

Bow-Concord I-93 Transportation Planning Study

Planning Group Meeting Nos. 6, 7 8 & 9

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: December 20, 2006

DATES OF MEETINGS: October 4, 2006 November 1, 2006
October 18, 2006 December 6, 2006

LOCATIONS OF MEETINGS: NH Department of Transportation (10/4)
Horseshoe Pond Community Resource Center (10/18)
Northeast Delta Dental Conference Center (11/1 & 12/6)

ATTENDED BY:

Planning Group Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>10/4</u>	<u>10/18</u>	<u>11/1</u>	<u>12/6</u>
Rich Roach	Army Corps of Engineers	X			X
Bill Klubben	Town of Bow, Town Planner	X		X	X
Eric Anderson	Town of Bow, Selectmen		X	X	
Mike Donovan	City of Concord, Mayor		X		X
Tom Aspell	City of Concord, City Manager	X	X	X	X
Bill McGonagle	City of Concord, Planning Board	X		X	
Rusty McLear	Lakes Region Tourism	X	X		X
Tom Raffio	Concord Chamber of Commerce		X		
Chris Northrop	NHOEP	X	X		X
Bill O'Donnell	FHWA	X	X	X	X
Carolyn Russell	NHDES		X		X
Gino Infascelli	NHDES	X	X		X
Brian Tufts	Town of Pembroke, Selectmen	X			X
Laura Scott	Town of Pembroke, Town Planner	X	X	X	X
Bill Norton	Concord 2020	X	X	X	X
Dan Lynch	NH Fish & Game		X	X	X
Howard Moffett	River Connection	X	X	X	
Nan Hagen	Main Street Concord	X		X	X
Philip Hastings	City of Concord, Citizen	X			X
Mickey Mclver	Concord Area Transit	X			X
Jim Sudak	Concord Area Transit		X		
Maura Leahy	Jordan Institute	X			X
Will Abbott	Forest Society		X		X
Mike McDonough	Pan Am Railways		X	X	
Stephen Buckley	CNHRPC	X	X	X	
Sharon Wason	CNHRPC	X			
Nick Alexander	CNHRPC		X	X	X
Rosemary Monahan	EPA		X	X	
Don Lyford	NHDOT	X	X	X	X
Bill Neidermyer	US Fish and Wildlife Service				X
Harry Blunt	Concord Trailways				X

Others

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>10/4</u>	<u>10/18</u>	<u>11/1</u>	<u>12/6</u>
Ansel Sanborn	NHDOT	X	X		
Bill Oldenburg	NHDOT	X		X	X
Bill Hauser	NHDOT	X	X	X	X
John Butler	NHDOT		X		
S. Sharma	NHDOT	X		X	
Roger Hawk	City of Concord, Community Development Director	X	X	X	X
Stephen Henninger	City of Concord, Asst. City Planner	X	X	X	X
Deb Stohrer	Concord 2020	X	X	X	X
Tom Irwin	CLF				X
Liz Durfee Hengen	Historic Preservation Consultant	X		X	X
Bill Flynn	Landscape Architect	X	X		
Steve Whitman	Moderator, Jeff H Taylor & Ass.	X	X	X	X
Steve Lawe	Resource Systems Group, Inc.	X	X	X	
Jed Merrow	McFarland-Johnson, Inc	X	X	X	X
Gene McCarthy	McFarland-Johnson, Inc	X	X	X	X

MEETING MINUTES:

The Agenda for each of the meetings was the same. There was either a brief update or no update followed by the screening of alternatives. These minutes present the original update followed by the detailed screening discussions.

A. Welcome

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

B Approval of Minutes

The minutes from Planning Group Meeting No. 5 were approved without comment at Meeting No. 6. Steve announced that each of the screening meetings would be summarized in one set of minutes.

C. Review Progress

Steve mentioned the progress that has been made on the Problem Statement, Goal Statement, Screening Criteria and Potential Alternatives. He presented a revised scoring system for the screening that uses color-coded dots instead of the "+" and "-" system that had been used. The project team felt that this visual system would be more effective. Steve mentioned that the project team had performed the initial screening on the Potential Alternatives and that the remainder of the meeting/meetings would focus on confirmation of the screening. He made special note that the traffic results that would be presented for each alternative are based upon the growth assumptions in the model. These assumptions were

determined in consultation with each community in the region and represent significant population and employment growth for the region and state.

D. Alternative Screening

Meeting 6 - October 4

Gene McCarthy began the screening discussion by explaining the initial screening conducted by the project team. He explained that the team developed results for twelve of the fifteen categories for each alternative. The team felt it was not appropriate for them to prepare screening for the Community Vision, Quality of Life, and Support categories. Gene explained that for each alternative he would present the results of the modeling (if applicable), ask for comments on the initial screening performed, and then ask the group to complete the screening for the three remaining categories. Finally, consensus will be sought as to whether an alternative is reasonable or unreasonable.

No Build: Gene stated that the No Build Alternative is the do nothing scenario that is the baseline for comparison. Under this alternative, no new facilities are proposed as part of this project. Other planned projects are assumed. The modeling for No Build indicates a great deal of congestion on I-93 due to excess demand. This results in trips diverting to local streets due to the congestion on I-93.

The initial screening indicates that transportation would be degraded under the No Build. Although impacts to resources would be avoided, there is no potential for enhancements either. The only mark in the “green” (reasonable) column was for Implementation, since it has no cost and requires nothing to be done. The only comment on the initial screening came from Tom Aspell who disagreed with the neutral score for Residential Neighborhoods. He felt, and the group agreed, that neighborhoods would be degraded by the increase in traffic from those vehicles that must detour around I-93.

The group then completed the remaining categories. No Build received mostly low scores for Community Vision, with a category score of half red because it was not compatible with local plans. Similarly, No Build received low scores for Quality of Life, with a category score of half red. Support for No Build was low, with a category score of half red. Although the consensus was that No Build is unreasonable, it will be carried forward because it is required for NEPA evaluation as the baseline for comparison.

Travel Demand Management: Gene explained that Travel Demand Management (TDM) aims to reduce demand for transportation rather than supplying more capacity for transportation. This is accomplished by ride sharing, alternate modes (bus, rail, etc.), vanpools, shifted work hours, toll pricing, tele-commuting, etc. The modeling for TDM assumed a 10% reduction in trips, a generous assumption. The results show that there is sufficient demand to make up for this reduction. The congestion on I-93 is not reduced measurably through TDM.

The initial screening indicates that transportation would be degraded with only TDM. The screening is similar to the No Build since no physical improvements are proposed. Although impacts to resources would be avoided, there is no potential for enhancements either. The Implementation was initially shown as a half green. Comments were made that TDM is not

easy to implement and it was agreed that this should be half red. The same comment concerning Residential Neighborhoods was made, as for the No Build alternative.

TDM received mostly low scores for Community Vision, with a category score of half red because it was not compatible with local plans. TDM received low scores for Quality of Life, with a category score of half red. Support for TDM was low, with a category score of half red. Although the consensus was that TDM is unreasonable as a stand alone alternative, it will be carried forward because it might be applied in conjunction with other alternatives.

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 1: Gene explained that this option is based on the Opportunity Corridor Concept developed by the City of Concord. However, under this project it includes potential improvements to I-93 from I-89 to I-393 along with the interchanges and exit ramp upgrades. It includes all of the components of the Opportunity Corridor plan including; six lanes on I-93, shifting and lowering I-93, reconfiguring Exit 14, Storrs Street extensions, multi-modal center, river access, etc. The modeling for this alternative shows it operates well. The six lanes on I-93 seem sufficient. There are some ramp movements that have very high volumes.

The initial screening for this alternative indicates relatively high (green) scores for most categories. The transportation categories all show benefits from this alternative. Implementation is shown half red due to the cost of this alternative and the disruption that would occur when shifting and lowering I-93. The only comment was again on the neutral score for Residential Neighborhoods. It was felt that the added capacity on I-93 would reduce traffic on local streets and this is an improvement. The score was raised to half green.

This alternative received mostly high scores for Community Vision, with a category score of half green. It received high scores for Quality of Life because it includes many components to improve the lives of those in the region, i.e. access to the river. It received a full green overall score. Support for this alternative was also very high and it received an overall full green score. The consensus from the group is that Option 1 is a reasonable alternative.

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 2: Gene explained that this option is identical to Option 1 except that I-93 would have 5 lanes instead of six where the center lane would be reversible. He explained that these reversible configurations are most effective in situations where there is a direction peak in traffic volume. The additional lane is used to accommodate this directional peak, where the middle lane handles trips to work in the am and trips home in the pm. However, I-93 in Bow and Concord does not have a directional split. Because Concord is the job center, trips come into Concord in the morning from all directions and leave to all directions in the evening. The model run performed for the pm peak had about 55% of the traffic northbound and about 45% of the traffic southbound. Also, reversible lanes are not necessarily less expensive because there are costs for additional equipment and on-going maintenance and operations costs for this equipment.

It was concluded that the screening for Option 2 would be identical to Option 1 with a few notable exceptions. The Implementation for Option 2 is full red as opposed to half red for Option 1 because of the cost for operating the reversible lane. Support for Option 2 was half green as opposed to full green for Option 1. The consensus from the group is that Option 2 is unreasonable. The group felt that six lanes were more appropriate given that traffic on I-93 is not directional. The idea of reversing traffic twice daily did not appeal to the group. Also, the construction cost was discussed in more detail. The initial cost to construct five lanes with a

reversible lane would not necessarily be less than constructing six lanes. The reversible lane requires a minimum width as well as barriers to isolate it from the other lanes. The long term operations and maintenance costs for the reversible lane lead many to feel it was unreasonable.

Route 106 Connector Option 1: This alternative proposes a connector roadway from I-89 to the intersection of US 3 and NH 106 in Pembroke. This would be a limited access roadway that would pass through but not provide additional access to Garvin Falls. Gene explained that this alternative was modeled to make it as attractive as possible. The model assumed a four lane section so that capacity would not be restricted; it assumed a full interchange at I-89/I-93, and a major signalized intersection at Route 3/106. Gene presented a figure showing about 2300 vehicles per hour (vph) using the connector during the pm peak hour. The modeling shows that many of these trips are currently using Manchester Street and Exit 13 to access I-93. Volumes on Manchester Street decreased by 25% in each direction and volumes on I-93 decreased south of Exit 13. However, volumes on I-93 north of Exit 13 did not change measurably, nor did the volume on NH 106 northbound. The results indicate that the Route 106 Connector is very successful in reducing volume on Manchester Street but has little effect on I-93 traffic north of Exit 13.

The initial screening for this alternative indicated that it was not effective in dealing with mobility and access issues. It also received a full red for Historic and Archeological Resources because Garvin Falls is sensitive for archeological resources. It also received a full red for Natural Resources because of the sensitivity of river crossings and impacts to undeveloped lands. There were no revisions to the initial screening for this alternative.

The group then completed the remaining categories. It received mostly high scores for Community Vision, with a category score of half green because it is compatible with local plans. A Route 106 connector is mentioned in the Master Plans of Concord, Bow and Pembroke. It received a neutral score for Quality of Life. Support for Route 106 Connector Option 1 was mixed. The individual communities scored in high (full Green), the region scored in mostly neutral (yellow), and the resource agencies and groups scored in low (full red). It received an overall category score of half red for Support. After a constructive discussion, the consensus from the group is that Route 106 Connector Option 1 is an unreasonable alternative. This conclusion was reached because this option did little to benefit travel on I-93, the primary goal of the project.

Route 106 Connector Option 2: This alternative proposes a new Exit 11 ½ on I-93 and a connector roadway from this exit on I-93 to the intersection of US 3 and NH 106 in Pembroke. This would be a limited access roadway. Gene explained that Option 2 was modeled in the same way as Option 1. Gene presented a figure showing about 1900 vehicles per hour (vph) using the connector during the pm peak hour. This volume is less than the volume for Option 1. As with Option 1, many of these trips are currently using Manchester Street and Exit 13 to access I-93. These volumes also decreased but not as much as with Option 1. The volumes on I-93 north of Exit 13 did not change measurably, nor did the volume on NH 106 northbound. The results indicate that the Route 106 Connector Option 2 is successful in reducing volume on Manchester Street but has little effect on I-93 traffic north of Exit 13.

The initial screening for Option 2 is similar to Option 1, except the Historic and Archeological Resources and Natural Environment. Both are less problematic for Option 2 because the

connector does not pass through Garvin Falls. It received a half red for these two categories. No revisions were made to the initial screening.

The remaining screening for Option 2 was identical to that for Option 1. For the same reasons as Option 1, Route 106 Connector Option 2 was deemed an unreasonable alternative by the group.

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 4: Gene explained that Option 4 includes all of the components of Option 1 but adds Exit 2 ½ and the Route 106 Connector. Under this option, I-93 south of Exit 13 performs better than Opportunity Corridor Option 1 because many of these trips would be using the Route 106 Connector. The traffic volumes on I-93 north of Exit 13 do not change measurably. Exit 2 ½ does attract traffic but it did not reduce the volume on Exit 14. It appears that vehicles currently using Exit 3 on I-393 are the ones diverting to Exit 2 ½.

The initial screening for Option 4 was a combination of Opportunity Corridor Option 1 and Route 106 Connector Option 1. Option 4 received high scores (full green) for Access, Mobility and Safety, but low scores (full red) for Historic and Archeological Resources, Implementation and Natural Environment.

The group began discussing the Community Vision category. Several group members felt this alternative would have strong support because it addresses mobility on I-93 and provides access to Route 106 that is mentioned in the master plans of each of the communities. The question was raised as to why this alternative would propose a Route 106 Connector when the Opportunity Corridor portion addresses the stated problem and goal. At this point in the discussion a quorum of attendees did not exist and it was decided to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Meeting 7 - October 18

An update of the screening from the previous meeting was presented. Several specific questions were raised concerning scores from the previous meeting. Many of the questions related to the overall Community Vision score. It was explained that the score reflects each community's score and not just one. After some discussion, all of the conclusions reached were confirmed. The only revision that was made to the previous screening was to the Implementation score for Opportunity Corridor Option 2; it was changed to full red from half red.

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 4 (cont'd): The group continued the discussion of this alternative. A question was asked why the Route 106 connector through Garvin Falls was used rather than the connection from I-93 and an Exit 11 ½. This would seem to have fewer environmental problems. Laura Scott mentioned that there would be major socio-economic impacts in Pembroke from that alignment.

In regard to the environmental concerns at Garvin Falls, Steve Whitman read an e-mail message from Bill Neidermyer of the US Fish and Wildlife Service; it read:

“You have asked for an update to our position on an alternative to the Bow-Concord I-93 project. You are correct in acknowledging that the Fish and Wildlife Service is opposed to a new river crossing at Bow Junction. The land on the eastern bank of the Merrimack River at this location is a large undeveloped tract that is bordered on three sides by the river. For

this section of the river it is uncommon to have such a large isolated tract of land. These characteristics enhance its wildlife value. As you are aware the wintering bald eagle population along the Merrimack River is expanding. As the trees on the parcel in question mature this area will become more attractive to eagles. The Service is in negotiation with PSNH on the relicense of the Merrimack River hydroelectric project. At this point the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has ordered PSNH to place in conservation easements their lands along the river including this parcel. I hope this helps to clarify our position.”

A statement was made that the land to be placed in conservation would only be a 200-foot buffer along the river and that there would be over 400 acres of developable land remaining. Gene stated that the land use in the model does not include development at Garvin Falls. Tom Aspell stated that the City would not want a Route 106 Connector if it did not provide access to this developable land at Garvin Falls. A statement was made that the Route 106 Connector would not address the future congestion on I-93. Mike Donovan pointed out that it would improve I-93 south of Exit 13. Gene confirmed this statement but also stated that the current modeling did not include development at Garvin Falls. The scenario including the Route 106 Connector, access to Garvin Falls and development at Garvin Falls would change the dynamics of the modeling.

The question as to whether Option 4 meets the purpose and need was discussed. Several felt that by improving a portion of I-93 it meets the purpose and need. Others felt that because Option 1 meets the purpose and need without the Route 106 Connector, the Connector should not be considered. Several felt that it was reasonable to carry it forward for further consideration. Rusty McLear said that if it is dead due to environmental concerns, why study it further.

Will Abbot asked if the widening of Manchester Street was studied as a way to provide sufficient access to Garvin Falls. City representatives stated that it has been studied but would not provide enough access to develop all of Garvin Falls. Mike Donovan stated that Exit 13 would need to be rebuilt to accommodate increased traffic. Tom Aspell stated that Garvin Falls would eventually develop and it would be prudent to plan accordingly.

Other statements/discussions:

- The transportation benefits of Option 4 do not meet the purpose and need.
- Rusty McLear stated that there are no benefits to the Lakes Region unless the connector goes all the way to Exit 3 on I-393.
- Suggest talking to the federal and state agencies to get their input.
- Does the purpose of the project include economic development? If so, cumulative impacts would need to be determined.
- Who owns Garvin Falls (mostly owned by PSNH).
- Laura Scott did not support changing the goal of the project to support a particular alternative.

It was clarified at this time that the current land use did not account for the development of the 400+ acres. It was decided that Option 4 should be re-defined to include the development of Garvin Falls. Option 4 would include the Route 106 Connector, but access to Garvin Falls would also be assumed. The previous versions of the 106 Connector assumed a limited access facility with no access points at Garvin Falls. A new model run would be performed

assuming the development. The City agreed to provide the employment and housing data for the development. The revised modeling would be prepared for the next meeting.

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 5: Option 5 is a “Lite” version of Option 1. It includes all of the land use and transportation capacity components of Option 1, i.e. six lanes on I-93, Storrs Street expansion, etc. However, shifting and lowering I-93 is not included. The multi-modal center and river access are also not included. The modeling for Option 5 is the same as for Option 1, where it operates well. The six lanes on I-93 seem sufficient.

The initial screening for Option 5 is similar to Option 1 but there are differences. The Residential Neighborhood score was upgraded as with Option 1 because of the reduced congestion on local streets. Notable differences include a lower score for Public Health due to the lack of river access and multi-modal center. The screening by the group for Community Vision, Support and Transportation Choice are lower because of the loss of many components viewed as important to the community.

The discussion of whether it is reasonable focused on the community support. From a Concord resident’s perspective, Howard Moffet stated that Option 5 would be worse than doing nothing. There would be more pavement and traffic through Concord, with no benefit for Concord. Laura Scott mentioned that even if it were eliminated as a standalone alternative now, it could be a scaled back version of Option 1 or a phased approach to Option 1. The consensus from the group is that Option 5 is unreasonable because it does not address the community vision of the I-93 corridor.

Alternate Land Use Alternatives: Steve and Gene mentioned that no screening has been done because we don’t know what the alternative includes. Alternate land use is a standalone alternative as well as a component of Opportunity Corridor Option 3. The question to the group is whether this should be carried forward to study further in Part B. It would be a more developed alternative at that time.

Laura Scott asked if the DOT would give the towns money to change the infrastructure needed for land use revisions. It was mentioned that Concord needs to change land use and zoning to make the Opportunity Corridor Options possible.

It was mentioned that if a compact development pattern would make a difference, then it should be considered in the next part. Carolyn Russell stated that it may be reasonable the same way TDM is, not as a standalone but as a component of other alternatives. There was no final determination made for this alternative.

Meeting 8 - November 1

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 4 (cont’d): Gene began by stating new model runs for Option 4 have been performed based on two land use scenarios. These scenarios were developed solely for the purpose of evaluating the effect on I-93 of development at Garvin Falls. The revised land use was not reviewed by the towns and was developed solely to gain better understanding of Option 4.

Both scenarios added 3,775 more jobs and 215 more housing units to the Garvin Falls zone. Land Use Scenario #1 added these values to the overall numbers for the region. Since 215 housing units is not enough to maintain the same jobs to housing ratio as the original scenario,

housing units had to be added throughout the region. This was done based on the % of housing units each zone had in the original scenario. The result is that Scenario #1 has 3,775 more jobs and about 1,600 additional housing units for the Central NH Region.

Land Use Scenario #2 maintained the same number of housing units for the region as the original by reducing the number of jobs in all zones except at Garvin Falls. The total number of jobs and housing units for the region stayed the same but they were re-distributed throughout the region.

Gene then presented traffic volume results for the two land use scenarios. Scenario 1 with the additional jobs and housing units increases the number of trips and therefore the demand on I-93. The segment of I-93 between Exits 13 and 14 increased by 800 trips for the pm peak hour. This was an increase of about 600 northbound and 200 southbound. There were 2,800 vehicles per hour on the Route 106 Connector, which were 500 more than the scenario without the additional jobs and homes. It again showed reduced traffic on Manchester Street and I-93 south of Exit 13. Gene stated that the increased traffic on I-93 indicates that I-93 may need to be eight lanes under these conditions. He stated that the volumes are beyond the capacity levels for a Level of Service E. There is a chance that a basic six lane freeway could function but auxiliary lanes would need to be provided in many locations. The segment between Exits 13 and 14 is one of these in addition to the segment between I-89 and Exit 12.

Scenario 2 had similar results but the increases and decreases were different. The increase in traffic on I-93 between Exits 13 and 14 were less due to the lower number of jobs in the Opportunity Corridor. The reductions in traffic on I-93 south of Exit 13 were greater for the same reason. The volumes on Manchester Street and the Route 106 Connector were about the same because the jobs and homes at Garvin Falls were the same. Gene stated that for Land Use Scenario 2 a basic six lane I-93 would likely be sufficient, however, as with Scenario 1 auxiliary lanes would need to be provided for the same segments.

Questions were raised concerning the amount of land assumed to be developed. The area available to develop is over 400 acres but there are about 1,000 acres currently undeveloped. The remainder is either part of a 200-foot buffer along the river or too steep to develop. Tom Aspell brought a copy of the "Garvins Falls Urban Reserve Area Development Feasibility Study" that was prepared for the City in 1996, and adopted by the Concord City Council in 1998.

There was a lengthy discussion about Option 4. Below are the main points:

- Bill Norton mentioned that the model assumes a high percentage of single occupant vehicles (SOV) when there should be more ride sharing in the future. Steve Lawe stated that about 90% of the trips in the model are SOV's. Bill stated that transit would need to part of the development.
- The additional 3,775 jobs out of a total increase of over 50,000 did not seem that significant. Gene stated that the increase under these scenarios is along the I-93 corridor and has a greater impact as a result.
- Tom Aspell stated that the City can control the development at Garvin Falls because of the need to provide utility service. He said that the Route 106 Connector would allow the City to plan for this inevitable development in a way to make transportation, housing, and jobs work well together. Rosemary Monahan said that she thought it would be difficult to develop due to the environmental obstacles.

- Bill O'Donnell stated that the Route 106 Connector does not help I-93 and that FHWA would find it difficult to fund a project that did not have a transportation benefit.
- Tom Aspell stated that the development of Garvin Falls would not happen until 2025 at the earliest. The 3,775 additional jobs represent build out for the site. Nick Alexander confirmed that the original land use assumed Phase 1 and 2 of the development but not Phase 3, which are the 3,775 jobs. Tom said that the City would not want the Garvin Falls area on the market today in competition with the Opportunity Corridor. The City would like to re-develop on "Brownfield" sites before looking at undeveloped land. He felt Option 4 with the Route 106 Connector should be evaluated. Rosemary Monahan stated that a Route 106 Connector would induce development.
- Laura Scott felt that the group was trying too hard to make this fit. The Route 106 Connector is not a solution for I-93 and should be separate from the I-93 Study. She feels Option 4 is unreasonable. Bill Klubben said that there would be no benefit for regional traffic in 2030.
- Without a Route 106 Connector the only access to Garvin Falls is via Manchester Street. The City is acquiring right of way along Manchester Street to accommodate five lanes.
- Bill O'Donnell asked whether the development of Garvin Falls had been presented to the public. Tom Aspell answered that it has been.
- Tom Aspell asked whether some percentage of the growth should be assumed for Garvin Falls. Bill McGonagle stated that if we accept the model there is no benefit to I-93; it may even be detrimental to I-93. The development of Garvin Falls may need to be considered, but outside of this project. If the land use assumes development of the northern part near Manchester Street, this should be adequate.
- Bill Klubben stated that the model should not assume growth that is beyond 2030. If you do it for the Garvin Falls zone, you would have to do it for all zones in the model. He also asked how you could consider an alternative that has the environmental issues and does not have the desired transportation benefit.
- Rosemary said that she gets the sense the Route 106 Connector and development on Garvin Falls is un-permittable. She recommended asking the agencies for their opinion. Bill Norton thinks this is true of a connection from I-89, but there are other options.
- Tom Aspell stated that the same thing was done for the access road to Manchester Airport. That project had two goals: to provide access to the airport and access to about 1,000 acres of undeveloped land. He feels this is the same situation. Steve Whitman mentioned that the Airport Access Road Project had a legislative directive that specified the two goals.
- Dan Lynch stated that there are many species that could inhabit Garvin Falls, including bald eagles. He felt that it was unreasonable from a resource standpoint but wouldn't say it was unreasonable to study.
- Bill Klubben stated that the purpose of this project is transportation. Steve Buckley stated that the Route 106 Connector is in the master plans of each community and he would hate to reject it now. Tom Aspell agreed by saying that he would find it hard for thirteen people to reject a potential benefit for over 100,000 people. Bill Klubben stated that he could live with it being reasonable for further consideration.
- Tom Aspell stated that he believes the Corridor includes the entire network, not just I-93.
- The only category score that was not initially screened was the overall rating for Support. The consensus was a neutral yellow for Support.

After a break Steve Whitman mentioned that there is no consensus but he conducted a straw poll to determine who felt this alternative was reasonable and unreasonable. There were about 8 votes for reasonable and 3 for unreasonable. (There were other opinions that the

alternative is unreasonable expressed earlier, but these members had left before the vote.) Steve asked for reasons why it is reasonable, the answers include:

- Balances the Needs of surrounding communities (Concord, Bow & Pembroke)
- Supports Economic Initiatives
- Supports NH's Smart Growth Legislation
- Benefits transportation (I-93 to Route 106)

Steve then asked for reasons why it is unreasonable, they include:

- Does not help I-93
- Natural Resource obstacles
- Majority of development to occur after 2030

It was stated that the project would be presented at the NHDOT monthly Natural Resource Agency meeting on November 15.

Local Road Improvements Alternative: This alternative proposed several local road projects to determine whether they could reduce the demand on I-93. The local roads proposed include the completion of the Langley Parkway, a connector from Exit 16 to Route 3, and Exit 16 ½. Gene stated that the project team decided to add the expansion of Storrs Street to the list to determine its potential to benefit I-93.

Gene began with a description of the model results related to Exit 16 ½ and the Exit 16 connection to Route 3. The model suggests that Exit 16 ½ would experience a relatively high volume of traffic, especially for the two southern ramps. These two ramps would expect to have about 1,000 vph in the pm peak hour. The total volume on the Exit 16 connector was only about 400 vph. It appears that Exit 16 ½ would be more attractive as a connection to Route 3. However, the use of both of these components did not change the volumes on I-93 south of Exit 15. There was a reduction of about 300 vph on southbound Route 3 just north of downtown. There was an increase of about 400 vph on southbound I-93 north of Exit 15. These numbers suggest that the new connections shift traffic from Route 3 to I-93 but only north of Exit 15.

Gene continued with a description of the impact of a completed Langley Parkway. The parkway would have a volume of about 1,300 vph. There was no change in the volume of traffic on I-93 through Bow and Concord. Gene stated that this was somewhat misleading because there are trips that are now using I-89 and I-93 that would use the parkway. However, there is "pent up" demand that fills this available capacity. Most of the trips using the parkway are trips that are now using city streets.

Finally, Gene presented model results for Storrs Street that indicate a reduction of about 400 vph on I-93. This suggests that trips that would use I-93 would use an extended Storrs Street. However, 400 vph would not alter the capacity requirements for I-93.

The group reviewed the initial screening and made no changes. The Support category was screened and the overall scored was determined to be a half red. The group reached a consensus that the Local Street Improvement Alternative was unreasonable. Rosemary commented that as a package the alternative seemed unreasonable but certain components

could be reasonable. It was explained that the expansion of Storrs Street is a component of all the Opportunity Corridor options.

Meeting 9 - December 6

Opportunity Corridor Concept Option 4 (cont'd): Steve began the discussion by reminding the group that Option 4 consists of the Opportunity Corridor improvements along I-93, an Exit 2 ½ along I-393, a Route 106 Connector, and land use changes at Garvin Falls. He then presented the reasons given so far for why group members felt Option 4 was Reasonable or Unreasonable, these were as follows:

Option 4 is *Reasonable* Because:

- Balances the Needs of surrounding communities
- Supports Economic Initiatives
- Supports NH's Smart Growth Legislation
- Benefits the local transportation system

Option 4 is *Unreasonable* Because:

- Does not benefit transportation on I-93
- Major Natural Resource objections
- Majority of development at Garvin Falls to occur after 2030
- Does not meet the stated Project Goal

The discussion about Option 4 continued for about 1 ½ hours; below are the main points:

- Laura Scott asked what was meant by support for Smart Growth. Tom Aspell and Mike Donovan answered that Smart Growth includes ideas like managing growth locally, community involvement and transportation choice, which they feel Option 4 supports. There is one major land owner and this enables the City to plan a large development that is meaningful and socially responsible.
- Bill Klubben mentioned that Garvin Falls is close to urban areas.
- Harry Blunt asked whether inclusion of the 106 Connector causes problems in the future because it would cost more than other alternatives. Would it be viewed less favorably because of cost. Gene stated that cost is one of the screening criteria and that the score for this category is the mechanism to show how cost reflects reasonableness.
- Statements were made regarding the future use of Garvin Falls. City representatives view Garvin Falls as a location for future planned development. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is pursuing the property as mitigation for the re-licensing of the Garvin Falls Dam, with the intent of preserving it as open space. They would fight against development at Garvin Falls.
- Bill O'Donnell stated that he has difficulty with Option 4 because it does not provide relief for I-93. He felt that the 106 Connector was a "development road" that provides access for economic development. He also stated that FHWA has made no commitments to fund every piece of the project. Tom Aspell felt that it does provide relief for I-93 especially Exit 13. Gene clarified the results of the modeling that show Option 4 reducing traffic on I-93 south of Exit 13 but increasing traffic north of Exit 13.
- Don Lyford mentioned that the City's Garvin Falls Study stated that the development would not be expected to occur for at least 30-40 years.

- A statement was made suggesting that the 106 Connector, including the bridge over the Merrimack River, could only be part of a federally funded project due to its cost. Mike Donovan stated that this is not true and he was part of a project in Berlin where a bridge was constructed without federal money.
- Mike Donovan also stated that Garvin Falls will develop regardless of the connection, with all the traffic having to use Manchester Street and Exit 13.
- Steve Whitman mentioned that e-mails had been sent by members who could not attend the meeting. Tom Raffio's message supported further study of Option 4, while Rosemary Monahan's message stated that EPA felt it should not be carried forward for these three reasons "1. not only does it not address the problems on I-93, it makes them worse, 2. the magnitude of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on natural resources is likely to be significant, and 3. the project may well be unpermissible under federal regulations, so money spent on studying it as part of an alternative would be wasted.
- Rich Roach mentioned that if the potential development at Garvin Falls is associated with this project it will draw the attention of the resource agencies to this larger purpose. If the resource agencies feel Option 4 is unpermissible, it would be difficult to proceed with the I-93 project. He mentioned that the flexibility could be built into the I-93 improvements to allow for further improvements once the development at Garvin Falls occurs. The I-93 project would not preclude the future development of Garvin Falls. Rich stated that there are different visions for the use of this land.
- Gene mentioned the concept of not including the construction of the 106 Connector in Option 4 but accounting for its traffic. Under Option 4, I-93 would be built for 2030 traffic but could be expanded in the future to handle additional traffic from the development of Garvin Falls. Tom Aspell questioned having special conditions for this option.
- The question of segmentation was mentioned and whether it would apply to an Option 4 that dealt with future potential development. Rich Roach said that it could be argued if a piece of the project had its own separate utility.
- Maura Leahy stated that she feels Option 4 is unreasonable because it would have severe environmental impacts and other options meet the goal of the project without these impacts. She also stated that the goal statement clearly mentions a balance that would be environmentally acceptable and she feels Option 4 does not do this.
- Phil Hastings said that he didn't agree with the statement that Option 4 is "unreasonable because it does not benefit transportation on I-93". Gene explained that this refers to the fact that there would be more traffic north of Exit 13 with Option 4 due to the additional jobs associated with development on Garvin Falls. Phil stated that he did not believe there was enough information to call it unreasonable despite the environmental problems.
- Chris Northrop stated that he hadn't heard any definitive statement that made it impossible to develop Garvin Falls. He asked what the down side would be to evaluating it in the next phase.
- A question was raised about a connector further south. It was explained that this was a transportation only alternative that was not supported by Pembroke due to its impacts to existing development. Option 4 has the dual purpose of providing a connector between I-93 and Route 3 and providing access for developing Garvin Falls.
- Tom Aspell asked whether it would be better if the connector came from Hall Street rather than I-89. He also stated that the plans from the City have more preservation than would be present if the land were on the free market.
- Harry Blunt mentioned that a trolley system once passed through Garvin Falls and the piers for the bridge are still present in the river. He wondered if a transit access to the site could help address the access issue. He was also concerned with this issue slowing down the I-

93 project due to its higher cost. Bill Neidermyer stated that the process would be slowed regardless of the cost due to the environmental value of the land.

- Mike Donovan raised his concern that this process was being used to advance the interests of the environmental community.
- Dan Lynch asked when the development at Garvin Falls would occur, 2030?, 2040? or beyond? Why include growth beyond 2030 at this location only? Tom Aspell stated that Concord is a growing city. In 10-20 years the Opportunity Corridor will be built and then development would occur at Garvin Falls. Tom feels that Smart Growth means developing in urban areas like Garvin Falls.
- Rusty McLear stated that if the City's plan is to develop Garvin Falls, how can we not study it. Brian Tufts agreed that it seems premature to put it aside.
- Steve Whitman mentioned that the reasonable alternatives that come from this group need to be presented to the public. One idea would be to present Option 4 as an alternative without consensus and get opinions from the public. Mike Donovan did not think this would be helpful because he believes a public meeting would be mostly attended by those trying to preserve Garvin Falls.
- Harry Blunt asked if there was a way to include the potential development in the option without having it delay the outcome. He wants to keep the project rolling. Bill Neidermyer stated that all alternatives would need to be evaluated equally with the same level of detail.
- Steve Whitman asked the question whether detailed environmental study would be required if the project only accounted for the Garvin Falls development. Tom Aspell said that we don't know what is there and this is a good opportunity to find out.
- The question of timing was raised with respect to the 106 Connector. Nick stated that if the Connector were constructed as part of this project, it would certainly lead to growth at Garvin Falls. Bill Klubben stated that you would have different land use with a different transportation system. Rich Roach felt that it was fine for the City to decide land use and for the project to plan for a transportation system to accommodate it.
- Bill Neidermyer reiterated the position of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It is clear from the aerial photo that it is an undeveloped tract of land surrounded on three sides by a river. Whether it is now or in Part B of the project development, they would object to Option 4. He said that the NHDOT and FHWA should decide whether to study it in Part B.
- Tom Aspell reiterated that Garvin Falls will develop and if it happens without planning there will be less value. He feels that I-93 would last longer with the connector and it should be considered.
- A question was asked about what is Part B. Gene McCarthy stated that Part B is the NEPA process where an environmental document will be prepared. Part C is final design.
- Gene McCarthy clarified that the Bow-Concord I-93 Project has construction funds scheduled for 2014. If the connector were part of the project it would be constructed by 2020.
- Tom Aspell stated that growth will occur and the question is where. Without the connector the growth will occur elsewhere. It is hard to say when the growth will occur. It would still occur at Garvin Falls without the connector, but to a lesser degree.
- After a meal break, Steve Whitman clarified that a public meeting needs to be held either way to get public comment on the list of reasonable alternatives.
- Will Abbot stated that he feels Option 4 is unreasonable but is not prepared to say he couldn't live with it being studied in Part B.

- Rich Roach also believes it is unreasonable and does not want this project to deal with the controversy. However, under a CSS process the City has the right to want it studied and the project may have to do it.
- Steve Whitman then asked if there were others who felt the same way. Bill Klubben said he feels it is unreasonable but can live with it moving forward.

Steve then conducted a poll to see where the group stood with regards to Option 4. The first poll was whether Option 4 should move forward to Part B.

- 7 Felt it should not move forward (37%)
- 12 Felt it should move forward (63%)

The second poll asked whether Option 4 was Reasonable or Unreasonable.

- 10 Unreasonable (53%)
- 9 Reasonable (47%)

It is clear that consensus was not achieved. The following are additional points made after the poll.

- Chris Northrop asked what the downside would be to carrying Option 4 forward. Rich stated that if it is studied it gives people the expectation that it could be built. Gene stated that it would take more time and money to evaluate in Part B.
- Nan Hagen thought that it received more favorable marks in the screening process than unfavorable and wondered if that should mean it is reasonable. Bill Klubben stated that one fatal flaw could kill an alternative.
- Maura Leahy felt it was wanted mainly for economic development. Tom Aspell said that all improvements to I-93 are related to economic development.
- Mike Donovan thought we had consensus that Option 4 was reasonable. Laura Scott read the rules from the first meeting where consensus was defined with all being able to “live with” a decision, with a backup consisting of a super majority of 75%.
- Will Abbott stated that since this is an advisory group, could it make a recommendation of no consensus.
- Dan Lynch asked whether it could be carried forward as a separate project. Will Abbott asked if it was in the City’s Master Plan, and it is. Will Abbott asked who would build it. Tom Aspell answered that it involves how you address the whole area and it is integral to the I-93 project.
- Bill Norton stated that he has heard that this project would not build the 106 Connector but that it needs to anticipate the growth to ensure I-93 can handle the traffic once it is built. It becomes a land use alternative with an anticipated 106 Connector. Chris Northrop asked whether this would require the detailed study of Garvin Falls. You could acknowledge it but not do all of the studies. There was disagreement whether this would be possible. Bill O’Donnell stated that if you try to not preclude it and this causes additional impacts on I-93, this would need to be studied. He didn’t feel that it would require detailed studies on Garvin Falls.
- Laura Scott felt this approach could be reasonable.
- Maura Leahy felt more comfortable with this approach.

At the end of the discussion it was determined that Option 4 had run its course for the time being. There was no need to schedule another meeting to discuss its merits at this time.

The next Planning Group Meeting would occur sometime in January on a date to be determined and would address other alternatives.

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