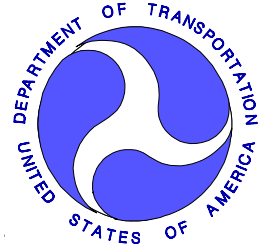




**Maine Department of Transportation  
I-395 / Route 9 Transportation Study  
May 22, 2002  
Public Advisory Committee Meeting**



*Contact Susanna Liller at 1-800-370-2458, extension 112  
Meeting Minutes  
May 22, 2002, at the Holbrook School  
7:00-9:00 pm  
PAC Meeting #12*

**Public Advisory Committee (PAC):**

Alan Bromley  
Rick Bronson  
Joan Brooks  
Rodney Buswell  
Ellen Campbell  
Manley DeBeck, Jr.  
Sandi Duchesne  
Keith Guttormsen  
Ed Harrow  
Linda Johns  
Melody Knadler  
Stan Moses  
Charles Plummer  
Roger Raymond  
Jim Ring

**Study Team:**

Raymond Faucher, MDOT  
Dale Mayo, MDOT  
Reddington Robbins, MDOT  
Jerry Chow, Barton & Gingold  
Susanna Liller, Barton & Gingold  
William Plumpton, Gannett Fleming

**Not in attendance:**

Scott A. Leach  
Gerry Palmer  
Al Skolfield

Susanna Liller opened the 12<sup>th</sup> PAC meeting. She introduced herself as the facilitator hired by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to lead the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) and public meetings. Ray Faucher was introduced as the study manager from MDOT and Bill Plumpton as the project engineer from Gannett Fleming.

## **AGENDA 1: OLD BUSINESS**

### ***Announcements:***

- Scott Leach & Gerry Palmer could not be at the meeting tonight.
- Susanna read the letter from the City of Brewer sent to the study team. This letter states Brewer's opposition to Alternative 2B.
- To provide the public with a brief history of the study process, Susanna explained the following:
  - The first public meeting was held almost 2 years ago. At the first public meeting, people were invited to apply to be on the PAC. The purpose of this advisory committee is to be a conduit for information. Although not required by law, the MDOT welcomes public participation in this process.
  - There are many federal and state laws that govern this study process; the two that provide the basis for the broad direction of the study are the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Sensible Transportation Policy Act. These laws direct that the study will balance the impact of social, environmental and economic factors to ensure that the best transportation decision is made.
  - Interagency meetings are held regularly and involve keeping the agencies with jurisdiction over this study up to speed on the progress of the study. Among the agencies that participate at these meetings include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP), Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and the Army Corp of Engineers.
  - This is a comprehensive process where the intent is to minimize and balance the impact of the preferred alternative on communities and resources. At times, the process can be a very challenging and stressful for people. Those on the study team and PAC recognize this.
  - We also recognize that it is challenging to be a PAC member. It's a substantial commitment of time and energy. The PAC is an advisory board, not a decision making board. This can be frustrating. However, they are an important communication vehicle with the communities involved and because of their familiarity with their communities they can provide information to the MDOT that they wouldn't have without the PAC.
- Susanna noted there had been confusion over the new alignments. She explained that right of way for 4 lanes would be acquired but initially only 2 lanes would be built. The 2 additional lanes will be built when traffic volume increases. This is done to provide for future traffic. The design and plans are in fact based on projections to the year 2030.
- Susanna pointed out 2 typos in the agenda:  
Agenda item 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, should read "Alternative 1-4B – Partial Upgrade Alternative"  
Agenda item 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet should read "Visualization of Alternatives – Review of where we are in the study process"

Bill Plumpton mentioned there is at least another year into the study. At this point, it is anticipated that the Environmental Assessment would be circulated for review and comment by the end of the year. Ray Faucher agreed with Bill, as there is still much work to be done to complete the Environmental Assessment.

## **AGENDA 2: REVIEW OF AGENCY COORDINATION MEETING ON MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>**

The agencies have seen all the alternatives analysis completed up to the last PAC meeting in February. They understand and agree with the reasoning behind the screening of alternatives from 46 alternatives to 8, then to 12, then to 10 and then to 3. The agencies have agreed with everything the study team has done, with one exception. They are apprehensive over the preliminary dismissal of Alternative 2B at this time, as this alternative could be 'practicable' in accordance with the law Bill Plumpton defined practicable as "available and capable of being done after taking into account cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall purpose." Additional coordination would be performed with the regulatory and resource agencies, but their initial conclusion was that Alternative 2B should be retained for further consideration.

The agencies did not have any suggestion on other alternatives the study team should consider.

## **AGENDA 3: REVIEW OF MDOT MEETINGS WITH THE TOWN OF HOLDEN**

At the meetings, Holden expressed their desire to further study Alternative 1-4B. MDOT agreed to evaluate the Alternative 1-4B alternative provided by the Town of Holden's consultant. Ray Faucher also agreed to reevaluate Alternative 2B and possible alignments that would run parallel the major utility corridors through Brewer, Holden and Eddington.

These alternatives would have to be studied, keeping in mind the goal of this study is to find the single alternative that best satisfies the purpose and needs of the study and minimize the impact on man and the environment.

## **AGENDA 4: RANGE OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES**

For these reasons, the range of reasonable alternatives has grown since February 20<sup>th</sup>. There are now 6 possible alternatives which include

- No-build Alternative
- Alternative 1-4B (a variation of the original alternative to be developed)
- Alternative 2B
- Alternative 3EIK
- Alternative 4B
- Alternative(s) that would run parallel to utility lines

## **Alternative 1-4B**

Steve Condon from the Town of Holden reiterated Mike Waugh's presentation from the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. In February, the initially proposed Alternative 1-4B was removed from the proposed list, as it did not meet the design criteria. Surry Engineering Associates proposed a modification of this alternative where frontage roads would be built behind the businesses along Route 1A. , Their proposal would provide for a 55 miles per hour design along Route 1A. At select locations, there would be timed traffic signals, which would be used in conjunction with a pacer light system. If the driver keeps his speed consistent with the pacer lights, he would never have to stop at the traffic signals.

Steve Condon added that since demonstration money comes out of Federal grants, this would free up money for the department.

Bill Plumpton noted there is much work to be done with this proposal. In particular, MDOT would need to study the ability of this alternative to satisfy the purpose and need of this study and the impacts to people and business.

Ed Harrow asked for visual presentations to be provided in the future when a new proposal is seriously being considered. Bill agreed.

Sandi Duchesne: No matter what alternative we select to take off the list, there will be someone who is unhappy with this decision. Is there any way we can ensure that once something is taken off the list, it can't be put back on?

Ray mentioned that Alternative 1-4B may look similar but is a different version than what was originally evaluated and presented. When alternatives are suggested, they are evaluated for merit and required by law to be studied further if deemed reasonable. This modification of Alternative 1-4B would be named to show that it is not the same as the alternative originally proposed.

Sandi Duchesne asked if there is a limit to the number of variations to the alternatives proposed. Ray responded that a variation would always have to be examined if it is significantly different.

Jim Ring: In listening to comments from previous meetings, a lot is mentioned with regards to shortest travel routes. Evaluation is based on vehicle miles traveled, vehicle hours traveled and distance. I would request that comparisons between alternatives be made from same points and results presented to the PAC.

Ray agreed. The study team will verify that the measures for travel and impacts have been measured from common points.

## ***Alternative 2B***

Modifications of Alternative 2B will be considered. Other than the way this alternative ties into Route 9, this first section of the alternative is the same as the original one proposed. The second half is all on new location parallel to the existing gas easement.

Charles Plummer asked where Alternative 2B would connect to Route 9? Bill Plumpton said all connections would be to the east of Route 9 and Route 46 and there are several possible permutations that would be studied.

## ***Parallel to utility line***

It was suggested that alternatives should be developed and considered along existing power/electric lines. These alternatives would be developed that parallel a combination of electric and gas easements and these alternatives and their impacts would be presented at the next PAC meeting.

To clarify the issue, Alan Bromley said this idea did not come from the town of Holden but from a businessman in the town of Holden.

Sandi Duchesne suggested it does not make sense to consider the southerly route around the village of East Eddington. Bill agreed adding, the horizontal distance between Route 9 and Davis Pond is very small. Ray added the PAC would be provided with quantitative information on the impact of this new alternative.

## **AGENDA 5: DESIGN OF INTERCHANGES AND INTERSECTIONS**

No intersections have yet been designed.

Some preliminary interchange concepts have been designed. However, these have not been developed because MDOT is now considering a broader range of alternatives. Interchange and intersection concepts will be developed when the range of alternatives being considered is narrowed to a few alternatives.

## **AGENDA 6: NEXT STEPS AND ACTIVITIES**

Future activities, in addition to developing the alternatives described, are avoidance and minimization of impacts to people and resources, cost estimating, noise analysis and visualization.

As the study progresses, the study team hopes to use technology to produce 3-dimensional visualizations of the alternatives. Through simulated outputs, it would be

possible to see how an alternative looks from the air as well as a close up look from different locations.

## **AGENDA 7: QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Fred Schlip asked if there is there was enough funding to complete construction of a proposed alternative. Ray mentioned funding is only in place for the completion of this study. The next phase would be the development of final design plans and right of way acquisition followed by construction which would take it into year 2005 and beyond under a best case scenario.

Edith Bochamp, Holden: In the presentation, you said a modification of Alternative 1-4B was being proposed by the Town of Holden. Who is the town of Holden and how was this request made?

Bill Plumpton explained the alternative was verbally proposed by elected officials in the town at a meeting held in April.

Dick Corovas, Holden: Resurrected options were presented at the Augusta meeting. At that meeting, it was proposed that Alternative 3A should be put back on the table. There is no Alternative 3A on the list we are looking at today. I would like to see the real reason for taking Alternative 3A off. On another note, when we proposed a corridor, we asked MDOT to consider all options that made sense. It was not limited to looking at just one power line.

Alternative 3A is not being considered due to its impact on natural resources, neighborhoods and business and the overall cost. Alternatives would be developed parallel to both electrical easements and the gas easement and the results would be presented at the next PAC meeting.

Scott Vornor, East Eddington asked what MDOT can do in the meantime to help alleviate truck traffic on Route 46. He suggested lowering the speed limits and adding signs warning drivers of children at play. Ray explained since it is a state road, no one can be prohibited from using it. The current legal truck size in Maine is a 74-foot truck. These long trucks, with trailers longer than 48', are supposedly not allowed to use Route 46. As for speed and sign issues, Ray suggested Mr. Vornor take it directly to the local transportation division office in Bangor. Signing issues that relate to the use of truck engine brake need to be directed to the local communities that have the responsibility for the installation of these signs.

Cindy, Holden, asked what compensation would be paid to the owners of property near the alternative? Ray mentioned only property owners that are directly impacted are compensated.

Jackie Hewett, Holden, asked about the grade selection criteria used in the study and how the study team had reduced the number of alternatives considered? Bill said MDOT uses a maximum grade of 3% for freeways. Alternative 4B was the only location where an alternative exceeded the design criteria; this design criteria exception was considered to minimize the impact of this alternative prior to comparing it further against the other alternatives being considered. In response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of her question, he explained the alternatives were narrowed based on the overall ability to satisfy the purpose and needs of the study and the impact to people and the natural environment.

Malcolm Mitchell: The center line of one of the alternatives goes through my property. Why must you spoil the entire field?

Ray's responded that the MDOT's intent is not to go through the center of someone's property if at all possible. At this point, the team has only identified possible connections. As the study proceeds to the design phase, there will be careful examination of individual properties impacted. The alternative will be fine tuned so as to minimize the impact to both man and the natural environment. Each individual property will be examined for impacts to that property.

Mike Ken, Holden asked if the new alternatives will be added to the existing matrix or if new criteria would be used to evaluate all 6 alternatives. Bill explained that the analysis would follow the same pattern as used in the past to analyze the impact to the environment. The new alternatives will be developed based on the same criteria and use the same comparative tools.

Scott Lindsey from Inland Fisheries and Wildlife informed the study team of the presence of deer wintering habitat on land proposed for alternative 3EIK. After two surveys conducted in early April, the department found significant deer use on 96 acres of land. This meets the criteria for the classification of a moderate deeryard. Bill thanked Mr. Lindsey for raising awareness to this issue. Scott Lindsey will provide this information to MDOT for inclusion in the study. Bill asked everyone to continue to come forth with information of this sort.

Bill concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for being present and for the PAC members who volunteer their time and effort.

**The next PAC meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2002.**