

**Maine Department of Transportation
I-395 Connector
Public Advisory Committee
Contact Susanna Liller at 1-800-370-2458, extension 112**

Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 2, 2000

Brewer Auditorium

7:00-9:00 pm

PAC Meeting #2

Public Advisory Committee (PAC):

Alan Bromley
Rick Bronson
Joan Brooks
Rodney Buswell, Sr.
Ellen Campbell
Sandi Duchesne
Linda Johns
Scott A. Leach
Stan Moses
Melody Knadler
Charles Plummer
Roger Raymond
Jim Ring
Al Skolfield

Not in attendance:

Joseph M. Baldacci
Manley DeBeck, Jr.
Bion Foster
Keith Guttormsen
Edward Harrow
Peter Waas

Study Team:

Andrew Bickmore
Terry Blair, Sr.
Richard Bostwick
Bill Coombs
Mari Costanzo
Michael Davies
Dale Doughty
Philip A. Dunn
Raymond Faucher
Bill Leet
Susanna Liller
Jim Linker
Dale Mayo
Fred Michaud
William Plumpton
Redington Robbins

Susanna Liller welcomed everyone and asked PAC and study team members to reintroduce themselves in the interest of clear communication. In addition to the PAC member introductions, the following study team members introduced themselves:

- ?? Andy Bickmore with the DOT, responsible for traffic studies
- ?? Jim Linker with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in Augusta
- ?? Mike Hassaman, Jim Linker's associate at the FHWA
- ?? Fred Michaud, regional planner
- ?? Dale Mayo, DOT construction representative

?? Redington Robbins, DOT

?? Jim Ring, city engineer for Bangor (Also a PAC member)

Susanna Liller asked if everyone had received the last meeting's minutes and if there were any problems. Sandi Duchesne responded that she was pleased with the minutes. There were no other comments.

Susanna asked the PAC to revisit the question of an ideal meeting time for everyone. Alan Bromley responded that he likes the 7:00 to 9:00pm meeting slot. There was agreement around the room. (It was decided at the end of the meeting to send an email survey out on the issue.)

Susanna announced that the DOT had made the following suggestions for new ground rules to add to the PAC's list:

1. No one is smarter than anyone else.
Jim Ring said he thought that rule was understood. Stan Moses added that the rule sounded like a value judgment and was not relevant. The PAC did not add the rule.
2. No moving in and out of meetings.
The PAC did not think this rule was necessary. The PAC did not add the rule.
3. Consensus can only come from PAC members.
Sandi Duchesne clarified that the PAC members are nonetheless representing other people outside the PAC. Charles Plummer asked if the PAC included the study team. Susanna answered no. The PAC did not add the rule.
4. Establish a quorum (See dialogue below)
5. Finish goals by the end of a meeting.
Susanna said she thought that having an agenda covered this rule.

Ellen Campbell: I think that [the quorum idea] goes back to the issue of commitment.

Mike Davies: There are only 13 people out of 20 here tonight.

Susanna: And I only received one call from Mr. DeBeck.

Ellen: I'm shocked.

Roger Raymond: I think there is value to having a quorum of at least 11 people.

Joan Brooks: If people miss three meetings, they're out.

Susanna: This process takes a lot of time and commitment but lays the foundation for very important work.

Jim Ring: Can there be a consensus or a vote with only 11 people?

Mike: Consensus is not the same thing as a vote. Consensus is not a majority.

Jim: But is 11 representative?

Sandi Duchesne: People should suck it up if they're not here.

Ellen: Is it two unexcused absences and limitless excused?

Susanna: Your decision.

Ellen: I think it should be three total.

Scott Leach: Three is too few over a couple of years.
 Sandi: Does the PAC choose a replacement if a member leaves?
 Mike: No. It comes from the community.
 Ellen: It would be unfair for people not on the PAC to have the PAC choose.
 Susanna: So three unexcused?
 Joan: I think three total. And an illness can be an exception, but you made a commitment.
 Mike Davies: And you're not representing the community if you're not here.
 Susanna Liller: But what about what Scott says about the length of time involved?
 Joan Brooks: True. But you're making a commitment.
 Sandi Duchesne: Can having a stand-in not count towards your absences?
 Otherwise I completely agree with Joan.
 Joan: Stand-ins can't do much.
 Rodney Buswell: What about a set number of absences each year?
 Jim Ring: My stand-in would be fully informed about what is going on in the PAC.
 Susanna: So three unexcused per year? Or two?
 Ellen Campbell: But how many excused?
 Rick Bronson: What is excused?
 Susanna: If you call me ahead of time.
 Mike: But if you call every week, I will ask to have you removed.
 Sandi: I don't think the word unexcused has to be in there.

Melody Knadler stated that she had not known about the last meeting but had been marked absent, and Charles said he also had been out of the country when the meeting notice had arrived and had similarly been marked absent. Mari Costanzo said she would adjust the last meeting's minutes. Susanna brought back the idea of two unexcused absences, and at a suggestion by Jim it was decided that a warning would be given to both the individual and the community represented when a member missed a second meeting. Susanna added it to the rules.

Susanna passed out a list with everyone's names and addresses so members could make sure all the information was correct, then asked if there was anything else administrative?

Charles Plummer asked if there was the possibility of a yearly schedule. Susanna reconfirmed that meetings are supposed to be held on the third Wednesday of every month and suggested that the PAC tentatively stick to that schedule starting in January.

Those dates are: January 17th, February 21st, March 21st, April 18th, May 16th, June 20th, July 18th, August 15th, September 19th, October 17th, November 21st, and December 19th.

Mike asked people to check their schedules to see if that would work. Jim Linker said from experience that schedules would probably realistically have to be done on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.

Jim Ring asked that Susanna's phone number be listed in the minutes. It was agreed.

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Susanna Liller quickly reviewed the consensus process: Opinions about issues lie on a continuum from great disagreement to great agreement. To be at consensus, everyone has to be at least a notch above neutral and has to be able to support the decision outside of the PAC meeting.

Susanna turned the meeting over to Bill Plumpton.

Bill asked if anyone was lost on his description at the last meeting of the NEPA decision process. No one commented. Bill went on to say that the PAC needed to be educated so they could start the first step of that process, identifying problems.

Bill passed out a handout on the importance of defining needs and attributed the information to the Federal Highway Administration website. The follow are reasons for the importance placed on defining needs:

1. They establish why the federal agency and its state proponent are spending money.
2. They explain to the public how their tax money is being spent and that the proposed project is both necessary and worthwhile.
3. They explain why environmental impacts are acceptable based on benefits.

Bill told the PAC that people will challenge their decisions and that well-defined needs will help the PAC justify their choices. He went on to say that more time spent on defining needs means less time spent on coming up with solutions and overall less time spent on the study.

Bill gave basic ingredients for defining needs.

- ?? They should be as fully developed and comprehensive as possible. (The PAC must understand unfixed variables, system linkage, etc. They need to know everything in the study area.)
- ?? The needs need to evolve with the process. The PAC should keep the study team updated with any new information on the study region.
- ?? The Federal Highway Administration is a good resource for information on defining needs.

Bill moved on to talk about what will be the next step after defining needs, creating alternatives. His points were as follows:

The PAC will identify alternatives before anyone else sees them. This is because the PAC will have the most information to work with.

There will be a wide range of alternatives to be considered from low-end to high-end. On the low-end there is the no-build alternative, transportation system management (traffic lights, fringe parking, HOV lanes, etc.) and travel demand management (example: working with employers to time work shifts). On the high-end there is an upgrade alternative, a partial upgrade with partial new alignment of roads, and a total new alignment alternative.

Alternatives will emerge when the needs are well defined. Often the first one or two solutions will prove to be best. Members of the public will come up with other alternatives to study, but most likely the PAC-generated alternatives will be the most effective. The PAC needs to bullet proof its alternatives so that they stand up to scrutiny.

The PAC will not study alternatives that are not responsive to the defined needs. Needs are used to define what is reasonable, prudent and practicable. This means MDOT must be able and willing to endorse each alternative, each alternative must be as sensible, given the circumstances, as possible, and each alternative must be realistic, both financially and in its impact on the environment. Sometimes possible alternatives run into legislation that make them non-viable such as laws that protect public property and wetlands. Sometimes the best alternative is too expensive or has too high an environmental impact and a less-than-perfect transportation solution must be accepted.

Alternatives and the nomenclature of the alternatives will be simple if the needs are well defined. They should be justified and as comprehensive and specific as possible.

Bill asked if there were any questions from the PAC. When there were no questions he invited Jim Linker from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to add to his comments.

Jim: I commend you for taking this commitment seriously. This process takes time, two years with the PAC and usually two years in construction, but when you're done you'll know you have had an important part in the community development of a very large region. I also want to clarify that there is not a pot of federal money set aside for this project. The federal government pays 80% of the project on a reimbursement basis. This is a state project. Neither I, nor any federal representative, has to be at each of your meetings. Our role is to track your process to make sure that nothing runs off course. And as we get closer to the public meetings we will be there too. If it appears your alternatives will have a significant environmental impact we will upgrade the environmental assessment to an environmental impact statement. The FHWA has to assure that all of the agencies involved have consensus as the point comes for decision making.

Any questions?

Stan Moses: Is the FWHA committing money to this project?

Jim: Yes.

Stan: Why?

Jim: The FWHA is interested in issues relating to transportation so we want to be involved from the beginning, and Congress wants the same. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) directs the FWHA to fund such projects so that we always know what's going on. The FHA sets up a program and approves the *concept* of transportation improvement in a certain area. This does not necessarily mean a new road will be built.

Alan Bromley: Is there an upper limit to the amount of funding for this study?

Jim Linker: It has to be a reasonable amount. You have a pot of money for national highway issues statewide. You have to weigh your project against others. And if your project is worthwhile but too expensive, then sometimes you get the money to plan the project and then you have to stretch the timetable for implementation over many years. There is no exact upper limit of funding.

Stan Moses: For this project to come to federal attention, how was it defined to you?

Jim: The state defines projects for us with justifications and they go on to our list.

There were no further questions for Jim and he thanked Bill for the floor.

Bill asked Duane Scott if he had anything to add. Duane took the floor briefly and passed out brochures.

Duane: There are numerous federal and state laws involved in this process. Integrated Transportation Decision Making brings together all of these laws. Laws like the Sensible Transportation Act, NEPA, Section 404 of the Army Corps, etc. The most important thing in your process is the statement of purpose and needs. This is the foundation for NEPA, the decision on viable alternatives, and for the 404 Army Corps permitting process. Each month state and federal agencies meet in Augusta. We will take your statement of purpose and needs to them so they know what's going on. I suggest to you that once you have a statement of purpose and needs, you should go back to review it every meeting.
Thanks.

Bill Plumpton: The purpose is different than the problems. Problems will lead to a purpose statement. The purpose statement can be considered as an overall vision or mission statement and can usually be stated in two or three sentences.

Mike Davies: There are three hurdles in this process. The PAC must support the final decision here and in public, we must solicit agency support (PAC members are invited to attend agency meetings), and the solution has to be reasonable. The three reasons we're here are system linkage, i.e. long term state transportation needs, local needs and community development, and safety along with the capacity of existing infrastructure.

At this moment Linda Johns arrived. She did not receive the last mailing and did not know the time or place of the meeting.

Mike Davies introduced Andy Bickmore to discuss traffic data. Mike said that crash data has shown a significant rise in crashes along the route 46 corridor recently. Bill Plumpton asked Mike if he wanted to mention that roadways in this study are on the national highway system. Mike said yes, that Route 1A, I-395, etc. are on the national highway system. **Rte. 9 is a state road???**

Andy started his presentation going almost immediately into a slide show, which reflected the information in a packet he had distributed.

Andy: I am presenting the information we've collected to date. These are the numbers behind the existing situation. It is how we as engineers or planners look at things.

*See information in packet for details on Andy's presentation. Below is a summary of the types of data that were collected.

There were studies done in 1990 and 1998 on Route 46. The data changed between the two studies, but major issues remained the same: trucks, safety and road conditions. The 1998 study led to a new corridor study.

A traffic study was done in June of 1998. It studied Route 1A East and West, Route 9 West and Route 46. It measured traffic counts, turning movement, vehicle classification, and used a roadside travel survey. Data collected showed there were peaks in the summertime at 160% above the year long average.

Alan Bromley: What time of day was studied?

Andy: The study was over 24 hour periods.

Stan Moses: What is the daily average?

Andy: 4600 vehicles, peaking around 5pm.

Stan: Is there information on the direction of traffic movement in this graph?

Andy: Not here. We do have that information. The surveys gave us some of it. The survey was done between 6am and 6pm with a rate of about 47% of vehicles stopped. This comes out to approximately 150 vehicles per hour.

Stan: Where do school buses fall?
Andy: Their vehicle type is trucks and the reason for traveling fell under the “other” category. The highest occupancy rates fell in recreational trips and the lower rates in work-related trips.
Alan: In both directions?
Andy: Yes. There were 4200 vehicles heading through on Route 9 and 1860 going down Route 46.
Stan: But this only represents a quarter of travelers?
Rodney Buswell: (Unintelligible, something about I-395- how many headed down to I-395 maybe?)
Andy: We have that information through the survey. Eighty three percent are headed toward the interstate, mostly trucks.

The presentation went on to cover the part of the packet on trip ends. It was found that often trips were to other states and to highly populated areas.

Stan Moses: Out of 4218 only 77 were ending or beginning in Canada?
Andy: Actually, this study projected out of 1998 summer daily volumes of 6070.
Stan: I would be interested to know about the Hancock County traffic, whether it’s from the east or west side.
Andy: That’s available in the town information. We can also infer based on the roads traveled.

Some summary points of the data to date:

- ?? Since 1990, traffic on Route 46 is up 60% versus traffic on Route 9 which is up only 15%
- ?? 80% of new truck traffic on Route 9 uses Route 46
- ?? 5 out of 6 heavy trucks that use Route 46 and Route 1A West also use I-395

Andy asked if there were any questions.

Roger Raymond: What part of the summer was used?
Andy: June for the survey. The average numbers are from across the summer.
Roger: And this was done in 1998?
Andy: Yes.
Roger: Have you seen any accounts of after 1998?
Andy: Yes. We have lots of information because the surrounding area vehicle counts are good.
Mike Davies: I know Calais is being done now. Those results will be compiled with this project.
Thank you, Andy.
Stan: Was this study done after I-395?
Andy: Yes.

Scott Leach: Is information easily available for Route 9 traffic?

Mike: We should know that. It gets added to Andy's list. Route 9 will also be looked at with regard to safety.

Ellen Campbell: I'd love to have a copy of the green map you have.

Mike: It would be hard to shrink it down to 8.5x11.

Ellen: How about 11x17?

Mike: We'll shrink it as much as possible and hand it out.

Charles Plummer: The percentage of trucks on Route 9 West, do they continue on 9 or go to Route 46?

Andy: It's in the handout.

Sandi: Page seven.

Mike Davies: (Unintelligible, something about distribution lines)

Susanna: If nobody has any more questions on traffic, we'll start the next meeting with item four on the agenda.

Bill Plumpton: And safety issues.

Mike: There is a lot of information in your packet, please read it through and ask me any questions you have. You can email me or call.

Roger Raymond: Do we direct questions on the study to you or Andy?

Mike: Me.

Susanna: We are going to move to the public but first Jim wants to make two points.

Jim Linker: We need to have a consistent name representing the region in this study and including the idea of transportation. Also, we've talked about the I-395 extension, but the interstate project is finished. You can build a four-lane divided highway, but it won't officially be part of the interstate. That project was funded on a 90:10 ratio. A lot has gone into the name of this project. And it is just a name.

Mike: A lot has gone into the name of this project. And it is just a name.

Susanna: Before I forget, if you want to be on the mailing list, give your name and address to Mari.

Frank Higgins
City engineer for
Brewer: If we're on the list, do we get all the handouts and all the information?

Mike: Specific handouts given to the PAC you'll have to ask me for.

Susanna: Was the public able to hear tonight?

Nods from the public. The meeting moved on to questions from the public.

Judy Sullivan,
Eddington: How are meetings publicized?

Mike: Information is sent to each community.

Judy: But it's not in the weekly paper?

Mike: No.

Joan Brooks: The town of Eddington probably posted it in the office.

Fred Michaud: Is it posted on the DOT web page?

Mike: It will be posted when there's a specific website for this DOT project.

Judy: For the public hearings and meetings, are there predetermined dates and times?

Mike: We will put a big ad in the paper for those.

Judy: But will there be a meeting, for instance, when the purpose and needs are decided?

Bill Plumpton: We have two public meetings planned plus one more formal public hearing. The first will take place after the purpose and needs is decided. The second probably when the alternatives are nailed down. The public hearing will be when the draft of the Environmental Assessment is circulated for public review and comment.

Mike Davies: At each step you'll be able to share your concerns.

Judy: On your maps, why not include the part of Route 9 that goes beyond Clifton?

Mike: The maps are graphical at this point. The study defines the region for the project but we can look further.

Bill: You will see many, many maps.

Mike: We will have a satellite image for this one.

Joan Brooks: Is there any real good reason for moving the meeting place each time?

Mike: We're trying to accommodate everyone.

Sandi Duchesne: I'd prefer to drive as opposed to finding a new place each time.

Susanna: If you have ideas for a central meeting place, please share them with Mari.

Mike: We have an enormous amount of material to cover. Maybe we can extend the hours for the meeting.

PAC members, please consider extending the meeting times to three hours.

It was generally agreed that one location for meeting would be best.
 Susanna thanked everyone for coming.

The following questions were asked after the PAC meeting:

1. What is the percentage of through trucks on Route 9 (do not use Route 46) that also use the interstate system?

Mike Davies: The percentage of these trucks that also use the interstate (NB or SB) is slightly over 29%. On an average summer day this would total 124 trucks.

2. If a truck coming from Calais stopped in Bangor and switched loads before continuing on to another state, what would the destination of this vehicle be?

Mike Davies: For the purposes of the study the information was collected with the origin being the last stop and the destination being the next stop. In the case cited in the question above the origin would be Calais and the destination would be Bangor.

It was also pointed out to Mari Costanzo after the meeting that Al Skolfield did not know about the last meeting and that therefore he also should not be marked absent in the 9/11 minutes.