



## Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Attached Attendance Sheet

Date/ Time: December 11, 2013  
7:00 – 9:00 PM

Project No.: 52196.00

Place: Manchester City Hall, Aldermanic Chamber

Re: I-293 Exits 6 and 7  
Manchester #16099  
Public Informational Meeting #5

Notes taken by: Dale Abbott

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Mr. Dave Smith opened the meeting by introducing himself as the Assistant Administrator with the Bureau of Turnpikes at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). Mr. Smith also introduced Mr. Marty Kennedy of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc (VHB), who is the lead consultant for the project, and who will be giving a presentation tonight. Tonight's meeting is the culmination of the first phase of the study. Mr. Smith stated that the goals of tonight's meeting are to present the findings of the study, solicit input from the public, and to make sure we're proceeding down the correct path to the next phase of the project.

Mr. Kennedy introduced himself as the Study Manager for the consultant team. Using a PowerPoint Presentation, Mr. Kennedy recapped some of the information presented at previous meetings, reviewed the project alternatives and an evaluation of the alternatives, project findings, and next steps.

### **Attendee Comments and Questions:**

Senator David Boutin stated that this project should be done once and it should be done right. He stressed the importance of completing the full solution to address the needs within the corridor. Senator Boutin stated that he is very concerned about the noise issues at Riverfront Drive, and wants to make sure that this project does not impact the quality of life of area residents. Senator Boutin stated he was very pleased with the work that has been done to-date. Senator Boutin addressed two major concerns for completing the project.

- Public safety should be the number one reason for completing this project. Senator Boutin described some of the dangerous driving conditions that the public has to deal with on a daily basis.
- Economic development is critical and should be number two. It is important to provide access to Goffstown and to remove traffic from Goffstown Road. Senator Boutin expressed the need to remove all the traffic that goes through Goffstown Road (at Exit 6), so that the people who live in those neighborhoods don't have to deal with all the noise and traffic.

Executive Councilor Chris Pappas thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Kennedy for tonight's presentation. Councilor Pappas stated that the Executive Council and the Governor have been working on the

State's Ten Year Transportation Plan, which currently includes Exits 6 & 7, but is an unfunded priority to-date. Councilor Pappas stated that the existing Turnpike Fund does not have enough money to rehabilitate Exits 6 & 7. The State will need to raise new money if this project moves forward. Councilor Pappas asked for the public's opinion on raising money. Councilor Pappas asked if the public would be willing to support a toll increase. Councilor Pappas ended by thanking Mr. Smith and Mr. Kennedy and noted that the presentation was very clear.

Alderman Keith Hirschmann stated that he was focusing on more of the nuts and bolts of the residential aspect of the project. Alderman Hirschmann publicly endorsed Alternative 9A at Exit 7, because he feels that Alternative 9A will have less of an impact to residential property. Residents of his ward have been very vocal on potential impacts to their property and Alternative 9A looks to have fewer residential impacts and provides access to Goffstown via Dunbarton Road. Alderman Hirschmann noted that Alternatives 10A/ 10B could impact 5 or 6 residential properties near Goffstown Road and that would be a negative impact of the project.

At Exit 6, Alderman Hirschmann noted that cantilevering the highway is more expensive but seems to be the more practical approach so that commercial buildings located on the west side of the highway are not impacted. Alderman Hirschmann also noted that there are a lot of apartment buildings located along the Front Street corridor and a school located on Montgomery Street. Alderman Hirschmann raised a concern with the number of school buses making a right-hand turn onto Goffstown Road from Front Street. Other than the Front Street/ Goffstown Road intersection, everything else looked good at Exit 6. Alderman Hirschmann concluded by thanking VHB and NHDOT on an excellent job.

Senator Lou D'Allesandro thanked the public for showing up to tonight's meeting and paying attention to the project. Senator D'Allesandro stated this was his third time seeing the project presented. Senator D'Allesandro noted that the public has to understand the magnitude of the project and the cost associated with the project. Senator D'Allesandro stated that the project is estimated to cost 150 million dollars. Senator D'Allesandro noted that a key element for the funding the project would have to be a toll increase. Senator D'Allesandro discussed three aspects of the project:

- A. Costly: Always costly when you have to redo a highway. When the F.E. Everett Highway was built, the State tried to save money by keeping the bend in the road (south of Exit 6), which was a cost savings measure that put us in this situation today. Some minor improvements have been made, but have not addressed the issues.
- B. Safety: This is a project that has to be done to improve safety along the corridor. Highway deaths are on the rise due to excessive speed and texting.
- C. Right-of-Way: The taking of property is a very expensive part of any project.

Senator D'Allesandro noted that the presented configurations are quite dramatic, but noted the dramatic change that took place at Granite Street and the tremendous improvements associated with that project. Senator D'Allesandro stated that the project cannot be built piece-meal and the project should be constructed all at once. The project is in the draft Ten Year Plan, but the Ten Year Plan is not funded for 10 years. The Ten Year Plan is more realistically a 2 ½ year plan that is continually re-evaluated. Senator D'Allesandro expressed his support for providing access to Goffstown and that it is a vital piece of the project. Senator D'Allesandro concluded by thanking the public for coming out to tonight's meeting and noting that these meetings are essential for the public to understand the project and the anticipated costs to construct such projects.

- Mr. Smith pointed out that this meeting is not the end of the public outreach and that as the State moves forward with Part B of the project, public outreach will continue.

Mr. Collis Adams, Chair of the Goffstown Board of Selectman, stated that this project is a once in a life time opportunity and that the project should take into account as many public needs as possible, both for City of the Manchester and the Town of Goffstown. Mr. Adams expressed support for relocating Exit 7 north of the Manchester Community College to provide better access and economic development in the region, but also to improve safety. Mr. Adams stated that by relocating Exit 7 to the north with a connector road, some traffic will be diverted from the Exit 6 area to Exit 7, which will improve safety at Exit 6. Mr. Adams recognized the potential residential impacts with relocating Exit 7 and the connector road, but felt that in the final design phase that most, if not all, of the residential property impact could be avoided.

Public Comment: A member of the public noted that it would likely be 20 years before a ribbon cutting ceremony for the project would be held and that short term improvements are needed in the interim. It was asked if short term improvements such as improved lighting, or additional lanes at the off-ramps would be included in the scope of work.

- Mr. Kennedy responded by explaining that the project team is looking at a number Transportation System Management (TSM) strategies and will continue to do so in the next phase of the project. Mr. Kennedy used the Exit 6 northbound off-ramp as an example of an area that could potentially be improved in the short-term by doubling up the lanes to provide additional storage.

Mr. Smith clarified an earlier comment on the funding by explaining that there is currently funding in the Ten Year Plan for preliminary design, which will allow the State to move forward with Part B of the project. Mr. Smith stated that what is not available is the 154 million dollars for construction and final design.

Mr. John Lisgard, a citizen of Hooksett commented on the funding and schedule. Specifically, Mr. Lisgard respectfully disagreed with Senator D'Allesandro on the funding the project with a toll increase and asked that the State to look into additional revenue from the liquor store expansion at the Hooksett Rest Area. In regards to the schedule, Mr. Lisgard asked why there is a delay in the end of year (2013) and the start of the Phase B work in the spring of 2014.

- Mr. Smith responded by explaining that there is no delay. The NHDOT is the progress of closing out the Planning Study and working on a scope and fee for Part B. Part B needs to be approved by the Governor and Executive Council, which is likely to be a 3-4 month period of time.

Mr. Will Stuart, representing the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, offered his support of the project to improve safety and to stimulate economic development. Mr. Stuart noted substantial economic improvements by improving Exit 6 to provide better access to the Manchester downtown area. Mr. Stuart also noted the benefits of relocating Exit 7 to stimulate economic development in Goffstown and the Hackett Hill area of Manchester.

Mr. Bob Walsh resident of Ward 4 and State Representative commented on increasing the State's gas tax to help pay for projects such as this one. Representative Walsh noted that the gas tax has not increased since 1991 and that recently the State House of Representative's voted to increase the tax by 4 cents per year for 3 years, for a total of 12 cents, but the Senate did not pass the legislation to increase the tax. Representative Walsh also noted the estimated income from the increased gas tax and suggested that the State should look at increasing the gas tax to pay for this project. Representative Walsh expressed his support for this project and for increasing the gas tax.

- Mr. Smith noted that this project is primarily expected to be a turnpike funded project, but the NHDOT is following all federal highway guidelines for potential use of federal

funds. Mr. Smith stated that historically, use of federal funds on Turnpike projects has been limited and that revenue from the gas tax has not been used on turnpike facilities. However, the State will be looking for alternative sources of funding.

Kevin McCue, a member of the Manchester Planning Board, cited a presentation to the Planning Board back in 2000 on the development of the Hackett Hill area. Mr. McCue noted that the City has not seen any development at Hackett Hill due to the limited access to that part of the City. Mr. McCue noted that this project would provide the necessary access to develop Hackett Hill and that anything the State can do to expedite the project would be greatly appreciated. Mr. McCue noted that relocating Exit 7 to the north is in the City's Master Plan and that he supports the project. Mr. McCue also noted the importance of the Hackett Hill area for developing the City's tax base.

Mrs. Christine Duffly, a resident of Straw Road, noted that her family has been involved in two motor vehicle accidents at the Amoskeag Traffic Circle in the last year. Mrs. Duffly stated that short-term goals, such as improved lighting, signage, and a greater state trooper presence are needed. Mrs. Duffly noted the excessive speeds on the mainline make it very difficult for traffic to enter the highway. Mrs. Duffly also noted that ticketing speeders could be used to help pay for the project. Mrs. Duffly expressed her support of the project, but noted the length of time to complete the project and asked that short term goals be considered as well.

Mr. Smith concluded the meeting by thanking the public for coming out to support the project. Mr. Smith also recognized the group support of the project and thanked the Technical Advisory Committee and members of the City Manchester and Town of Goffstown who have been working hard on the project.