



**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: Bruce Thomas – City of Manchester
David Beauchesne – City of Manchester
Chris Wellington – City of Manchester
Will Stewart – Manchester Chamber of Commerce
Susan Huard – Manchester Community College
Jeff Nyhan – Manchester Community College
Jo Ann Duffy – Town of Hooksett
Leo Lessard – Town of Hooksett
Barbara Cocci – Hooksett Chamber of Commerce
Carl Quiram – Town of Goffstown
Tony Marts – Town of Goffstown
Julie Chen – SNHPC
Tim White - SNHPC
Leigh Levine – FHWA
Jamie Sikora - FHWA
Chris Waszczuk – Bureau of Turnpikes
David Smith – Bureau of Turnpikes
Keith Cota – NHDOT
Mike Dugas – NHDOT
Nancy Spaulding – NHDOT
Marc Laurin - NHDOT
Marty Kennedy – VHB
Dale Abbott - VHB

Date/Time: June 27, 2012
1:00 – 3:00 PM

Project No.: 52196.00

Place: Manchester Community College

Re: I-293 Exits 6 and 7
Manchester #16099
Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Notes taken by: Dale Abbott

Mr. Keith Cota opened the meeting by introducing himself as the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's (NHDOT) Project Manager for this study. He also introduced other NHDOT attendees as well as the consultant - Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc (VHB). Each of the Advisory Committee members was also asked to introduce themselves. Mr. Cota proceeded to present a brief overview of the project, the Committee structure, and the roles and responsibilities of Committee members. Mr. Cota addressed the following items in his project overview:

- FHWA will serve as the lead federal agency for the project. FHWA involvement will provide potential access to additional federal funding such as TIGER Grant funding.
- The project will address operational deficiencies along the corridor, specifically at Exit 6 and 7 with the potential recommendation for a new full access interchange at Exit 7.
- NHDOT has been considering options for improving this segment of I-293 for many years including the development of some concepts for a new Exit 7 interchange, which were developed back in the mid 1980's.

- The current Ten Year Plan provides funding for the current project through the use of Bureau of Turnpike Funds.

Mr. Cota discussed the makeup of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and how the project will not only address operational issues along the highway, but how the outcome will also influence economic conditions in the three communities of Manchester, Goffstown, and Hooksett as well as on a regional level. Mr. Cota also indicated that the current list of TAC members is not fixed and that if there were suggestions for other candidates to let him know.

Mr. Cota discussed the roles of the Committee members, explaining that each Committee member will act as a liaison for their community/agency providing the study team insight as the study proceeds. The Committee serves in an advisory role and should work as team, respecting each other's opinions, and seeking consensus.

Mr. Cota then introduced Mr. Marty Kennedy as the Study Manager for the consultant team. Using a PowerPoint Presentation (to be included with meeting minutes and posted to the project website) Mr. Kennedy discussed the following:

TAC Meetings:

- The Committee should anticipate approximately 9 TAC meetings over the course of the study.
- Notice of the meeting (date, time, place) will be sent out to TAC members by e-mail as soon as the meeting is scheduled. A reminder notice, agenda, and any necessary review material will be sent out (again by e-mail) one week in advance of the meeting.
- Meetings are expected to last no longer than two hours, with meetings starting on-time and ending on-time.

Project Process:

Mr. Kennedy described the three part project process (Part A - Planning Study, Part B - Environmental Documentation & Preliminary Engineering, and Part C - Final Design) stressing that the current study is the Part A - Planning Study only. Mr. Kennedy also noted that bringing a project from the initial Planning Study through to Final Design can take several years and that sometimes the process can get bogged down in the Planning Study. He stated that he will look to keep the study focused and on schedule. Mr. Kennedy asked the Committee for their help with keeping the study focused.

Planning Study Purpose

Mr. Kennedy noted that the purpose of this Planning Study is to consider transportation system modifications aimed at addressing capacity and safety related deficiencies along the mainline and at the interchanges (Exits 6 and 7) for a 3-mile segment of I-293 including consideration of relocating and reconfiguring Exit 7 into a fully directional interchange.

He also explained that the Planning Study will establish a range of practicable alternatives to be advanced to Part B for further development of preliminary engineering and formal environmental documentation and to assist the communities with long-range planning.

Mr. Cota emphasized the point that the Planning Study will identify potential system solutions, which can help at the local level in guiding community development decisions.

Mr. Cota added that Part B (Environmental Documentation Phase) will likely take two years to complete, followed up by an additional three to five years for Part C (Final Design) assuming property acquisition is required.

Study Corridor

Mr. Kennedy proceeded to show an overall study corridor map and some low-level aerial photographs as he described the extent of the study corridor, some of the key study issues, and some of the existing corridor deficiencies.

Mr. David Smith noted that there is a number of Red List bridges located within the study corridor.

Planning Study Schedule

Mr. Kennedy indicated that the overall study schedule is approximately 18 months. He noted that the first phase (Data Collection and Problem Identification) is underway and will last throughout the summer. The second phase (Screening Criteria and Brainstorming Alternatives) will occur during the fall of 2012. Phase 3, which will involve the development, evaluation, and screening of alternatives, is scheduled to occur during the winter and spring of 2013. The final phase will include study documentation, which if all goes well, should have the study being completed in the summer of 2013.

Public Outreach

Mr. Kennedy noted that the key to the success of the Planning Study will be to maintain an open and consensus-driven public participation process. He indicated that in addition to the TAC meetings, there will be approximately six public informational meetings as well as other local officials meetings. Other forms of communication may include project newsletters, press releases, and a project website. At this point, Mr. Kennedy introduced an early version of the project website indicating that the site was still being developed, but would be fully operational for the first public meeting. Mr. Kennedy reviewed the various components of the site and indicated that he planned to post a list of the TAC members on the site. He asked the Committee members to let him know if they would prefer to not have their phone number or e-mail address listed on the site.

Mr. Cota described the public outreach component process as being flexible and that the Department is open to suggestions on improving the process. Mr. Cota also noted that the public is welcome to attend TAC meetings.

Information to be Presented at July 18th Public Meeting

Mr. Kennedy proceeded to provide the Committee a sense of what type of information would be presented at the first public meeting. He indicated, that in addition to some general information such as describing the study corridor, study purpose, and study schedule, Mr. Kennedy stated that we will be discussing some existing conditions information such as:

- Traffic Data
- Travel Speeds
- Traffic Model
- Crash Data
- Existing Operational Conditions/Deficiencies
- Base Mapping
- Environmental Resources & Land Use

Mr. Kennedy presented some examples of how the information might be presented.

Mr. Tony Marts asked if the presentation material for the July 18th Public Meeting will be made available to the TAC prior to the meeting.

Mr. Kennedy stated that once we get beyond the first meeting we'll get into a regular routine of presenting information to the Committee in advance of the public meetings. He indicated that the information presented at the first meeting will be limited to existing conditions type information; nonetheless, we will get the material to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

Mr. Jamie Sikora asked if actual photos would be used at the Public Meeting to help illustrate the base information being presented in bar charts, or other diagrams. For example, will photos be used to help illustrate peak traffic conditions along the corridor?

Mr. Kennedy responded that pictures and possibly video could be used to help describe the existing conditions found along the corridor.

Mr. Chris Waszczuk suggested that it would be useful to compare the rate of crashes along the study corridor with state-wide averages.

Mr. Kennedy indicated that the crash analysis will include an operational comparison to similar facilities.

Format of the Public Meetings

Lastly, Mr. Kennedy discussed the format for the July 18th public meeting. He indicated that we'll have some material such as study corridor maps, resource maps, etc. on boards and easels so that attendees can view prior to the start of the presentation. He also indicated that NHDOT and VHB personnel will be available prior to the presentation to answer questions. Once we get into the presentation, we'll be presenting information using PowerPoint similar to today's meeting. At the conclusion of the formal presentation, we'll open the meeting to attendees for questions and comments.

Mr. Kennedy noted that perhaps one or more of the other public meetings may consist of a less formal presentation format where we may use a workshop type format.

At the conclusion of Mr. Kennedy's presentation, Mr. Cota solicited comments/questions from the Committee.

Mr. Smith asked that the Key Issues Map developed by VHB during the proposal phase of the project be made available to the TAC. Mr. Smith noted that the map is great starting point from a known issues standpoint.

Mr. Kennedy indicated that he will e-mail a copy of the Key Issues Map to the TAC and would provide hardcopies upon request.

Mr. Marts asked if information on the potential construction impacts will be presented at the Public Meeting.

Mr. Cota responded by stating that we don't know what the solutions are yet and that constructability options will not be presented at the Public Meeting. Mr. Cota also stated that construction impacts will be addressed during the latter phases of the project.

Mr. Marts followed up by asking if the Department was concerned with the public raising issues with construction impacts at the Public Meeting.

Mr. Cota explained that a context sensitive approach would be used to identify issues and to create dialog to get general input from the public on the transportation concerns relative to the corridor. Mr. Cota provided a few examples of the types of questions he expected to hear at the Public Meeting; issues related to congestion, noise complaints, high crash locations, business/homeowners concerned over property impacts.

Mr. Sikora commented that the goal of the Public Meeting should be to provide an overview of the project and the purpose of the Planning Study.

Ms. Jo Ann Duffy asked where the July 18th Public Meeting will be held.

Mr. Cota replied that the Public Meeting will be held here in the auditorium at the Manchester Community College at 7PM.

Mr. Cota stated that the TAC members will receive an invitation to the meeting as well as elected officials from the City of Manchester and the Towns of Goffstown and Hooksett. In addition, Mr. Cota stated that board members, local and state representatives from the three communities will also be invited. He also stated that the meeting invitation will be published in the local newspapers.

Ms. Duffy asked if Part B & C of the project are included in the Ten Year Plan.

Mr. Cota stated that currently only the Planning Study part of the project is funded. Mr. Cota noted how important it will be that we do a good job in the planning phase in order to gain support for proceeding with the additional phases of the project.

Mr. Waszczuk said that the current Turnpike Capital Revenue Program does not include funding for additional phases of the project. He also stated that it has been estimated that the overall project improvements would likely be in the range of \$70 million.

Mr. Tim White asked if there will be discussions on the financing of the additional phases of the project through an increase in toll rates.

Mr. Waszczuk indicated that he expects that there may be some discussion on raising tolls to fund the project.

Mr. Cota stated that there is an existing Black Brook Bridge project within the corridor that is ready to be advanced, but has been put on hold by the Commissioner, pending the results of the Planning Study. It is known that there are significant deficiencies within the corridor.

Mr. Kennedy suggested that although not everyone is going to agree on all aspects of the project recommendations, if the communities can reach a general consensus on the overall improvement plan, the plan likely stands a better chance of advancing to the next phases. Community support is an important factor in obtaining additional funding.

Mr. Bruce Thomas asked if the PowerPoint presentation could be emailed out to the TAC.

Mr. Kennedy stated that he will email a copy of the presentation.

Mr. Waszczuk stated that once the project website was up and running, presentation material could be downloaded from the website.

Mr. Kennedy agreed with Mr. Waszczuk that once the website is up, we'll be posting information such as meeting agendas, meeting notes, and copies of PowerPoint presentations.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the Community College was the best place to hold future TAC meetings or was there a better venue or time for these meetings.

It was suggested that possibly the new Manchester Public Works Department might be a good venue. It was also suggested that 1PM seemed to be good meeting time.

Mr. Waszczuk asked if the agenda could be forwarded to the TAC one week in advance of a meeting to provide feedback.

Mr. Kennedy indicated that yes, that's what we'll be doing.

Mr. Marts asked if the study should be expanded south to the Bedford Tolls.

Mr. Cota replied that the southern limit of the study area will be Granite Street.

Mr. Waszczuk stated that a study was recently completed on the Turnpike from Route 101 south into the City of Nashua, which identified two critical narrow areas along the corridor. Currently there is no funding available to address these two areas. The study can be found on the Turnpike website.

At this point the meeting was concluded and the Committee Members were thanked for their attendance and participation.