



Place: Manchester Community College

Date: April 18, 2018

Notes Taken by: Karen Huberdeau

Meeting Notes

Time: 1:00-2:10 pm

Project #: 52392.01

Re: I-293 Exits 6 and 7
Manchester #16099
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #8

ATTENDEES

Keith Cota	-	NHDOT
Trent Zanes	-	NHDOT
Marc Laurin	-	NHDOT
David Smith	-	NHDOT
Keith Hirschmann	-	City of Manchester
Bruce Thomas	-	City of Manchester
Melanie Sanuth	-	City of Manchester
Jamie Sikora	-	FHWA
Nate Miller	-	SNHPC
Karen Keeler	-	Manchester Community College
Marty Kennedy	-	VHB
Benjamin Martin	-	VHB
Karen Huberdeau	-	VHB

Mr. Marty Kennedy, VHB's project manager for the project, began by discussing the public input opportunities/meetings that have occurred since the start of the project. He also stressed the importance of reaching a decision on a proposed action as soon as possible to move forward with the environmental documentation.

Mr. Keith Cota, NHDOT's project manager for the project, highlighted that since the last TAC meeting, the project team has attended meetings with former Mayor Gatsas and newly elected Mayor Craig to discuss Manchester's needs at Exit 6. He also discussed how the design team has been considering solutions to the City's emergency access concerns at Exit 6. He stated that once the Department has Manchester's support, they will advance the proposed action.

Mr. Kennedy proceeded to review the three major components of the project noting that we have worked through the various issues and have settled on the proposed action for the I-293 mainline and Exit 7, while we are very close to a decision on the proposed action for Exit 6. He stated that the proposed action for the mainline is to provide an additional lane in each direction. The proposed widening for the segment between Exit 5 and Exit 6 looks to minimize impacts to the Merrimack River, as well as save the Cotton Duck building on the west side of the interstate. He went on to say that the design team has been working with the City of Manchester to maintain the integrity of the building function, by allowing space for trucks to access the existing loading dock, and to allow fire trucks to maneuver along

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the sides of the building for emergency access. He mentioned that these modifications will impact some parking and likely the existing billboard that is located on the side of the building.

Mr. Cota noted that the team will set up a meeting with the property owner to discuss potential impacts prior to the next public informational meeting.

Mr. Kennedy then stated that the proposed action at Exit 7 is to relocate the interchange to the north, without a connection across Black Brook to Goffstown Road. Based on input from the Town of Goffstown it was clear the need for the connection failed to justify the cost and impacts. He also explained how Front Street will be realigned to form a four-way signalized intersection opposite a new driveway to the nearby condominium complex. He added that the interchange connector road will also provide access to the Community College. The relocated Exit 7 will also accommodate any future connection to the Hackett Hill area.

Mr. Kennedy provided an update on the status of the Exit 6 alternatives beginning with the Offset Diamond Interchange. He discussed the configuration and noted that given the proximity of the signalized Amoskeag Street/Front Street intersection to Coolidge Ave., left turn movements would need to be prohibited at Coolidge Ave. This prohibition would necessitate the upgrading (traffic signal) of the Montgomery Street intersection and the widening of Goffstown Road resulting in property impacts along Goffstown Road. He mentioned that Mayor Craig expressed concern with the widening Goffstown Road as she felt it would increase vehicle speeds, which are already too high with the existing configuration. The Coolidge Ave. left-turn prohibition would also result in traffic being diverted through the neighborhood to Montgomery Street.

Mr. Kennedy then discussed the Modified Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI). He explained that the ramps will be tight to the interstate leaving potentially developable land in the southeast quadrant that could be available for reuse under this alternative. This available land would allow for a proposed P3 Millyard People Mover Project to remain viable. In an effort to address parking needs in Downtown Manchester, a group of business people are looking into the potential of constructing a parking garage at this location. This P3 proposal is in the very early planning stage and is not part of the Department's interchange project, nevertheless, it is important to consider that unlike the Offset Diamond alternative, the Modified SPUI alternative could potentially accommodate the future garage. He also discussed that without an at-grade intersection at Amoskeag and Front Street/Eddy Road under this option, the need to prohibit left-turns at Coolidge Ave and the resulting need to upgrade the Montgomery Street intersection and widen Goffstown Road goes away. In the absence of this at-grade intersection, Front Street/Eddy Road would become a local low-volume, pedestrian and bicycle friendly roadway that could benefit commuters to and from the City and Manchester Community College.

Mr. Kennedy noted that some residents of the Dunbarton Road area have expressed concern with not having a direct access to the Amoskeag Bridge under the Modified SPUI alternative. It was noted that there are available alternative routes including traveling south on Eddy Road to Bridge Street or using the new Exit 7 interchange then traveling south to Exit 6 and across the Amoskeag Bridge. He explained that although some motorists may travel further in distance, the travel time will likely be similar and, with the improvements in place, the travel will likely be easier.

Mr. Kennedy also explained that the Manchester Police and Fire Departments have expressed concern with limiting emergency vehicle access to the Dunbarton Road area. He discussed that the design team has looked at various emergency access options and have presented them to the City for review. We expect a decision from the City soon,

but at this time it appears that the City is favoring an alternative that would provide a gated emergency vehicle only direct connection between the SPUI interchange and Front Street.

Mr. Kennedy stated that once the emergency vehicle access matter is resolved, we expect to move the Modified SPUI alternative forward as the proposed action at Exit 6. We would then work towards a public informational meeting - perhaps in June. He discussed the project schedule, including the time it will take to develop the environmental documentation and get to a public hearing in late fall/early winter.

Mr. Cota explained that the Department will carry forward the proposed action for public input, through a Formal Public Hearing with a Hearing Commission of members of the Governor's council. He noted that the team will continue to prepare the environmental documentation. After the documentation process is complete, the project would move on to final design and construction.

Q: How do we get abutters/stakeholders involved in the process, with the concern that many get involved too late?

A: Mr. Cota explained that the public involvement process has always been a challenge for state agencies, stating that there has been a public website and meeting announcements from the beginning of the project. He explained that although residents and business owners are aware, attendance and input is voluntary. Mr. Cota also discussed that the property impacts will be revised before the next public meeting and notices will be sent to impacted abutters to inform them of the meeting. He also said the team has entertained a stakeholder group meeting, as some residents in the area have expressed interest in discussing their concerns.

Q: Why does the Offset Diamond interchange have lower construction and future maintenance costs than the Modified SPUI?

A: Mr. Kennedy explained that the Modified SPUI bridge is a very large structure, which contributes to its construction costs and future maintenance costs. Managing traffic during the construction of the Modified SPUI will also be challenging.

Q: How does the P3 garage project influence the interchange project?

A: It was discussed that the P3 project advocates would likely speak in favor of the Modified SPUI alternative at the Public Hearing because it allows for that project to remain viable. Other discussions included access for the future parking garage and the potential for additional lanes on Amoskeag and traffic impacts, all of which will need to be discussed if the P3 project moves forward. Mr. Dave Smith recommended that the project teams engage early on to determine the best solutions for the future of the two projects.

Q: Which properties along the interstate will be impacted?

A: The gas stations and businesses on the east side of Eddy Road, between the ramps and Planet Fitness, as well as a few other properties along Front Street, the gas station on Amoskeag Street and some additional property impacts, as previously discussed, to the mill building along the interstate.

Q: Will the gas stations be given the opportunity to relocate within the new interchange?

A: If there is excess ROW with the final design, the State can provide opportunity for public sale of the land. Mr. Cota explained that this will likely not happen until construction is complete.

Q: Will the mainline option still need to be cantilevered over the river?

A: Yes, although a smaller section will be cantilevered – it will be like the Exit 5 NB off ramp.

Mr. Nate Miller, representing the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission stated that the team has done an admiral job, minimizing impacts and selecting a proposed action. He agreed that the SPUI alternative seems to have more pros than cons.

Ms. Melanie Sanuth, from the City of Manchester, agreed.

Mr. Cota thanked everyone for their feedback and stated that the design team will refine the engineering and get ready for the next public informational meeting, which will likely be held at the Northwest Elementary School again.

Mr. Dave Smith asked Mr. Cota to discuss the project's long-term schedule.

Mr. Cota explained that the project is in the current 10-year plan with construction scheduled for 2024. He stated that the funding for construction had been advanced by one year. He also discussed that the department will be looking at constructability and ways to best invest their funds. Exit 7 will likely be built first to relieve traffic congestion during the construction of Exit 6. Alderman Hirschmann discussed the need for the City of Manchester to budget funding for upgrades to utilities, lighting and other amenities that the City may want included in the project.

Mr. Cota confirmed that the team will need to continue to partner with the City to have those discussions into the final design phase.

Mr. Bruce Thomas, representing the City of Manchester, informed the team that the City has monthly Utility Coordination meetings, stating that they have discussed this project. Mr. Thomas will make the committee aware of the City's future needs and how they can align with this project.

Mr. Kennedy thanked everyone for attending. The meeting ended at 2:10 pm.