

Bow-Concord I-93 Transportation Planning Study

Planning Group Meeting No. 4

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 25, 2006
DATE OF MEETING: April 18, 2006
LOCATION OF MEETING: Northeast Delta Dental Conference Center
Two Delta Drive, Concord, NH

ATTENDED BY:

Planning Group Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Patricia Sherman	Concord 2020
Rich Roach	Army Corps of Engineers
Bill Klubben	Town of Bow, Town Planner
Eric Anderson	Town of Bow, Selectmen
Tom Aspell	City of Concord, City Manager
Chris Northrop	NHOEP
Bill O'Donnell	FHWA
Carolyn Russell	NHDES
Laura Scott	Town of Pembroke, Town Planner
Tom Raffio	City of Concord, Citizen Representative
Steve Buckley	CNHRPC
Michael McDonough	Guilford Rail
Rusty McLear	Hampshire Hospitality
Howard Moffett	River Connection
Nan Hagen	Main Street Concord
Mickey McIver	Concord Area Transit
Bill Norton	Concord 2020
Sharon Wason	CNHRPC
Don Lyford	NHDOT

Others

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Bill Hauser	NHDOT
Mark Hemmerlein	NHDOT
Ansel Sanborn	NHDOT
Bill Oldenburg	NHDOT
Subramanian Sharma	NHDOT
Stephen Henninger	City of Concord, Asst. City Planner

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Roger Hawk	City of Concord, Community Development Director
Nick Alexander	CNHRPC
Deb Stohrer	Concord 2020
Liz Durfee Hengen	Historic Preservation Consultant
Bill Flynn	Landscape Architect
Steve Whitman	Moderator, Jeff H Taylor & Associates
Jed Merrow	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Gene McCarthy	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.

MEETING MINUTES:

The Agenda for the meeting is attached and the meeting generally followed the Agenda. These minutes are formatted to follow the Agenda Items.

A. Welcome

Steve Whitman opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending.

B Approval of Minutes

The minutes from Planning Group Meeting No. 3 were approved without comment. The approved minutes will be made available on the project website.

C. Review Progress

Steve mentioned that a revised Planning Group list was included with the agenda. Chris Northrop is now the representative of NHOEP and there is a vacancy for NH Fish and Game.

Steve presented the Project Problem Statement and the Project Goal Statement. He commented that consensus was reached on both at the last meeting in record time. The Statements are included in the Meeting 3 minutes and are posted on the project website. These will be living documents that can be revised later if deemed necessary.

D. Tying NEPA and CSS Together

Bill Hauser, NHDOT Administrator for the Bureau of Environment, made a brief presentation on how the NEPA process fits with the implementation of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). Bill stated that this project would be breaking new ground on how projects are progressed. The traditional approach had a project enter the Ten Year Plan from one of many ways and then the NHDOT would develop alternatives to solve a perceived problem. When it became time to write a purpose and need it would become apparent that the purpose of the project was not completely clear. This made it difficult to determine if the alternatives developed truly met the purpose and need of the project.

The CSS process engages a stakeholders group like this Planning Group to get a better understanding of the problems and goals of the project. Stakeholders shape the project so that it is clear whether an alternative addresses the true needs.

Bill mentioned that two key products of Part A are a Purpose and Need Statement for the project and a Range of Reasonable Alternatives. The Purpose and Need will be developed from the Problem and Goal statements. The alternatives to be advanced will be only those alternatives that are reasonable and the others will be discarded.

E. Screening Criteria Discussion

Steve Whitman opened by saying that many good comments were received and incorporated into the latest version of the criteria. He opened it up for discussion and Tom Aspell suggested several revisions. He recommended that the Access section be edited to include access to I-89 and I-393 in addition to I-93. He recommended adding “to and from the Merrimack River” under Aesthetics and add the Opportunity Corridor Master Plan to the Community Vision criteria for Concord.

Laura Scott questioned the need for two criteria under Community Vision for each of the communities. It was explained that this was done based upon comments to a previous version of the criteria. The discussion of this subject concluded with a consensus that each community should have a single criterion in Community Vision.

Carolyn Russell asked about the land use issues raised at last year’s Growth Forum and whether they could be included in the criteria. Gene answered by saying some of this is covered under Mobility but that much of that discussion must be reflected in land use planning at the local level.

Eric Anderson questioned whether mobility for tourists should be limited to them getting “through” the region. All agreed that it should say “to and through the region”.

Sharon Wason questioned why under Economic Vitality there are two lines for each community. It was explained that this was done based upon comments to a previous version of the criteria. Sharon recommended adding “existing” before the first set of criteria to clarify the point.

Mike McDonough recommended that under Transportation Choice a criterion should be added that evaluates the integration of all modes of freight transport.

Laura asked whether all criteria are equally weighted. Gene stated that the screening would be qualitative in nature and not quantitative. The Category Score is not a sum of the individual scores but an overall score for the category.

Steve Whitman mentioned that the criteria can be revised at any time, but could all live with it? All present agreed that they could live with the criteria based upon comments heard at the meeting.

F. Alternatives Brainstorming

The alternatives discussion began with a presentation from Gene McCarthy on known alternatives and components. Gene presented a list and then described each one. The list presented was as follows:

Alternatives

- No Build
- Interstate 93
 - Four Lanes
 - Six Lanes
 - Eight Lanes
 - Shift to East Side of River
 - Shift West
 - Reversible Lanes
- Opportunity Corridor Concept
- I-89 to Route 106 Connector
- Passenger Rail Service
- 1992 Feasibility Study

Components

- New Exit 16-1/2 on I-93
(at Sewalls Falls Rd)
- New Exit 11-1/2 on I-93
- New Exit 2-1/2 on I-393
(at Portsmouth St)
- Exit 14 Grade Reversal
- Langley Parkway (NW Bypass)
- Storrs & Commercial Streets
Expansion
- Expanded Bus Service
- Access to Merrimack River
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

A question was asked about the limits of the project. Gene stated that the project limits are along I-93 from south of I-89 to north of Exit 15 and I-393. It includes Exit 1 on I-89 and Exit 1 on I-393. He mentioned that projects, components, improvements, etc. that have the potential to affect these limits can be considered. Projects that are programmed are already assumed to be in place by the design year of 2030.

There was a great deal of discussion and recommendations. Below is a list of additional alternatives and components that were recommended for consideration.

- Consider a five lane I-93 (Four lanes with a fifth reversible lane)
- Move the river
- Place I-93 underground
- Depress I-93 and have Exit 14 go over

- A connector from I-93 south of I-89 to Route 106
- A connector from Exit 12 to Route 106
- Northwest Bypass (Langley Parkway)
- A connector from I-89 to I-393 not on Route 106
- Close Exit 14
- Fix Exit 1 on I-89
- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-93
- Separate through and local traffic (vertical separation?)
- Place I-89 to Route 106 connector underground through Garvin's Falls
- Connect all pieces of bicycle paths
- Light rail in the median of I-93

There was additional discussion concerning how the Planning Group will develop alternatives. Steve and Gene proposed conducting some preliminary transportation modeling to help the group package alternatives. The idea is to use the June meeting to develop alternative packages that can be evaluated by the Project Team during the summer. The team recognizes the difficulty in creating packages without understanding how a component will perform. The preliminary model runs would give the planning group some information on the performance of components so that alternative packages can be developed.

A question was asked concerning traffic that comes from beyond the region. It was explained that the model currently gets information from the existing statewide model. The statewide model is currently being updated and should be available for use by this project in the summer.

Tom Aspell asked about the magic "X" number that will define what can and cannot be done. Ansel responded by saying there is no such number. In the past, we have used models to predict traffic on a facility 20 years after the expected opening of a construction project. The goal was to find solutions for the project that would convey the predicted traffic at that time in the future to meet a standard, a specific level of service [congestion measure] for a particular design hour [normally the 30th highest traffic hour of the year]. Today, we predict the need to move people and goods but acknowledge that the demand can be affected through a mix of actions: an increase in supply of transportation options, demand management actions, changes in expected land uses, and alterations to the highway system. Vehicular modeling and level of service computations inform, but do not drive, the process as they represent only one of the screening criteria.

Howard Moffett mentioned that I-93 needs to be more compatible with the communities as it passes through, but we cannot forget that this is an interstate corridor and that it does need to move traffic.

Rusty mentioned that access in Concord is important to the residents north of Concord. Most residents and business people to the north travel to Concord to shop, recreate and conduct business.

Bill O'Donnell mentioned that it would be helpful to have No Build traffic numbers for the public meetings. Gene stated that the goal would be to have No Build traffic numbers for 2000 and 2030 for the public meetings.

Howard asked whether the Exit 14 Grade Reversal included eliminating ramps. Gene stated that it could include four ramps or two ramps.

G. Public Meeting Discussion

Steve presented the three sessions for the Public Meetings. There will be a morning session in Pembroke on May 18, an evening session in Bow on May 18, and a Saturday morning session in Concord on May 20. Laura mentioned that the time in Pembroke should be 7am to 9am. Howard suggested extending the Concord session to noon to capture more people.

The format of the workshops will be a short presentation on the Problem Statement, Goal Statement and Screening Criteria. The alternatives and components will be presented and then a group discussion will take place about alternatives. These will be one-hour workshops and there will be multiple workshops for each session.

Planning Group members were encouraged to attend and participate. In addition, members should speak to their constituents and encourage them to participate.

H. Next Meeting

There will be no Planning Group Meeting in May. The next meeting will be on June 13.

There are some members who are having difficulty with the early start of the meetings. An e-mail poll will be conducted to determine the best time for all members.

I. Adjournment

Submitted by,
Gene McCarthy, P.E.
McFarland-Johnson, Inc.

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April 18, 2006
Tuesday, 3:30 p.m.

Northeast Delta Dental Conference Center
Two Delta Drive, Concord, NH

AGENDA

- A. Welcome
- B. Approval of Minutes
- C. Review Progress
- D. Tying NEPA and CSS Together
- E. Screening Criteria Discussion
- F. Alternatives Brainstorming
- G. Public Meeting Discussion
- H. Next Meeting
- I. Adjourn

Bow Concord Interstate 93 Transportation Planning Study

Planning Group

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Mike Donovan	City of Concord, Mayor
Tom Aspell	City of Concord, City Manager
Nan Hagen	Main Street Concord
Philip Hastings	City of Concord Citizen Member
Bill McGonagle	City of Concord Citizen Member
Tom Raffio	City of Concord Citizen Member
Steve Buckley	CNHRPC Executive Committee
Sharon Wason	CNHRPC, Executive Director
Bill Norton	Concord 2020
Pat Sherman	Concord 2020
Mickey McIver	Concord Area Transit
Harry Blunt	Concord Trailways
Nancy Girard	Conservation Law Foundation
Bill O'Donnell	Federal Highway Administration
George Thayer	Guilford Rail System
Patrick Miller	Jordan Institute
Terry Johnson	Livable Walkable Communities
Peter Dearness	New England Southern Railroad
Alice Desouza	NH Division of Travel and Tourism Development
Carolyn Russell	NH Department of Environmental Services
Don Lyford	NH Department of Transportation
Vacant	NH Fish & Game
Jim McConaha	NH Historic Preservation Office
Chris Northrop	NH Office of Energy and Planning
Rusty McLear	Private Sector Tourism
Howard Moffett	River Connection
Will Abbott	Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Bill Klubben	Town of Bow, Director of Planning & Econ. Devel.
Eric Anderson	Town of Bow, Selectman
Laura Scott	Town of Pembroke, Director of Planning & Econ. Devel.
Brian Tufts	Town of Pembroke, Selectman
Rich Roach	US Army Corp. of Engineers
Rosemary Monahan	US Environmental Protection Agency
Bill Neidermyer	US Fish & Wildlife