

Bow-Concord I-93 Transportation Planning Study

Planning Group Meeting No. 5

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: June 19, 2006
DATE OF MEETING: June 13, 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>
Rich Roach	Army Corps of Engineers
Bill Klubben	Town of Bow, Town Planner
Eric Anderson	Town of Bow, Selectmen
Mike Donovan	City of Concord, Mayor
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
Nancy Girard	CLF
Howard Moffett	River Connection
Harry Blunt	Concord Trailways
Nan Hagen	Main Street Concord
Mickey McIver	Concord Area Transit
Patrick Miller	Jordan Institute
Will Abbott	Forest Society
Sharon Wason	CNHRPC
Rosemary Monahan	EPA
Don Lyford	NHDOT

Others

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Mark Hemmerlein	NHDOT
Ansel Sanborn	NHDOT
John Butler	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
Steve Lawe	Resource Systems Group, Inc.
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. 4 were approved without comment. The approved minutes will be made available on the project website.

C. Review Progress

Steve mentioned the progress that has been made on the Problem Statement, Goal Statement and Screening Criteria. He mentioned that the public workshops were held in May with many good ideas coming from those who attended. The turnout was not great but those who did come were very engaged.

D. Transportation Model Overview

Steve Lawe of Resource Systems Group, Inc. (RSG) gave an overview of the transportation model being used for the project. He began by describing the differences between a mental model and a computer model. The mental model is how each of us decides to travel for each individual trip. The computer model takes all of these mental models and decides how they will all interact with one another. Computers are good at the complex computation of many mental models.

Steve continued by describing two aspects of model forecasting, structure and assumptions. The model structure refers to the transportation network and how it behaves under current conditions. The assumptions determine how the network will perform in some future year based upon projections in population and employment. There are several dynamics that take place during a forecast model run. With increased congestion on a roadway, drivers will choose different roads, a different location or a different mode. With increased capacity,

vehicles will be drawn to the road, thus increasing its auto use. More housing and employment causes more person and vehicle trips and the location of housing may increase trip lengths.

After describing the model fundamentals, Steve described the assumptions that are included in the model for the Year 2030. He presented the projections that have been determined for each community in the Central NH Region. The population projections assume a 40% increase by 2030, with 45% of the people living in Concord. The employment projections assume an 85% increase by 2030, with 75% of the jobs in Concord. This breakdown means that people will be living outside of Concord, but commuting to Concord for work.

Finally, Steve mentioned that the model projections are for the Central NH Region only. The external growth was assumed to be 40% based upon growth information received from the NH Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) and the NH Department of Transportation (DOT).

Tom Aspell asked if issues like gas prices and second shift workers are modeled. Steve stated that certain items are and can be modeled, but some are not. Gas prices are not modeled explicitly, but can be taken into account through assumptions about their effect.

Steve Buckley asked if the growth numbers are based on historical trends. The answer was that the population and employment projections are based upon trends, but were also evaluated for reasonableness with each community.

Patrick Miller asked if the land use assumes today's guidelines and regulations (business as usual). Steve answered yes.

Steve Whitman asked if there were any questions or comments. He mentioned that the model would be used to evaluate alternatives and wanted to be sure everyone understood the information that had been presented. There were no additional questions.

E. Preliminary Model Results

Steve Lawe began by stating that six corridor-level scenarios were evaluated, :

- No Build
- I-93 widening to 8 lanes
- I-93 widening to 6 lanes
- Local street investment
- TDM/Transit investment
- Route 106 Connector

The scenarios were based upon the design hour, that is the 30th highest hour. There were no changes in the future land use assumptions for each scenario and they were only corridor-level alternatives, where no details were considered. The specific information for each scenario can be found in the presentation that is posted on the project website.

First, a comparison of I-93 from 2000 to the 2030 No Build was presented. The conclusion for 2030 is that with the assumed future employment and housing and without any investment in

the transportation infrastructure, there will be considerable congestion in the area. Travel times along I-93 increase between 41% and 67%. More local trips must use local streets because there is no capacity for them on I-93. A description and comparison of internal, internal-external and external trips was given. For the purposes of presentation, two geographic boundaries were selected for showing trip making; those within Concord and those within the Central NH Region. Trips within and through the Concord area were presented and trips within and through the Central NH Region were presented

Next, a comparison of I-93 from a four lane interstate in 2000 and a four, six or eight lane interstate in 2030 was presented. The comparison shows that to have similar travel times in 2030 with an investment only on I-93, an eight-lane section would be required. It shows that six lanes work fairly well, but travel times would increase for some trips.

The comparison for the TDM/Transit and the Local Road Scenarios indicate that they could not accommodate the projected congestion on their own. They do provide some relief that could be combined with other options to facilitate the demand. Steve felt that the Local Road scenario wasn't given the best chance to perform due to the complexities associated with adding roadway capacity in an existing downtown grid system and that there are opportunities to improve it.

The Route 106 Connector was presented and the results indicate that about 2,050 vehicles would use the connector in the peak hour. Many of these vehicles now use Route 3/Manchester Street to access I-93 and would use the connector if it were built. There is about a 7.5% reduction of traffic on I-93 due to the connector. This provides some relief, but travel times are not much better than the No Build.

The final slide compared all of the scenarios and how they handled the projected traffic in 2030. The 8-lane I-93 would have a good level of service while the 6-lane would have a fair level. The remaining scenarios would all have a poor level. The results indicate that a six lane I-93 could perform well if other components were included with the widening. The assumed growth would likely not be accommodated with the current 4-lane I-93 even if other components were constructed.

Rich Roach stated that it sounds like the 8 lane I-93 works well. Steve Lawe stated that it draws traffic because of the amount of capacity and that congestion on adjoining streets is also reduced. Steve also noted that other scenarios such as the 6 lane I-93 will also provide congestion relief.

Patrick Miller asked if scenarios could be blended. The answer was yes and later in the meeting this will be done.

Tom Aspell asked whether there was some performance requirement for alternatives. Bill O'Donnell responded that typically a 20-year horizon is used in terms of capacity. He stated that many roads cannot meet this requirement and there is no rule of thumb from FHWA.

F. Develop Alternatives

Gene McCarthy began by explaining that the project team would like to hear from the Planning Group about packages of alternatives that should be considered. He presented the City of Concord Opportunity Corridor Concept as a good example of the type of package that should be considered. A package should include an idea for I-93 and other components that could improve the transportation system. The packages could include components that are not transportation in nature, but reflect community or environmental goals.

Some of the ideas that were mentioned include:

- Consider 4 lanes on each side of the river with alternating exits
- Consider the Opportunity Corridor Option
- Consider the Route 106 Connector with no increased capacity on I-93, but include other components to make it function better
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle access for all build alternatives
- Enhance river access for all build alternatives
- Package the Opportunity Corridor option except use a 5-lane reversible lane on I-93
- Package the Opportunity Corridor option plus TM and compact land use
- Package the Opportunity Corridor option plus Route 106 Connector and Exit 2½ on I-393
- A local road improvement package with no increased capacity on I-93
- Interchange improvements that are not the Opportunity Corridor configurations
- Assume TM for all build alternatives
- Consider all three Route 106 Connector options to see which performs the best
- Package a Route 106 Connector with an Exit 11 ½
- Consider An Exit 11 ½ with a re-configured Exit 1 on I-89
- Consider an Opportunity Corridor “Lite” that includes the transportation improvements without the lowering and shift of I-93 or the connection to the river
- Safety Improvement Alternative, no additional capacity
- Update of the 1992 Feasibility Study Concept
- Preserve the rail corridor for all build alternatives
- Consider Exit 16 ½ on I-93
- Consider a package including TM, Rail, Bus, the NW Bypass, Route 106 Connector and the Opportunity Corridor.
- Consider Land Use changes

The discussion concluded with the understanding that a list of alternative packages would be distributed to the Planning Group for review before any additional studies are completed.

G. Summertime Activities

Steve Whitman explained that over the summer the project team would be developing the alternatives in more detail and performing additional model runs. Preliminary screening will be performed by the project team and brought to the Planning Group in the fall for discussion and confirmation. He also mentioned that the project team might use community events such as Market Days in Concord and Public Access Television to inform the public on project progress.

H. Next Meeting

The next Planning Group Meeting will be in September. The group will be notified of the specific date during the summer.

I. Adjournment

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

Bow-Concord I-93 Transportation Planning Study

Planning Group Meeting No. 5
June 13, 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. Transportation Model Overview
- E. Preliminary Model Results
- F. Develop Alternatives
- G. Summertime Activities
- H. Next Meeting
- I. Adjourn