being no further questions or comments on noise impacts and mitigation, Frank O'Callaghan introduced Pete Walker to summarize the wetland impacts and proposed mitigation. He began by noting the environmental sensitivity of the study area with respect to both tidal and freshwater wetlands, and stated the philosophy of avoiding impacts where possible, minimizing impacts where they are unavoidable, and mitigating for those unavoidable impacts. Pete noted that there were approximately 15.5 Ac of wetlands impacted in Newington (11.2 Ac) and Dover (4.30 Ac) 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 Improvements project, approximately 0.4 Ac of impact 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/Intersection Improvement project in Madbury. He 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, noting that the Resource Agencies will determine the acceptability of the proposed mitigation package. General guidance is to keep mitigation appropriate to impacts. He reviewed the process of identifying up to 24 potential wetland

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. Following the summary of impacts, and background description of the regulatory framework and the process of identifying potential wetland mitigation parcels, Pete summarized the proposed wetland mitigation package as follows: restoration of Railway Brook in Newington, preservation and restoration of the 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 referred to a comparison of 1986 and 1956 USGS maps in Newington to demonstrate that the proposed restoration of Railway Brook would realign the brook into a more natural configuration, resembling its original configuration prior to construction of the Pease AFB. He noted that preservation and restoration of the Drive-In site abutted the Natural Resource Protection Zone of the Tradeport, and could be restored to support upland habitat such as the grasshopper sparrow. He concluded his presentation by outlining 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.

At this point, Chris Waszczuk opened the meeting to general questions and comments in addition to specific questions and comments relating to wetland impacts and proposed mitigation. He expressed hope that the design team, ATF and communities are headed on the right track in developing a smart transportation improvement solution for the Newington-Dover study area. Jim Noseworthy, Nimble Hill Road, noted the access to the ExxonMobil facility from the local cul-de-sac under Alternative 13, and asked if the cul-de-sac could be connected to the Turnpike, or if access to ExxonMobil could be provided to the southbound acceleration lane from Nimble Hill Road. Chris Waszczuk replied that site access directly from Nimble Hill Road where traffic is exiting the Turnpike, and site egress onto the Turnpike where traffic is accelerating from Nimble Hill Road present traffic operational and safety conditions inconsistent with state and federal design and operational standards. The reconfiguration of site access to the cul-de-sac addresses these concerns and maintains the facility's high visibility from the Turnpike. Lulu Pickering asked for explanation of the significance, if any, of the yellow border on properties depicted on the graphics related to the wetlands presentation. Pete Walker replied that the purpose of the yellow border was to draw attention or identify specific parcels that he referred to in his presentation. Chris Waszczuk added that highlighting specific parcels is helpful in the discussion of comparing potential preservation parcels with one another; it is necessary to be parcel-specific in one's comment and review. Lulu noted that the Turnpike bisects the Town and that this evening's meeting was the first identification and discussion of potential wetland mitigation parcels. She stated that her property has been identified as a potential wetlands mitigation (preservation) site, and she is disturbed that her property may be involuntarily taken by the state for mitigation purposes. Chris responded that intent of the mitigation would be to preserve land from further development, and the state would purchase the development rights. Lulu replied that some property owners might prefer to retain their property and development rights. Chris noted that the Department would consider owner's input in the identification of the final wetland mitigation package. Certainly, owners, whose parcels are identified for mitigation and are amenable to preserve their properties, would be given higher priority.

Gail Pare stated that her preference for wetlands mitigation would be the restoration of Railway Brook, as proposed. She asked if restoration of the brook would conflict with the existing railroad right-of-way. Pete replied that it would not. Gail also stated that she prefers preservation of designated prime wetlands. Pete responded that priority in preservation should be directed towards wetlands that are at risk of being developed or impacted by development, as opposed to wetlands –

such as designated prime wetlands – that cannot be infringed upon by future development. Gail raised the question of restoring the lower section of Railway Brook where it enters Tricky's Cove.

A resident inquired as to the location of the approximately 11 acres of wetland impacts in Newington. Pete replied that the impacts were distributed throughout the study corridor. Chris added that the impacts are identified on the plan of Alternative 13 by areas depicted in light green color; he noted that some are former drainage elements. Another resident asked if there was a formula or guidance for mitigation. Pete responded that there is no official "formula", but NHDES generally expects that for every one acre of impact, approximately 10 Ac of preservation, 1½ Ac of restoration, or 1½ Ac of wetland creation be offered as mitigation.

Lulu Pickering reiterated her dismay with the concept of linking the involuntary acquisition of private development rights to the mitigation of transportation improvements in locations such as Newington where land is so scarce. Pete replied that NHDOT is compelled to follow state and federal law, and adherence to such process should not be misinterpreted as the implementation of NHDOT policy. Pete stated that wetlands preservation is favored by the residents and officials of Dover. Preservation has not been the focus of mitigation in Newington; the recommended and preferred mitigation in Newington is wetland restoration, such as Railway Brook and the Drive-In site. Chris Waszczuk stated that the NHDOT will continue to solicit input from the Newington Officials and residents. A resident asked how landowners could stay informed with respect to the resolution of mitigation issues. Chris suggested that the Advisory Task Force Meetings (another meeting is planned for mid-January) and the Public Hearing, which is scheduled for May 2006, are effective forums. He noted that the project team is trying hard to balance impacts and make as many people as possible satisfied by the project and process. Gail Pare stated that the Newington Conservation Commission prefers restoration of Railway Brook and the Drive-In site. Finally, a resident asked if all owners within a potential preservation area would have to agree and support the proposal for the proposal to proceed. Pete Walker replied that individual parcels could potentially be acquired, depending on the particulars of the proposal.

There being no further questions or comments, the public informational meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

cc: J. Brillhart
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**NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 9, 2005**

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NEWINGTON-DOVER
NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
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NH 16 / US 4 / SPAULDING TURNPIKE IMPROVEMENTS (11238)
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 9, 2005**

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NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 9, 2005

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PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (PIM) MEETING
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 9, 2005

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