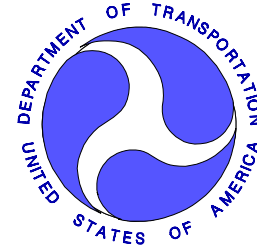


**Maine Department of
Transportation
I-395 / Route 9 Transportation
Study**

October 9, 2001
Interagency Meeting Minutes



The purpose of the interagency meeting was to present the range of reasonable alternatives considered for satisfying the study purpose and needs and preliminary screening to date.

This study has been presented on two occasions. In January 2001, MDOT presented an introduction to the study. In February 2001, the study purpose, needs, and natural and man-made features in the study area were presented. The agencies concurred with the purpose, needs, and features information.

Following several meetings to define the study purpose and needs, the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) was asked to help define broad corridors for alternatives for satisfying the purpose and needs. 45 possible alternatives including the no-build alternative were developed at the PAC meeting on May 2nd. The PAC provided their input, and modifications have been made to the original suggested alternatives. At the June 27th PAC meeting, following the initial development and evaluation of the alternatives by the study team, the number of alternatives was reduced to 8. Following suggestions from the PAC, the number of alternatives was increased to 12. Further evaluation by the study team lead to their recommendation that two of the new alternatives should no longer be considered for further evaluation, leaving 10 alternatives including the no-build alternative to be considered for further analysis.

At the PAC meeting in May 2001, the 45 possible alternatives were presented in the following groups:

- Alternative 1 – upgrade alternative
- Family of 2s – alternatives that run North and South
- Family of 3s – alternatives that run East and West
- Family of 4s – alternatives that run along Route 1A and Route 46

These alternatives were developed in accordance with MDOT's design criteria and screened based upon their impacts to the natural and man-made resources in the study area. At a minimum, one alternative from each family of alternatives was retained for further consideration. The results of the preliminary screening of alternatives are as follows:

- Alternative 1 it was dismissed from further consideration because it does not meet MDOT's design criteria for slopes. To meet MDOT's design criteria for slopes, substantial impacts would result.

- Alternative 2A was dismissed from further consideration because of residential displacements (8 vs. 2 and 3 for alternatives 2B and 2C, respectively) and the impact on deer wintering habitat (4.4 acres vs. 0 for alternatives 2B and 2C, respectively).
- Alternative 2C was dismissed for being the most intrusive of the family of 2s. To satisfy the purpose and needs, it would require 132 acres of land. (Part of Alternative 2C was later introduced back into the study). Alternative 2C would impact approximately 14.8 acres of the 100-year floodplain (vs. 10.6 and 10.5 acres for alternatives 2A and 2B, respectively).
- From the family of 4s, Alternative 4C and 4D were dismissed due to the impact to Waters of the U.S.. Alternative 4A was dismissed because it would require approximately 17 residential displacements.
- The family of 3s were further divided into two groups – east and west. As a minimum, MDOT retained the best component using the I-395 / Route 1A interchange and the best component representing an extension of the mainline of I-395.
- East: Components 3A – 3F
 - Component 3B was dismissed due to impact on to Waters of the U.S.
 - Components 3C and 3D were both dismissed as they would require using a section of Route 1A, creating an hourglass or bottleneck for traffic, and the number of residential displacements (4 and 6, respectively).
 - Component 3F was dismissed for being physically more intrusive (155 acres) than the other alternatives.
 - Components 3A and 3E were retained for further consideration as the best of the family of eastern 3s
- West: Components 3G – 3J
 - Components 3G and 3H were both dismissed due to impacts to Waters of the U.S.
 - Component 3J was dismissed due to impact on wetlands, hydric soils and deer habitat. This component would have resulted in greater habitat fragmentation than component 3I.
 - Component 3I was retained as the best western 3s.

After this initial evaluation by the study team, 8 possible alternatives were presented at the PAC meeting in June. Suggestions from members of the PAC increased the number of alternatives to 12; additional alternatives or components developed as a result of the discussions at this meeting included another upgrade alternative, 3E-2C, 3E-2C-2E, and 2D. Many people expressed concerns over noise and visibility of the proposed roadway. They would not want a roadway that would cut them off from the area that has been designated by the Town of Holden as undeveloped open space.

Further evaluation by the study team led to a dismissal of Alternative 2D because of impacts to Waters of the U.S., and the upgrade alternative originally

developed. It was proposed that the upgrade alternative originally consist of five lanes on Route 1A and four lanes on Route 46. This was presented at the PAC meeting in July. Alternative 1 was subsequently redesigned to consist of four lanes on Routes 1A and 46. Issues raised include:

- The proposed changes in the upgrade alternative led to concern over safety. PAC members thought a five-lane roadway with a dual center turning lane would result in fewer collisions than four lanes.
- Despite the least impact on hydric soils, Alternative 3E-2E is perceived to have the greatest impact on the quality of life for residents of Holden.

Bill Plumpton concluded with an update of the project website. He said the website was getting a lot of use and has been a good source of information for the public. He asked the committee for their comments and guidance on how the DOT should proceed with the study.

The agencies concurred with the range of alternatives considered, the development of the alternatives and the preliminary screening of alternatives to date. The agencies did not ask that other alternatives be considered.

Rick Bronson, a PAC member from Brewer was at the Interagency meeting. He addressed the committee concerning the following points:

- People are upset with the heavy truck traffic in the east/west direction. In North Brewer, the 100,000-pound trucks result in a constant rolling roadblock.
- Growing organized resistance from residents of Eaton Ridge, a fairly expensive housing development, and residents along Eastern Avenue. They are concerned about the impacts of a highway passing near their neighborhood.
- Rebuilding Route 1A and Route 46 still leaves traffic on Route 46. The PAC is concerned with the growing stream of traffic. Members of the PAC feel it would be more feasible to build one alternative that also fixes the traffic problem on Route 1A rather than two projects.

Ray Faucher told the agencies about the public informational meeting that was held in September. It was well attended and many good questions were asked. He asked for the agencies to comment on the work that has been done to date.

Jay Clement from ACOE asked about the development of the Bangor-Brewer bridge that had been proposed several years ago. Ray said it would be difficult to justify, given it would be a parallel facility to I-395. A bridge would only add to the traffic problems on I-95. Ray indicated that he had no direct knowledge of this other proposed bridge, but that the need for this study had been identified in the East/West Highway Study, a regional transportation study that was completed in 1997.

Bill added that with the request of the public, there is now a link to the East-West highway report on the project website.

Based on the presentation, Mr. Clement noted the proposed range of alternatives meet the purpose of the study. The focus from here on should be determining which alternatives are practicable. Alternatives, which are not feasible from an engineering standpoint or cause greater impact to environmental resources, should be dismissed. He asked the study team to examine the cost estimate and reminded them, in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, it would be difficult to convince the agencies if an alternative with the least environmental impact isn't identified as the preferred alternative.

With regards to progress, the agencies would like to see results from the traffic forecasting study.