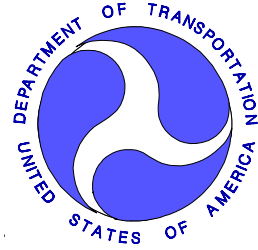




**Maine Department of Transportation  
I-395 / Route 9 Transportation Study  
September 18, 2002  
Public Advisory Committee Meeting**



*Contact Susanna Liller at 1-800-370-2458, extension 112  
Meeting Minutes  
September 18, 2002, at the Holbrook School  
7:00-9:15 pm  
PAC Meeting #14*

**Public Advisory Committee (PAC):**

Alan Bromley  
Rick Bronson  
Joan Brooks  
Ellen Campbell  
Manley DeBeck, Jr.  
Sandi Duchesne  
Ed Harrow  
Linda Johns  
Melody Knadler  
Scott A. Leach  
Stan Moses  
Gerry Palmer  
Charles Plummer  
Roger Raymond  
Jim Ring

**Study Team:**

Raymond Faucher, MDOT  
Richard Bostwick, MDOT  
Mark Hasselmann, FHWA  
William Plumpton, Gannett Fleming  
Jeraldine Chow Herrera, Barton & Gingold  
Susanna Liller, Barton & Gingold

**Not in attendance:**

Rodney Buswell  
Keith Guttormsen  
Al Skolfield

Susanna Liller welcomed everyone to the 14<sup>th</sup> PAC meeting. She introduced Mark Hasselmann as Jim Linker's replacement from FHWA. She went on to introduce herself as the facilitator hired by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to lead the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings.

## **AGENDA 1: OLD BUSINESS**

### ***Announcements***

Keith Guttormsen and Rodney Buswell were unable to attend the meeting.

### ***Minutes from the last meeting***

Ellen Campbell pointed out that she was wrongly quoted in the last minutes. She did not mean that the idea of using pacer lights should be dropped but rather it should not be encouraged if there is a better option available.

### ***Review where we are in the study process***

Bill Plumpton announced the study is proceeding to the final comparison stage. He explained the objective of this transportation study is to find the best alternative that satisfies, at the least cost, the study purpose and need with the least impact to people and the environment. He acknowledged the need to invest a fair amount of time to get the best solution. He added that through his experience, the proposed alternative often is not favored by everyone in the community but hopes that everyone will understand the decision-making process.

## **AGENDA 2: RANGE OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES AND PRELIMINARY IMPACTS**

Bill Plumpton announced that this meeting would focus on the suggestions made at the last PAC meeting in July. The full range of reasonable alternatives being considered include:

- No-build Alternative
- Alternative 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4
- Alternative 1-4B-1, 1-4B-2, 1-4B-3, 1-4B-4
- Alternative 2B, 2B-1, 2BEF, 2BE3K
- Alternative 3EIK, 3EIK-1, 3A-3EIK-1
- Alternative 4B

All alternatives (except 1-4B-1) that begin with 1 are new alternatives. After the last PAC meeting, Ray Faucher had asked Bill Plumpton to take another look at modifications to Route 46. Four new alternatives, 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4 were developed as a result.

Modifications to Alternatives 1 and 1-4B ending with -1 were suggested by the Town of Holden. These modifications consists of a series of jughandles on Route 1A with traffic signals and pacer lights with parallel service roads.

Modifications ending with -2 were developed as a series of diamond interchanges on Route 1A with parallel service roads. To reverse direction, one would have to do so at a diamond interchange.

Roger Raymond asked if there would still be traffic signals. With grade separation, Bill said it was likely that the traffic signals could be eliminated. This modification does a lot more to fix system continuity than Alternatives 1-1 and 1-4B-1 because no matter how well coordinated, traffic will accelerate and decelerate at varying speeds.

Upon examining the matrix, Jim Ring noticed Alternatives 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4 would require 1.5 miles of new roadway. He asked if this would be newly constructed roadway. Bill said that it would be: a 1.4-mile section between Route 1A and Route 46 to provide a smoother connection between the two routes and avoid the intersection of Route 1A and Route 46, and a 0.1-mile between Route 46 and Route 9.

Modifications ending with -3 consist of grade separations on Route 1A with only right-in and right-out movements for turns. It is similar to -1 modifications but instead of the 7 jughandles, there are 7 grade separations. There will be the same controlled access on Route 1A but one will have to go over a bridge to reverse direction.

Modifications ending with -4 consist of barrier separated collector/distributor lanes along Route 1A. An example of this is on I-295 at Congress Street in Portland where slow speed lanes help traffic getting on the highway cause less interference with the flow of traffic. Collector/distributor lanes are very useful when traffic volumes are high.

#### ***Alternatives 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4***

Referring to the matrix, Bill Plumpton highlighted several key points:

- i. This family of alternatives would have the highest impact to prime farmlands.
- ii. Total land area required is between 203 and 209 acres, on the lower end in comparison to the other alternatives.
- iii. Residential displacements are higher than other alternatives.
- iv. The commercial displacements include a Mobil station, the Red Barn take out and an antique and collectables store.
- v. If selected, 0.3 million cubic yards of extra fill would be required.

#### ***Alternatives 1-4B-1, 1-4B-2, 1-4B-3, 1-4B-4***

Continuing to examine the matrix, Bill Plumpton highlighted these issues:

- i. The acreage of wetland affected is higher than the new family of alternatives above.
- ii. Fewer acres of prime farmlands are affected.
- iii. Fewer residential and commercial displacements.

**Questions relating to Alternatives 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4 and 1-4B-1, 1-4B-2, 1-4B-3, 1-4B-4**

Scott Leach asked who would be responsible for paying for construction and maintenance of these alternatives. Ray Faucher said the initial cost of construction would probably come from state and federal dollars. However, once the roadway is built, the local community will be responsible for maintaining the facilities.

In response to a question regarding acquisition of property, Bill Plumpton said MDOT and FHWA would pay for a business to continue running as it does in the present location. In other words, if necessary, businesses would be compensated for loss of commercial property of parking lots, space to expand, etc. Mark Hasselmann, FHWA, added that any right of way acquisition would be based on current market value.

Jim Ring asked if the MDOT, in considering the compensation structure for impacts, considered the fact that it could cut off the possibility for future expansion of a business. Bill Plumpton reiterated that the state compensates for losses and suggested that the MDOT would consider the impact on the ability for a business to expand.

Jim Ring asked how modifications 1-4 and 1-4B-4 would connect to Route 46. Bill Plumpton said 1.4 miles of road on new alignment would be constructed between Route 1A and Route 46 so that it meets the system linkage purpose of the study. This would help to fix the problem of system linkage.

In response to Sandi Duchesne's question, Bill Plumpton clarified that all new alignments are proposed as four lanes. Initially, two lanes would be built and the remaining two would be constructed, only as traffic volume increase. The numbers in the matrix include the impact on property for all four lanes. MDOT would acquire the right-of-way to build four lanes.

Manley DeBeck asked if the MDOT would consider a four-lane alignment given the current traffic volume and if all traffic was taken off I-395 and Route 1A. Ray Faucher said if the no-build alternative was selected, traffic volumes would warrant widening Route 1A to four-lanes in 5-10 years. If Alternative 4B was selected, it would take most of the traffic off Route 1A however, and the four-lane alignment would probably be warranted in about 25 to 30 years.

Jim Ring asked if widening was considered a solution. Ray Faucher replied there would be fewer lanes to handle the traffic problem in the future. Limiting access points would allow greater efficiency for the existing system thereby delaying the need for widening to 4 lanes.

Jim Ring asked if the other alternatives had similar beneficial alignment impacts. Bill Plumpton said only Alternative 4B would help with the east-west traffic flow as well as traffic going to Ellsworth.

Joan Brooks said at the end of this study, if it were decided that Alternative 4B should not be built, given the increasing traffic volumes, something would have to be done to Route 1A at a later date. Ray Faucher agreed and added those improvements would have to compete for funding at that point in time.

Manley DeBeck said before 1986 when I-395 was built, people would have a difficult time trying to get through Bangor in the summer. The construction of I-395 has enabled the area to grow. He added that the same thing is happening on Route 1A.

Rick Bronson asked why the problem on Route 1A was being stressed. During the Bangor Folk Festival, there was traffic backed up to the Lucerne Inn. He stressed the need to ensure the right alignment is selected so as to alleviate the traffic problem.

Stan Moses stressed the need to consider immeasurable costs such as inconvenience and present traffic danger. Bill Plumpton agreed and said that MDOT understands the urgency and is committed to seeing this move forward but at the same time making sure the best alternative is selected.

Ed Harrow asked if the study team should consider expanding their scope in order to solve two traffic problems with one solution. Bill Plumpton disagreed. The boundary of the study area was originally based on the east-west traffic problems identified. Therefore the solution to the traffic problems should lie within this geographic boundary.

Sandi Duchesne asked if the study team could stop exploring new solutions and move forward with the current range of alternatives. Ray Faucher agreed.

Bill suggested it would be helpful if the Town of Holden could help the study team reduce the families of 1 and 2s to just 1 or 2 alternatives. Alan Bromley said it would be necessary for the Town of Holden to hold a public meeting to look at the options and to come to a consensus on the alternatives to examine further.

### ***Alternatives 2B, 2B-1, 2BEF, 2BE3K***

Alternative 2B-1 was suggested at the last PAC meeting. It comes closer to the Holden and Eddington town line. This alternative impacts a lot of undeveloped wildlife habitat, however, fewer buildings are in the proximity of this alternative.

The other alternatives in this family are unchanged.

### ***Alternative 3EIK, 3EIK-1, 3A-3EIK-1***

#### ***Alternative 4B***

These alternatives have not changed since the last PAC meeting.

To conclude, Bill Plumpton said -1 modifications would not satisfy the purpose or need for improved system linkage. All the other options provide continuity and call for less maintenance.

He called everyone's attention to several areas in the matrix:

- The number of residential displacements for Alternative 4B is 5, compared to 4 in the matrix distributed at the last PAC meeting in July. This is due to the difficulty of examining displacements in areas with heavy forest cover. It would be more accurate to say between 5 and 7 residences would be impacted by this alternative.
- Two footnotes should be added to the matrix: for Alternatives 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4 about 4,100 feet of the total length of the alternative exceeds 3% design criteria, and for Alternatives 1-4B-1, 1-4B-2, 1-4B-3, 1-4B-4, and 4B, about 2500 feet of the total length of the alternative exceeds 3% design criteria.
- A reminder of the operational impacts to Camp Roosevelt that would result from Alternatives 1-4B and 4B.

### **AGENDA 3: NEXT STEPS AMD ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE**

The next steps include

- Continue Design and Impact Avoidance and Minimization
- Agency Coordination
- Noise Analysis
- 3-Dimensional Visualization of Alternatives Retained for Detailed Analysis
- Cost Estimating
- Preparation of the EA

### **AGENDA 4: QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Dick from Holden: I understand there is some consideration for future growth on Route 1A but what about the fact that there is really no good alternative route to get to Mt. Desert Island? Is the state putting in a new bridge in Augusta?

Ray Faucher said the state is building a new bridge and interchange in Augusta connecting I-95 to Route 3. This bridge would make it more attractive for travelers going to the coastal communities. There will be better signage to divert traffic from Route 1 in Bath, Wiscasset and Woolwich. The DOT is also considering other modes of transportation like commuter buses and rail.

Mike from Holden: In the handout, traffic volumes on Route 1A and Route 46 are forecasted to increase by 69% for all vehicles. Did these numbers include the construction of a new bridge between I-95 and Route 3?

Ray said the numbers reported were from the East-West Highway study and wasn't sure if the numbers reported took into consideration the diversions that would occur from a new bridge near Augusta. He intends to review the actual numbers and provide a more accurate answer at the next meeting. Bill Plumpton added that this sheet was a summary of the information supporting the purpose and needs for this study was produced over a year and a half ago. It was included in the handout simply as a reminder of the problems that this study is trying to fix.

Mr. Grant, who lives and owns a business in Holden, commented on the differences in the I-395 bypass and impact to Wilson Street versus Alternative 4B. Wilson Street is better than the remainder of Route 1A in that it has a major nucleus of residences and has water and sewer infrastructure. He went on to say that Marden's brought people and traffic to Brewer. In response to his comment, Manley DeBeck pointed out that the people who travel on Wilson Street are going towards Route 1A to Bar Harbor.

Eva from Holden: At the last meeting you said the family of alternative 3s were favored. Why were they not mentioned at this meeting? Also, there is a severe disconnect between the people from Holden and the Selectmen. I am glad to hear we are finally going to have a public meeting. Why do we focus so much attention on Alternative 4B if it has the most impact and costs the most?

Ray Faucher said this meeting was spent explaining the new alternatives. As for studying Alternative 4B, NEPA requires federal agencies to consider an alternative that is reasonable, and satisfies, the study purpose and need with the least impact to people and the environment. Although some options are less attractive than others, Alternative 4B is a viable alternative and needs to continue to be considered.

Judy Sullivan asked for a clarification of the number of lanes proposed on Route 9 on the section of Alternative 2B. Ray Faucher said it would be 2 lanes and if it were considered to be the best option, it would be a challenge to control access considering how built up the area is presently.

Bill Plumpton assured the public present at this PAC meeting that there will be opportunities for public involvement in the future.

Sandi Duchesne asked if the PAC, MDOT or study team would be responsible for reducing the number of alternatives. Ray Faucher said MDOT and the study team would look at all the information collected and then make their recommendations at the next PAC meeting. At that point, they would look for concurrence from the PAC. If the PAC agrees on the recommendations, the study proceeds. Otherwise, the study team will go back and reassess their recommendations in light of the comments heard.

Jim Ring requested that the study team provide a traffic data for the new set of alternatives at the next PAC meeting. Ray Faucher agreed. He said that Mike Morgan is working on this and hopes to complete the analysis by the next PAC meeting.

**The next PAC meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2002.**