What's Next?
Phase 2 of the study (January 2004-August 2004) entails the development and macro-level screening of conceptual improvement alternatives to select a reasonable range of alternatives to carry forward for detailed evaluation. The process of identifying, screening and recommending alternatives to carry forward will be documented in a Rationale Report to be distributed in August 2004.

Scheduled Events
ATF Meeting, 6:30 pm
June 23, 2004, Dover City Hall
Public Information Meetings (7:00 pm)
-- June 20, 2004, Dover City Hall
-- July 1, 2004, Newington Town Hall

Project Website
www.newington-dover.com

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Mr. Jim Campbell, Town of Durham (603) 868-8084, Ext. 121
Mr. John Burke, City of Portsmouth (603) 766-1415
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Project Status
✓ Study initiated January 2003
✓ Advisory Task Force formed -- Meetings Held
✓ NOI Filed May 5, 2003
✓ SeaCoast Travel Survey conducted June 2003
✓ Scoping Meeting held June 25, 2003 at Newington Town Hall
✓ PIM held November 17, 2003 at Dover City Hall
✓ Model Update complete
✓ Scoping Report published March 1, 2004
✓ Next ATF Meeting June 23, 2004 at Dover City Hall
✓ Public Information Meetings
  -- June 30, 2004 at Dover City Hall
  -- July 1, 2004 at Newington Town Hall

Introduction
The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) has initiated engineering and environmental studies to design, permit and implement short-term and long-term traffic operational and safety improvements to the approximately 3.5 mile section of the Spaulding Turnpike that extends northeasterly from Exit 1 (Goding Road/Pease Boulevard) in Newington and traverses the Little Bay Bridges to a point just south of the Dover toll plaza. The Spaulding Turnpike is a major arterial for freight into and out of the areas north of the Little Bay Bridges, and is the economic lifeline of the region. It also serves as a major tourist route, providing access to the northern reaches of the state from the seacoast and points south of New Hampshire.

Improvement options that include implementing transportation system management (TSM) improvements, reusing the General Sullivan Bridge for local motorized and non-motorized traffic, enhancing rail service, improving bus transit service, and instituting other transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that may reduce vehicle trips along the Spaulding Turnpike will be considered, in addition to upgrading the mainline, Little Bay Bridges, and interchanges.

Traffic volumes on the Little Bay Bridges have steadily increased from approximately 30,000 vehicles per day in 1980 to almost 70,000 vehicles per day in 2001 resulting in high levels of congestion on the bridges and along the Turnpike near and within the interchange areas. Over the next 20 years this average daily volume is expected to
increase to approximately 180,000 vehicles per day.

Without improvements to the Turnpike or substantial changes in the current mode choice of motorists, congestion levels will spread beyond the typical commuter peak hours encompassing more hours of the day.

A total of 908 reported accidents occurred within the study area from 1997 through 2001, an increase of 58 percent over the previous five years. During the 1997-2001 period, traffic accidents increased at an average annual rate of 11 percent per year, while traffic increased at a rate of approximately 3 percent per year, suggesting a deterioration of study area safety. Due to infrastructure constraints and geographic location, accidents create long delays in an area where there are virtually no viable alternate routes.

The Turnpike has a number of existing study area geometric deficiencies including limited sight distance and substandard shoulder width on the Little Bay Bridges and substandard merge, diverge, and weave areas at the interchanges. Many of the traffic maneuvers required to enter, exit or change lanes along this section of the Turnpike are capacity constrained under current traffic conditions and contribute to drive discomfort and accidents. Existing acceleration, deceleration and weaving sections along the Turnpike are inadequate by current design standards.

The NEPA Process

The Spaulding Turnpike Improvements Study is being conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). This process entails five (5) phases:

- Scoping
- Conceptual/Screening
- Public Hearing
- Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Final Design

The process requires approximately 41 months to complete, with publication of the Final EIS scheduled for August 2006, and Federal Highway Administration’s Record of Decision (ROD) targeted for November 2006. The process is being conducted within a dynamic public participation process. An Advisory Task Force (ATF), representing community stakeholders, has been established and meets regularly to provide input to the NHDOT and the consultant team and to provide a conduit for dissemination of project information to their respective constituencies.

A series of meetings and workshops with local officials, in conjunction with public informational meetings and meetings with state and federal resource agencies are also regularly planned during the course of the project.

This decision-making process is intended to foster the community consensus necessary to uncover the practical, smart, affordable and permittable long-term solution to study area safety problems and mobility needs.

Schedule

Phase 1: Establish Purpose and Need / Assess Existing Conditions / Project Future Travel Demand Study / Identify a Range of Alternatives (February 2003 - March 2004)

Phase 2: Develop and Screen Conceptual Alternatives (January 2004 - August 2004)


Phase 4: Public Hearing (October 2005)

Phase 5: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (March 2006 - December 2006)

Final Design (November 2006 - October 2011)

Construction (dependent on the availability of funding) (June 2008 - October 2013)