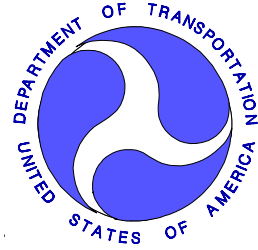


**Maine Department of Transportation
I-395 / Route 9 Transportation Study
November 20, 2002
Public Advisory Committee Meeting**



*Contact Susanna Liller at 1-800-370-2458, extension 112
Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2002, at the Holbrook School
7:00-9:15 pm
PAC Meeting #15*

Public Advisory Committee (PAC):

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

Study Team:

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

Not in attendance:

Keith Guttormsen
Melody Knadler
Gerry Palmer
Al Skolfield

Susanna Liller welcomed everyone to the 15th PAC meeting. She introduced herself as the facilitator hired by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to lead the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings. PAC meetings are working meetings for committee members but the public is welcome to attend and can ask questions during the last 15 minutes of the meeting.

AGENDA 1: OLD BUSINESS

Announcements

The agenda was rearranged as Bill Plumpton would be late. He was expected at 7:30pm.

Minutes from the last meeting

Susanna asked for those who have not been receiving the mailings to let her know.

AGENDA 2: RESULTS OF TOWN OF HOLDEN PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS ALTERNATIVES

Alan Bromley presented.

At the last PAC meeting, the representatives of Holden were asked if there was any option that the town could support. As a result, the town conducted several meetings. Ray Faucher attended one of the meetings.

The Town of Holden has identified a corridor that they can support. The Corporate Boundary Route is a variation of a route that the PAC and study team have seen. The Corporate Boundary Route:

- Is a modified connector route from I-395 to Route 9 approximating the corporate boundary lines of Brewer, Holden and Eddington
- Includes a road connector headed northwesterly to Route 178
- Continues the center turning lane on Route 1A to Route 46.

Details of this proposed route is in the attached resolution, which Alan read.

AGENDA 3: SUMMARY OF MDOT'S RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Before his presentation, Bill Leet from MDOT handed out a booklet entitled, "A Landowners Guide to the Property Acquisition Process." Please call Jerry C. Herrera at 774-2458, x115 if you need a copy.

Summary of Bill Leet's presentation:

The right-of-way acquisition does not start to affect people until the highway alignment is accepted and design has begun. Types of property rights that the MDOT acquires include:

- Fee Interest: the State acquires all interest in a given parcel.

- Permanent Easements: the owner retains the title but the State acquires the right to use all or a portion of a property for a certain purpose. Examples include slope easement, drainage easement, construction and maintenance easement.
- Temporary Rights: the State acquires the right to grade, loam or seed, but only for a temporary period which will automatically expire at the conclusion of a project.

Prior to construction, an initial contact is made with the property owners. Information about the owner and the property is gathered for the Property Owner's Report. MDOT's legal department then begins title searches. A right-of-way map consisting of the existing right-of-way, existing property lines, construction baseline, proposed design and acquisitions is established through topography maps, county layouts, town records and previous projects.

When land is acquired from private property owners, the compensation is determined through an appraisal process. The property is inspected thoroughly with the property owner present. Next, the appraiser gathers, confirms and analyzes the market data, writes a report and then submits it for review to MDOT. The State then reviews the appraisal to see if damages are reasonable, specifications and laws are followed, damages can be defended and non-compensable items are excluded.

If just a portion of the land is taken, MDOT appraises the entire property and pays the difference between the value immediately before and immediately after the taking. When a property sustains severance damage, owner is compensated not only for the fair market value of the property taken, but for the loss in value incurred by the remainder resulting from the acquisition and proposed construction.

MDOT makes the state's offer in writing and sends it to the property owner. There should be a complete explanation of the project need, design, takings and impacts. The offer would be no less than the approved appraised value and there is no coercion.

If you are displaced by this or any other federally funded project, you are entitled to relocation assistance from MDOT's relocation assistance service. The benefits include assistance in residential relocation, business relocation, advisory assistance, moving costs, re-establishment expenses and incidental expenses.

Questions from the public

Carol Smith, Brewer: Page 18 talks about "Sale to the third party." If no one is being contacted now, who's responsibility is it to tell people who are buying or selling their houses and don't know about these proposed alternatives?

Bill Leet said once the alignment or right-of way is established, the property owner is then contacted by the MDOT. The legal issue only comes into play after MDOT contacts the property owner.

Charlie Payne, Holden: Once the process gets underway, how long will it take?

According to Ray Faucher, the objective is to complete the study by mid to late 2003. Once the study is complete and an alignment is identified, MDOT can start the process of identifying the parcels which have to be acquired.

Susanna stated that if people had more questions, there are contact numbers in the guidebook Bill handed out.

AGENDA 4: RESULTS OF INTERAGENCY COORDINATION MEETING ON OCTOBER 8TH

Bill apologized for being late to the meeting.

The 4th Interagency Meeting was held in October, eight months after the previous meeting. All the alternatives and analysis work done to date was shared with the federal and state agencies. They did not have many substantive comments and did not make suggestions for additional alternatives to be studied or modifications to any of the alternatives to further avoid and minimize impacts.

Ed Harrow asked if this meant that they agree with and would grant permitting for any of the alternatives selected. Bill Plumpton said there are no guarantees. The permit will be granted for the alternative with the least impact to the environment that is also in the public interest.

AGENDA 5: SUMMARY OF TRAFFIC FORECASTING AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

Bill Plumpton referred to the handout that was sent with the minutes of the last meeting. In an effort to evaluate the potential transportation benefits, the design team developed quantitative estimates of the following:

- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Vehicle hours traveled (VHT)
- Cost Savings (for VMT, VHT and yearly total travel cost)

Bill reiterated the need to balance the impact to people and the environment. The objective of this study is to find the alternative that best satisfies the overall purpose and need of the study with the least impact to the human and natural environment.

All reductions are compared to the no-build alternative in 2030. Bill summarized the analysis and disclosed the assumptions which were made:

- Alternative 2B and Alternative 2B-1 would have similar reductions
- Functions of the 4 modifications to Alternative 1 and Alternative 1-4B were assumed similar
- Speed on Route 1A was assumed at 50 & 55 mph

Questions from the PAC

Sandi Duchesne asked how close Alternative 2BE3K is to the Corporate Boundary Route proposed by the Town of Holden. Bill said he hadn't had time to fully evaluate Holden's proposed alternative. The town voted on the resolution on November 17 and he was given the plans a day later. The town plotted the corridor boundary route on an aerial photograph.

In response to Sandi Duchesne's question, Bill Plumpton said that it appeared that the Corporate Boundary Route closely resembled several alternatives that were previously studied and dismissed for various reasons. Alternatives 5A2E3K and 5A2EF were specifically mentioned. The suggestion of the Corporate Boundary Route would be examined before the next meeting.

Alan Bromley asked how cost savings have been determined and wondered if the figures for cost savings were accurate, as the road would primarily benefit trucks originating from Canada. Bill Plumpton said only variable costs, not fixed costs, are considered. The costs of running a vehicle such as gas, wear and tear, oil and other variable costs were valued at \$0.114/hr for cars and \$0.70 for heavy trucks. People's time is also quantified at \$10/hr and \$39/hr for heavy trucks. In response to his second statement, Bill said in the origin and destination study, it was found that many vehicle trips have Penobscot and adjacent counties as either their origin or destination. Bill promised to attach the summary charts from a previous PAC meeting when needs were discussed to the minutes of this meeting (see page 10).

Stan Moses asked if the study only counts one passenger per car and how VMT and VHT are calculated. Bill Plumpton said the numbers used were \$10/hr for car and \$39/hr for each truck (one person per vehicle). He went on to explain VMT and VHT were taken from a statewide travel demand model used by MDOT.

Rick Bronson questioned the accuracy of the numbers and asked the study team to confirm them for the next meeting. Bill agreed to take a look at results, but also said it was unlikely the computer model would give erroneous results.

In response to Alan Bromley's statement about the trucks from Canada benefiting from the new right-of-way, Stan Moses said the Canadian truckers are in the US to do business. It benefits the truckers and US businesses.

Bill Plumpton said that the handout can be found on the project website.

AGENDA 6: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISMISSAL OF ALTERNATIVES FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Currently, 16 different alternatives or modifications exist for satisfying the purpose and needs of this study. The study team recommended the dismissal of several of the remaining alternatives from further consideration. Bill handed out a memo dated November 15th (attached) and asked the PAC to review the rationale for reducing the proposed range of alternatives.

Family of Alternative 4, 1-4B:

There are other alternatives that better satisfy the purpose and needs and have less impact, and, presumably, at far less cost. These alternatives were dismissed at the meeting due to:

- Most physically intrusive
- Substantial operational impacts to Camp Roosevelt
- Very high construction costs

Family of Alternative 1:

There is compelling reason to dismiss 1-1 and 1-4 because:

- Most physically intrusive
- Inability to satisfy the traffic need

Bill reviewed the modifications to Alternative 1.

Alternative 1-2 consists of 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. There would be no traffic signals and businesses and residents along the alignment will have access from the rear.

Alternative 1-3 is similar to the Town of Holden's suggestion. It consists of grade separations on Route 1A with only right-in and right-out movements for turns. There will be the same controlled access on Route 1A but one will have to go over a bridge to reverse direction.

Family of Alternative 2:

Due to the large impact to wetlands and hence, difficulty in obtaining a permit, Alternative 2BE3K should be dismissed from further consideration.

Alternative 2B and 2B-1 should be retained for further consideration at this time as more study needs to be performed prior to making a recommendation. Alternative 2B-1 satisfies system linkage and need more effectively than Alternative 2B but Alternative 2B-1 requires 100 acres more land to build it.

Family of Alternative 3:

Alternative 3EIK and 3EIK-1 were dismissed because they didn't perform as well as 3A-3EIK-1 and they had greater impact to natural resources.

Questions from the PAC

Ellen Campbell stated that the Town of Holden has no objections to also dismissing Alternative 1-2 and 1-3 from further consideration. Alan Bromley added there is little to no support from the town for any of the 1- options. MDOT agreed and is no longer interested in further considering these two alternatives.

Manley DeBeck asked why Alternative 2B-1 should be retained for further consideration if it requires 100 more acres of land than Alternative 2B. Ray Faucher said it does satisfy system linkage and need and more analysis needs to be done before the study team can recommend dismissal of this alternative. Bill said the study team needs to study these two alternatives a little further to fully understand the direct and indirect impacts caused by these two alternatives to people, particularly those living along the two alignments and living along Route 9, before making a recommendation to dismiss these two alternatives. Bill stated that MDOT is aware that there is little public support for these two alternatives. Manley said the Town of Eddington does not like these two alternatives.

Having lived in Clifton for 17 years, Sandi Duchesne expressed concern about Alternative 2BE3K. People who live on Route 46 could not walk to their neighbor's yards without putting their safety at risk. Their lives are severely limited. Bill Plumpton agreed with her and said that those were additional reasons why MDOT was no longer interested in considering Alternative 2BE3K.

Roger Raymond asked why Alternative 2B was dismissed then reintroduced. Bill reviewed the history of the original section of I-395, the conditions of the original permit, and how MDOT and others originally thought that alternatives using the existing interchange would not be considered 'practicable' by those that need to issue permits. This turned out not to be the case. Bill said more work has to be done before it can be conclusively eliminated from further consideration and said that MDOT is aware that there is little public support for Alternatives 2B and 2B-1.

With regards to the need to improve Route 1A, Roger Raymond asked if the associated costs should be taken into consideration. Ray Faucher mentioned that MDOT has considered the effects of upgrades on Route 1A. If the no-build is selected, Route 1A will become a candidate for widening in approximately 5-10 years. If an alternative from the Family of Alternative 2s and 3s were selected, Route 1A will become a candidate for widening in approximately 15-20 years. If an alternative from the Family of Alternative 4s were selected, Route 1A would become a candidate for widening in approximately 25-30 years. No matter what happens, the project to upgrade Alternative 1A will have to compete for funding with all other projects in the state at that point of time.

Rick Bronson suggested that Ray just made the case for Route 4B as it would "get our hand in the cookie jar sooner." Ray responded that he questioned if it would be a good investment of taxpayer's money.

Sandi Duchesne asked if it was too soon to eliminate Alternative 4B. Many people are in support of this alternative but have been told to hold off their support until later. Ray said that Alternative 4B is very intrusive, is most expensive to construct, is less effective at satisfying the purpose and needs of this study than other alternatives, and could potentially result in substantial impact the operations to Camp Roosevelt, one of the major destinations in the study area.

Jim Ring summarized for the PAC the recommended alternatives that have been retained for further consideration:

- The no-build (this always has to be considered as a viable alternative)
- Alternative 2B, 2B-1
- Alternative 3A-3EIK

He offered his comments:

- Alternative 2B should be dismissed as it does not serve system linkage
- Alternative 2B-1 should be considered if it is a different route than what the town of Holden has suggested
- Alternative 3A-3EIK-1 should be retained for further study

Bill thanked Jim for summarizing the range of alternatives being considered and accepted his comments, stating that MDOT needs to fully develop the no-build alternative and the other alternatives and their consequences for the year 2030 to get true assessments of the impacts.

Stan Moses asked what sort of improvements will there be for Route 1A if the no-build alternative was selected. Ray said MDOT would have to look at the cost and impact of widening. Based on present traffic growth, Route 1A will become a candidate for widening in 5-10 years. Bill Plumpton added that the no-build would only be selected when the cost of another suggested alternative outweighs the benefits. It also comes into play when no better solution can be found.

Ellen Campbell asked if the list of proposed alternatives for further consideration would include the proposal from Holden. Bill agreed and said he didn't have enough time to study that alternative before this PAC meeting.

Sandi Duchesne asked if Alternative 2B could be eliminated from further consideration. Ray said although Alternative 2B may not be a good alternative, MDOT would like to keep it in the study at this time to fully understand its impacts before making a recommendation to dismiss it.

AGENDA 7: NEXT STEPS AND ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

The next meeting will be held on **January 15, 2003** at a **different location**. Rick Bronson suggested that it was good to alternate locations so that the same people didn't always have the longest drive.

AGENDA 8: QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Sharon Byers from Holden said it was hard to see Alternative 3A-3EIK-1 on the map. Bill Plumpton said the study team would develop better maps of this alternative as it is studied and bring copies to the next meeting.

Larry Adams from Brewer referenced the memo from the City of Brewer and said there is no support from the city for the family of Alternative 2.

Ralph Russell from Eddington mentioned had the Town of Eddington has taken a stand, and they would have liked to see some of the other alternatives that had been proposed more than what remains today.

Barbara from Holden asked if the cost savings includes the reduction of crashes and the time drivers save by not being caught in traffic due to accidents. Bill Plumpton said the study did not factor in catastrophic events. It would make modeling much too complex. Only day-to-day events and not special events were calculated. Ray Faucher added MDOT has information on what crashes cost the.

Barbara asked if safety was a concern. Bill reassured her safety is paramount to the department and one of the fundamental needs of this study.

Judy Sullivan expressed her lack of understanding how Alternative 2B satisfied the purpose and need of the study. In her opinion, it does not deal with safety. Bill said Alternative 2B does not satisfy system linkage and this alternative pales in comparison to the other alternatives being examined. However, the work to fully understand the impacts to people has not yet been done.

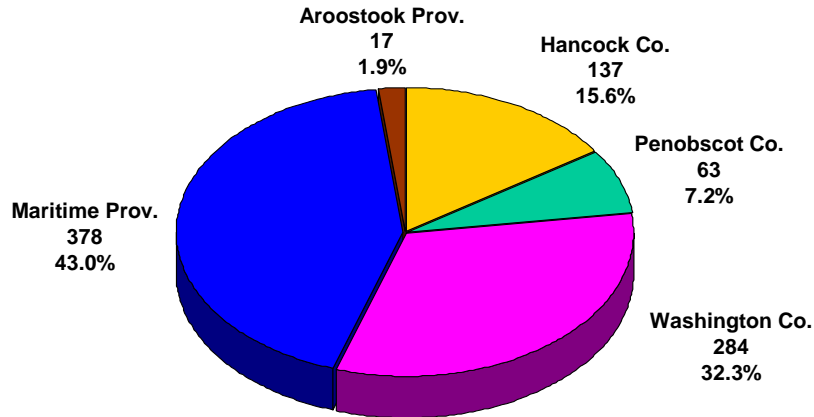
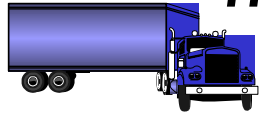
A gentleman from Holden asked the PAC not to give short shrift to the alternative proposed by the Town of Holden. Ray said the study team would look at the alternative to see if it is substantially different from something already analyzed. If it is, it will be studied fully.

The same gentleman said the Town of Holden worked very hard to design an alternative that utilizes existing major transmission lines as it has less impact to people and wetlands. Ray thanked the community of Holden for taking a proactive approach and going through so much work to come up with a reasonable alternative.

Ray concluded the meeting by wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday. The next meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2003. The location will be announced.

HEAVY TRUCKS

East End of Trip



HEAVY TRUCKS

West End of Trip

