



Meeting Notes

Attendees: Bruce Thomas – City of Manchester
David Beauchesne – City of Manchester
Tony Marts – Town of Goffstown
Mark Lemay – Town of Goffstown
Jo Ann Duffy – Town of Hooksett
Julie Chen – SNHPC
Tim White – SNHPC
Adam Hlasny - SNHPC
Susan Huard - MCC
Leigh Levine - FHWA
Keith Cota – NHDOT
David Smith - NHDOT
Nancy Spaulding - NHDOT
Marc Laurin - NHDOT
Marty Kennedy - VHB
Dale Abbott - VHB

Date/Time: April 10, 2013
1:00 – 2:30 PM

Project No.: 52196.00

Place: Manchester Community College

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

Notes taken by: Dale Abbott

Mr. Marty Kennedy of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and reviewing the meeting agenda, which included a review of the conceptual alternatives, a preview of traffic simulations to be shown at the next public meeting, and a discussion on the results of the evaluation matrix.

Mr. Kennedy delivered a PowerPoint presentation that began with a review of the study purpose and schedule. Mr. Kennedy proceeded to present and discuss each of the conceptual alternative plans. At Exit 6, Mr. Kennedy introduced the possibility of a new alternative (the Off-set Diamond Interchange). He noted that at this point it is not considered an official alternative as the Study Team continues to evaluate its operations.

Following the discussion on the alternatives, Mr. Kennedy provided the Committee with a brief preview of the traffic simulations noting the simulations were not yet complete. However, he indicated that he wanted to provide the Committee an advanced look at the type of simulations that would be used at the Public Meeting. Mr. Kennedy proceeded to describe and discuss the draft Evaluation Matrix – noting that the Matrix included three parts:

Highway Needs (Study Purpose)
Safety and Capacity

Community Needs (Economic Development)

Supports Hackett Hill Master Plan Connectivity
Supports Goffstown/I-293 Connectivity

Impacts

(highway noise, wetlands, cultural resources, etc.)

At this point, Mr. Dale Abbott introduced an interactive GIS tool that allowed the Committee members to view the various impacts on layers superimposed on each of the conceptual alternatives. Mr. Abbott noted that the interactive tool would be made available on the project website.

Throughout and following the presentation, the following comments/questions were raised:

- Mr. David Beauchesne asked if motorists would be able to turn right from Goffstown Road onto Eddy Road under the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) Alternative.

Mr. Kennedy stated that under the SPUI Alternative, the Goffstown Road/Eddy Road intersection would be eliminated. Motorists from Goffstown Road would travel through the SPUI and then turn right at the proposed intersection at Amoskeag Street that would crossover the highway to a third intersection where motorists would then turn left onto Eddy Road.

- Mr. Tim White asked if the existing Eddy Road southbound on-ramp was modified to allow traffic to enter I-293 from the north, what modifications would be required on the mainline.

Mr. Kennedy explained that the plan for I-293 calls for 3 lanes in each direction. However, in the southbound direction, the 3-lane section would drop to 2 lanes after the Exit 6 SB off-ramp. This would allow the Exit 6 SB on-ramp to enter the highway in its own lane effectively re-establishing the 3-lane section. The SB Eddy Road on-ramp, which enter the highway further to the south as a merging condition would be upgraded to current design standards providing a longer acceleration length.

- Mr. White asked if the Eddy Road Ramp was removed, would northbound traffic on Eddy Road avoid the area by using Exit 5.

Mr. Kennedy responded that yes, removal of the Eddy Road ramp under the SPUI alternative would likely result in motorists using McGregor Street to enter I-293 at Exit 5. To reduce any potential impact to the local street system, we felt it was better to retain (and upgrade) the ramp.

- Mr. White agreed that removing the Eddy Road ramp would result in an adverse impact.
- Mr. David Smith asked if retaining the Eddy Road ramp resulted in additional widening of the mainline and questioned whether consideration should be given to an auxiliary lane or CD road.

Mr. Kennedy replied that we would need to carry three SB lanes through the Bridge Street underpass, regardless. Mr. Kennedy did not believe that a CD roadway was needed.

- Mr. Smith noted that if additional widening would be needed, scope creep could become an issue - particularly with regard to the southern limit of the current project.

Mr. Kennedy stated that retaining the Eddy Road ramp would not alter the southern cross-section substantially and he did not expect scope creep to be an issue.

- Mr. Smith noted that if the Eddy Road ramp is carried too far south, we could be looking at increased impacts to historic resources.

Mr. Kennedy agreed, but also suggested that impacts to the Historic Mill District can be minimized by widening I-293 to the east.

- Mr. Beauchesne, speaking with regard to the Offset Diamond Interchange, asked if motorists would be able to turn right from Goffstown Road onto Eddy Road.

Mr. Kennedy said yes.

Mr. Kennedy reminded the Committee that the project team is still evaluating the Offset Diamond Interchange Alternative and that it was not yet clear as to whether it would become an official alternative.

- Mr. White asked if the Eddy Road on-ramp would be required with the Offset Diamond Interchange.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the Eddy Road on-ramp would not be needed and would be eliminated.

- Ms. Nancy Spaulding, speaking with regard to the Exit 7 Diamond Interchange Alternative with connection to Dunbarton Road, asked if it was likely that southbound traffic on Front Street heading into the City would enter the highway using the southbound on-ramp and then get off Exit 6, rather than using Front Street via the Connector Road to Dunbarton Road.

Mr. Kennedy agreed that that is a possibility. He noted that it will depend to a great extent on the configuration of Exit 6 and how easy or difficult it is to maneuver through the interchange.

- Mr. Tony Marts asked if, from an engineering perspective, it is good practice for motorists to enter the highway at Exit 7 and then immediately exit the highway at Exit 6.

Ms. Spaulding noted that on I-93 in the Concord area, motorists often use the highway as a local connector roadway.

Mr. Beauchesne agreed, with Ms. Spaulding, noting that residents in the area use the highway as extension of the local street network.

- Ms. Susan Huard raised concern about traffic backing up onto the highway due to the proposed traffic signals at Front Street associated with the Exit 7 Diamond Interchange Alternative.

Mr. Kennedy also noted that an additional concern of upgrading Exit 7 at its current location is the spacing between the Exit 6 and Exit 7 interchanges. Mr. Kennedy noted that to obtain an acceptable operating condition, an additional weaving lane between the two interchanges would be needed.

- Mr. Beauchesne asked how the weaving would help in this area; in adding a 4th lane it would make it more dangerous with vehicles swooping across three lanes to exit the highway.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the 4th lane helps by providing added capacity for vehicles to enter and exit the highway. However, the relatively short distance between the ramps is still an important consideration.

- Mr. White asked if Delia Drive would be impacted under both 9A & 9B Alternatives.

Mr. Kennedy noted that both alternative alignments intersect Front Street to the east of Delia Drive.

- Ms. Huard raised a concern with the potential of the College losing access onto Front Street with the proposed driveway onto the new connector roadway.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the College wouldn't necessarily lose its access onto Front Street; it may simply gain an additional access at the connector roadway.

- Mr. Beauchesne asked why direct access is provided to Country Club Drive.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the existing entrance to County Club Drive on Front Street would need to be eliminated due to the proximity of the proposed Connector Road /Front Street intersection.

- Mr. Bruce Thomas asked why there are two options for connecting to Front Street.

Mr. Kennedy replied that the study team was simply trying to provide more than one option for connecting to Front Street in an effort to consider option to minimize property impacts.

- Ms. Huard noted that the College is currently working with a consultant to study their driveway access as well as emergency access to the College. Ms. Huard noted the importance of having more than one entrance for safety reasons.

Mr. Kennedy asked Ms. Huard to consider the various alternatives as they relate to any future plans that the College has and to let the Study Team know which alternatives work best for you.

- Ms. Huard stated that the College is currently talking with the NHDOT with regard to addressing the campus' need for emergency access. The College won't be able to wait until a new Exit 7 interchange is constructed.

- Ms. Spaulding asked who owns the land associated with the College.

Ms. Huard responded that the Community College System of NH owns all of the property.

- Mr. Beauchesne asked if Mr. Kennedy was aware of the Job Corps site.

Mr. Kennedy replied that he was aware of the site and has the site plan.

- Mr. Smith noted that the current connector road with a crossing of Black Brook would require two intersections. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Kennedy if he was thinking that there was some flexibility in the location of the crossing of Black Brook.

Mr. Kennedy replied that there is flexibility in the location of the crossing, and that it had been suggested that there might be a location further to the north that might serve as better location.

- Mr. White asked what traffic analysis year was used in the traffic simulations that Mr. Kennedy presented.

Mr. Kennedy replied that the 2035 traffic projections were used.

- Mr. Beauchesne asked what time of day is used in the traffic simulations.

Mr. Kennedy replied that the worst case peak condition (Exit 6 – AM, Exit 7 – PM) at each intersection was used.

- Mr. Marts, referring to the evaluation matrix, stated that from Goffstown's perspective Alternative 9A & 9B would not meet the Community Needs and should be shown in red as these alternatives fail to provide the improved access Goffstown needs.

Mr. Keith Cota noted that the color coding system in the top portion of the evaluation matrix is a subjective process and that we'll be looking for a consensus of opinion on the ratings.

- Mr. White asked if it would be possible to quantify the diversion factor between alternatives and provide that information in the matrix.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the project team has all the diversion information, but was trying to keep the matrix simple with the use of broad easy-to-understand criteria.

Mr. Cota added that once there is consensus on the scoring of the evaluation matrix, the next step will be to filter out those alternatives that fail to meet the objectives of the project, and then start mixing and matching the remaining alternatives and comparing the benefits of each combination to meet the different project objectives.

- Mr. Mark Lemay commented that from the Town of Goffstown's perspective, economic development is as important as the traffic component. Moving the ramp to the north could bring new opportunities to the Town.
- Mr. Kennedy asked the TAC members from Goffstown if the two Alternative 9 options should be colored as yellow or red under Community Needs.

Mr. Lemay and Mr. Marts responded that the Alternatives 9A and 9B should be shown as red – failing to meet Goffstown's economic development objectives.

- Mr. Beauchesne stated that any alternative that impacts historic property should be shown in red.

Mr. Cota responded that under the next phase (Part B) Section 106 documentation a more comprehensive analysis of the impacts on historical properties will be conducted.

- Mr. White asked if there was any idea on the environmental classification of the project yet.

Mr. Cota responded that the DOT will not make the environmental classification determination. That determination will be made by FHWA.

- Mr. Marts asked why economic development as a project indicator is so far down the list. Mr. Marts noted that when the MPO ranks a project for the Ten Year Plan, economic development, safety, and capacity are the top criteria for screening projects. He asked at what point economic development gets incorporated into the project.

Mr. Kennedy noted that the next phase of our work will include the development of a draft Purpose and Need Statement. We may want to consider including a reference to the importance of economic development in the Purpose and Need Statement.

Mr. Cota added that he anticipates other agencies raising the issue of economic development as a potential impact as the project progresses.

- Mr. Beauchesne asked how the TAC should go about providing comments on the impact evaluation and what is the timing for providing the comments.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the evaluation matrix and the mapping for each alternative will be posted to the interactive mapping application on the project website, where TAC members can turn on the different alternatives and overlay the different environmental resources. The next public meeting is likely going to be pushed back until June, so there is time for the TAC members to review the information and to get any comments back to us within the next few weeks. Mr. Kennedy also noted that, if necessary, an additional TAC meeting could be held before the next public meeting.

- Mr. Marts asked how the Bass Pro Shop development in Hooksett will impact the traffic projections.

Mr. Kennedy indicated that at this planning study level, the future year traffic volume projections are based on the regional traffic model. It is unlikely that any single development project would alter the planning study conclusions. As we proceed to Part B, the future year traffic projections will be updated.

- Mr. Cota noted that if you add up the environmental impacts across the matrix for different combinations of alternatives you can get a sense of the range of impacts as well as the total construction costs.
- Mr. Kennedy reminded the Committee members that if they any have any questions regarding the evaluation matrix or the study in general, to feel free to contact him.
- Mr. Cota added that, if it would be helpful, we could schedule a study briefing with public officials of any of the communities.

Mr. Marts and Mr. Lemay indicated that Goffstown would be interested in scheduling such a meeting.

Mr. Kennedy closed the meeting by thanking the TAC members for attending the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.