



Meeting Notes

Place: Manchester Community College

Date: August 10, 2016

Notes Taken by: Karen Huberdeau

Time: 6:00 – 8:15 pm

Project #: 52392.01

Re: I-293 Exits 6 and 7
Manchester #16099
Public Informational Meeting #1

Beginning at 6:00 pm, the public was invited to attend a one hour open house to review the project plans and discuss any questions or concerns they have with some members of the project team.

Following the open house, at 7:00 pm Mr. Keith Cota began a presentation to update the attendees with the project status and discuss the data collection that has been performed for the environmental assessment phase (Part B).

Mr. Keith Cota introduced himself as the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's (NHDOT) Project Manager for this project. He also introduced Marty Kennedy as the Consultant Project Manager from VHB. He discussed that the project has been assigned a Technical Advisory Committee. He informed the attendees that there are representatives from all communities and project stakeholders involved in the committee, so feel free to reach out to them, their contact information is available on the project website.

Mr. Cota provided a brief overview of the project status and schedule, stating that Part A (Planning Level Study) was completed in December 2013. He discussed that the project is now in the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Documentation phase (Part B). He added that at the end of this phase, there will be a formal Public Hearing that will discuss the impacts of the proposed action as well as the purpose and need of the project. He explained that the next phase will be the final design and construction (Part C).

He continued to discuss the purpose of the project and the existing deficiencies that the project will address. Mr. Cota then introduced Mr. Marty Kennedy to provide a recap of the Planning Study findings.

Mr. Kennedy explained the traffic data that has been collected. He also summarized the traffic volumes with a series of charts and discussed the design hour volume that the project will be designed for. He spoke briefly about the crash data and deficiencies that have been defined as well as the existing transit routes and bike master plan within the project area.

Mr. Kennedy then introduced Mr. Pete Walker from VHB to discuss the environmental resource data that has been collected. Mr. Walker described a series of resource maps including: wetlands, cultural resources, floodplains, farmland soils, groundwater resources, wildlife habitats, hazardous sites, and noise monitoring locations. He also provided a list of other environmental resources that will be studied throughout the next phase, including socio-economic impacts, air quality, public recreation and conservation lands, and visual resources.

Mr. Walker described the consulting party act, section 106...will add information to the project website.

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Mr. Walker then turned the meeting back to Mr. Kennedy to discuss the various alternatives that are being developed throughout Part B of the project. He displayed preliminary figures and discussed a few Exit 6 Alternatives:

- Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)
- Standard Diamond Interchange
- Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) He also presented a narrated video of how the traffic would flow within this alternative
- Offset Diamond Interchange

Mr. Kennedy continued to discuss the alternatives for Exit 7:

- Diamond Interchange at existing Exit 7 location
- Relocated Exit 7 interchange
- Potential connection to Goffstown, connecting to Goffstown Road

He discussed the design challenges associated with widening the interstate (I-293) along the tight curves located between the Historic Mill District and the Merrimack River floodplain. Mr. Kennedy then described some of the diversionary effects that could be expected with the various upgrade alternatives:

- o What will happen if Exit 6 is upgraded?
 1. Reduce congestion and delay
 2. Diversion of traffic flow within west side neighborhood

Mr. Kennedy described how under existing conditions, motorists destined to downtown Manchester from the west on Goffstown Road tend to avoid the congestion at the Amoskeag Circle and travel through the west side neighborhood by way of Montgomery Street to Bridge Street. The traffic model results suggest that an upgrade to Exit 6 would benefit the neighborhood as these motorists would likely shift back to Amoskeag Street. Mr. Kennedy also discussed how under the SPUI Exit 6 alternative, it would be important to maintain convenient southbound access to the highway from Eddy Road as currently provided. Otherwise, neighborhood traffic might shift to Coolidge Street resulting in an impact to residents along that roadway. Mr. Kennedy also described how separately the City, and/or as part of this project the NHDOT, may need to consider transportation system management actions within the neighborhood street system to minimize impacts.

- o What will happen if Exit 7 is upgraded at its existing location?
 1. Physically it can be constructed, but it is not ideal due to the close proximity to Exit 6
 2. Very little traffic diversion occurs, traffic will likely still use Exit 6
- o What will happen if Exit 7 is relocated to the north?
 1. Improved access to the Hackett Hill Master Plan area
 2. Reduction of traffic on Goffstown Road
 - a. 335 vph in AM (24%)
 - b. 260 vph in PM (18%)
- o What will happen if a connection is provided across Black Brook?
 1. Improved connection to Goffstown's industrial zoned land
 2. Reduction of traffic on Goffstown Road

- a. 435 vph in AM (31%)
- b. 480 vph in PM (34%)

Mr. Kennedy reminded the committee that these results are preliminary but wanted to share some insight as to what we are seeing. He added that additional details will be provided at the next meeting. He also discussed that the proposed action will add capacity to the system but it will also generate shifts in traffic patterns that will need to be considered.

Mr. Kennedy proceeded to discuss the draft purpose and need statement that the project team has developed to submit as a part of the Environmental Assessment. A draft version of the Purpose and Need Statement was handed out to the TAC members. He noted that the Purpose and Need Statement establishes a basis for the development of a reasonable range of alternatives and assists with the selection of a proposed action.

He provided an overview of the purpose, as follows:

The purpose of the project is to address capacity, safety, and access related deficiencies along a 3.5-mile portion of I-293 beginning north of Exit 5 and ending north of Exit 7 by:

- Correcting geometric and safety deficiencies while reducing congestion at problem locations
- Accommodating future traffic growth related to commuter trips and the transportation of commercial goods and services through the corridor
- Improving access to the highway consistent with the long-term visions of the communities of Manchester and Goffstown

Mr. Kennedy stressed the importance of public outreach that will take place throughout the project. He stated that the key to a successful project will be to provide an open and consensus driven public participation process. Public involvement will take place through a series of Technical Advisory Committee meetings, additional Public Informational Meetings, Public Official Meetings, Project Newsletters, and an up-to-date Project website. He asked the attendees to visit the website and provide any comments or questions they may have. He stated that he will review all of the entries and reply. The website is as follows www.293planningstudy.com

The meeting was then opened up to the public for any questions or comments.

A concern was raised about the deer population being forced into the city if the connector road is constructed.

Mr. Marty Kennedy confirmed that as a part of the environmental documentation, there will be a study performed on the impacts to wildlife and the mitigation to follow.

If the project will add connectivity and a new interchange at Exit 7, will less need to be done to improve Exit 6?

Mr. Kennedy responded that due to safety concerns and weaving deficiencies at Exit 6, there will still be a need for significant upgrades at Exit 6 to better accommodate future traffic growth.

Is there any other Directional Diamond Interchanges (DDI) in New Hampshire?

Mr. Kennedy responded that there are not any other Directional Diamond Interchanges in New Hampshire, but he would provide more information on DDIs and where they are located on the project website. Mr. Keith Cota added that Manchester was one of the first to have the existing rotary that is at Exit 6 now, so they have been innovative in the

past. He also noted that the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) was a new concept when it was constructed at Exit 5 and the drivers adapted to it fairly quickly.

A concern was raised about tourists using the DDI at night, and the fear of confusion.

Mr. Cota responded that the DDI has strong advantages for moving traffic efficiently through the corridor. He added that if it becomes the preferred alternative then there will be a large educational component to ensure its proper use.

Is the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations the same for each of the different alternatives?

Mr. Kennedy responded that each alternative will assure a connection east to west as well as a connection to Front Street and Eddy Road. The alternatives will provide safe crossings, sidewalks, bike lanes or shoulders, all varying depending on the alternatives and roadways. He stated that once a preferred alternative is reached, there will be more details developed on pedestrian connectivity throughout the project area. He added that the project will be designed to accommodate Manchester's master bicycle/pedestrian plan.

A suggestion was made to look at alternatives to keep bikes off the road and on separate bike routes.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the preferred alternative will study various feasible connections for bicycle and pedestrians throughout the study area.

Will the Exit 7 interchange be constructed before the Exit 6 interchange?

Mr. Kennedy responded that the intent is to construct Exit 7 first in order to provide a relief of traffic at Exit 6 while it is under construction.

A concern was raised with the new connector road to Goffstown, it was asked to please take caution as there are many vernal pools in the area.

Mr. Kennedy responded that data has been collected in regards to the wetlands and vernal pools within the study area and the alternatives will minimize impacts to the least extent possible.

What is the white line on the concept plan along The Pointe Condo property?

Mr. Keith Cota replied that the white line depicts the proposed property line.

There are 23 residents of The Point Condo community at the meeting, what can you tell us about the trees on our property, will they be removed?

Mr. Cota responded that it is still too early in the design process to determine the extent of the property impacts. He added that there is a potential for a sound wall along the property, but that will be confirmed later in the design.

Are there plans to upgrade the Black Brook Bridge?

Mr. Keith Cota responded by explaining the previous study that was done on the bridge that was put on hold until a further study was done on the whole corridor between Exits 5 and 7. He added that a construction project is scheduled for early spring that will rehab the bridge and shore it up in order to prevent further scouring until the Exit 6 & 7 project is constructed.

It was noted that the construction of the sound walls was done from state property in order to lessen impacts to the trees on the private properties. It was asked if a similar construction technique would be used along Exits 6 and 7?

Mr. Cota responded that the ideal construction sequence is to provide the least disturbance beyond the state's Right-of-Way as possible. He stated that at this time there is not a defined answer in regards to the means of construction and property impacts.

A suggestion was made to move construction along for Exit 7 as soon as possible and drivers are turning around in private driveways and speeding through the residential neighborhoods.

A question was also asked as to when the project would be added to the ten year plan?

Mr. Keith Cota explained that the project is currently in the state's 10 year plan and it set to begin construction in 2024. He added that if there is an opportunity to advance the project more quickly, then they will, but currently the project is anticipated to be funded by turnpike funds and toll revenue where the I-93 project is federally funded.

A resident of Straw Road whose home is shown as impacted, asked if the proposed intersection will be a roundabout or a 4-way stop?

Mr. Keith Cota responded that the project team is looking in to various intersection alternatives and the preliminary impacts could change depending on the selected alternative.

Mr. Keith Cota thanked everyone for coming and the meeting concluded at 8:15 PM.