Transportation
Land Development
Environmental
Services

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Kilton Road
Six Bedford Farms, Suite 607
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110-6532
603 644-0888
FAX 603 644-2385

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Chris Cross, ATF Chairman, RPC
Bruce Woodruff, Dover
Tom Fargo, SRPC
Bill O'Donnell, FHWA
Leon Kenison, PDA
Jack Newick, Dover
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Marc Laurin, NHDOT
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Tim Roache, SRPC
Dave Walker, RPC
Howard Muise, VHB
Frank O'Callaghan, VHB
Members of the Public

Date/Time: January 12, 2005

Project No.: 51425.00

Place: Dover City Hall

Re: Newington-Dover 11238
ATF Meeting No. 9

Notes taken by: Frank O'Callaghan

In the absence of Chris Cross (who arrived after the beginning of the meeting), Bruce Woodruff called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM and welcomed all. He noted that Chris Waszczuk and Frank O'Callaghan would update the ATF on the project status, and asked that the public hold their comments or questions until the end of the presentation.

Chris Waszczuk then explained the role of the ATF in providing guidance to the project team, and that the ATF meetings are an excellent opportunity for all in attendance to provide input and feedback to the project team. He noted that there had been eight ATF meetings to date, and that ATF meets on a regular basis, usually every two or three months. Chris then asked ATF members if there were any comments on the draft meeting minutes of August 25, 2004. Hearing none, he offered two comments: on page 2, he suggested substituting "a two-lane loop ramp" for the "double loop ramp" reference to the Exit 6 westbound off-ramp; he also suggested that reference be made and noted on page 5 that the November 17, 2004 tentatively scheduled ATF meeting at Dover City Hall had been rescheduled to this evening's meeting (January 12, 2005). The draft minutes, as revised, were approved.

Chris Waszczuk then thanked all for braving the snow and freezing rain and attending the meeting. He noted that the project team had lost momentum and that the Rationale Report had been delayed due to the updating of the travel demand model, and he had been hesitant to reschedule the November 2004 ATF meeting until the Rationale Report had been completed. In the context of reviewing the meeting agenda, he stated that the Rationale Report had been published last week, and

that copies had been distributed to ATF members, federal and state agencies requested to be cooperating agencies to the project, other interested resource agencies, the regional planning commissions (RPC and SRPC) and the municipalities of Dover, Newington and Portsmouth. The report culminates the completion of Phase 2 of the study, and documents the rationale for eliminating alternatives and recommending those alternatives to be carried forward for more detailed evaluation in Phase 3 of the study. Chris noted that the Rationale Report had been posted on the project website, www.newington-dover.com, and that NHDOT was requesting comments by February 11, 2005 to continue to progress the project. He stated that some new information would be presented at this evening's meeting, such as updated ridership numbers associated with the various transit alternatives, and roadway and bridge cross section alternatives. There would also be a brief summary of the alternatives recommended to be carried forward. Chris also noted that the project team had reassessed cross section requirements on Woodbury Avenue in the vicinity of the Isaac Dow House, and that a revised cross section would be presented that minimizes potential impacts to the potentially historic property. He further noted that the project team had taken a first cut at identifying and assessing a number of potential infrastructure upgrades and TDM/Transit combinations in meeting the project purpose and need. This preliminary analysis would be presented to initiate comments and discussion. Chris concluded suggesting that three main or core issues have surfaced to date and are pertinent when considering the various options of combining infrastructure upgrades with transit/TDM alternatives:

1. the level of infrastructure upgrade, vis-à-vis 8 vs. 6 basic lanes between Exits 3 and 6;
2. the function, cost, and 4(f) issues related to the potential reuse of the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB); and
3. the level of TDM/transit that is appropriate and cost-effective to complement the infrastructure upgrade.

Frank O'Callaghan then began his presentation; he reviewed the contents of the Rationale Report and the limits of the study area. He noted that following the initial travel demand forecast prepared for the Newington-Dover project, travel demand forecasts were estimated for the Route 1 Bypass study. Review of these forecasts by Portsmouth planning officials and regional planning staff suggested the need to re-examine the nature of the land use changes assumed for downtown Portsmouth, and the schedule of development assumed for the Pease Tradeport. The growth rates for traffic external to the seacoast region were also re-examined. Based on model revisions (which reflected more reasonable downtown redevelopment assumptions, a somewhat slower build-out of the Tradeport, and slightly lower traffic growth rates for traffic bordering the north and south of the Seacoast region), revised travel demand projections were estimated for the Newington-Dover study area. The revised projections are approximately seven percent less than the original 2025 projections documented in the Scoping Report (March 2004). In the absence of non-SOV (single occupancy vehicle) alternatives, four lanes of travel in each direction would still be required to meet the 2025 projected study area travel demand. Frank noted that the 2025 peak hour demand would exceed the 2-lane northbound and southbound capacity of the Little Bay Bridges (LBB) by approximately 900 vehicles per hour during the weekday PM peak hour. As a result, the current (5:00 – 6:00 PM) peak hour of traffic congestion is expected to increase to approximately four hours (3:00 – 7:00 PM). The current PM peak hour delay of approximately eight minutes between Exits 1 and 6 is expected to more than double by 2025 under existing bridge and roadway conditions. He stated that such congestion on the Turnpike takes into consideration the capacity constraints on other area roadways (such as ME 236, NH 108, NH 125), which limit the ability of study area drivers to seek alternate routes. Frank noted that the weekday AM peak hour condition is less intense than the PM peak hour, but that the current single hour of congestion is expected to double by 2025. He also noted that as one increases capacity on the Turnpike from two lanes to three or four lanes, the peak hour travel demand increases, reflecting the diversion of some traffic from area local roadways to the Turnpike.

Frank then reviewed the revised ridership numbers for the various non-SOV alternatives which include employer-based TDM programs, bus, rail, HOV and combinations thereof. He noted the ridership estimates were generated for four alternatives: the 4-lane no-build, 4-lane with the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB) rehabilitated and used as a busway; a 6-lane build condition and an 8-lane build condition. He also presented various cross section alternatives that could be utilized under the 4, 6 and 8-lane infrastructure alternatives. He summarized by stating that no combination of TDM and transit alternatives in conjunction with either the 4-lane no-build or 4-lane with the GSB busway was adequate in meeting the projected 2025 peak hour travel demand. The 6-lane build condition in combination with aggressive TDM, transit and use of an additional HOV lane could meet the 2025 travel demand under certain conditions, and the 8-lane build condition, with or without complementary TDM and transit alternatives, would meet the travel demand of 2025 and beyond.

Frank then reviewed the Alternatives that were recommended to be carried forward. He noted that the range of recommended alternatives was the same as previously recommended at the June and July 2004 Public Informational Meetings and the August ATF meeting with a couple of additions. The No-Build alternative is a requirement of the federal NEPA process, and is a benchmark to measure other alternatives against. A number of Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives are recommended to improve current safety and traffic operational conditions at Exit 6 in Dover, and at Exits 3 and 4 in Newington. The Newington alternatives are planned to complement the Interim Safety Plan which is currently programmed for construction in 2005. With respect to the proposed improvements to the southbound on-ramp at Exit 6, a resident inquired as to whether or not the Boston Harbor Road on-ramp to the southbound on-ramp from US 4 would be closed. Frank responded in the affirmative subject to emergency access only.

In addition to employer-based TDM programs, Frank noted that three bus alternatives – expanded intercity bus service from Rochester through Portsmouth to Boston, expanded express bus service between Rochester and Portsmouth and expanded local service between Durham and Portsmouth and between Rochester and Portsmouth – and one rail alternative -- expanded peak hour Downeaster service either between Dover and Boston or between Rochester and Boston -- had also been recommended for further study. Three (3) new park and ride facilities [Rochester (Exit 12), Dover (Exit 9) and Durham (US 4 /NH 108)] to support these transit alternatives were also recommended for further study. He noted that provision for a future rail spur into the Pease Tradeport was included into the planning and reflected in Roadway Alternatives 10, 11 and 12 in Newington which are being recommended for further study. He then stated that three bridge alternatives were recommended for further study – rehabilitation and widening of LBB with GSB rehabilitated, rehabilitation and widening of LBB with GSB removed, and replacement of the LBB with GSB removed. Frank noted that each of the bridge alternatives was located to the west of the existing LBB to minimize impacts to Hilton Park and the shoreline near Bloody Point, each bridge alternative would be assessed for either six or eight lanes, and that only the new bridge alternative would improve the existing LBB profile to a 70 mph design (the rehabilitation alternatives would maintain the existing 60 mph design criteria).

Frank then summarized the roadway alternatives that were recommended for further study: Alternatives 2 and 3 in Dover, and Alternatives 10, 11 and 12 in Newington. The Dover alternatives are similar in several respects – the overpass at Exit 6 is converted to 2-way traffic flow; the northbound exiting loop ramp to US 4 is replaced by a diamond-type, traffic signal controlled off-ramp; the missing northbound on-ramp is provided; a grade-separated connection is provided under the Turnpike at Hilton Park; and both alternatives minimize residential and wetland impacts in comparison to Alternative 1. Alternative 3 includes a grade-separated connection for local motorized and non-motorized traffic between Spur Road and Boston Harbor Road which also allows for the

elimination of the traffic signal control at the US 4/Spur Road intersection. Bill O'Donnell inquired as to the reason why the southbound right turn on-ramp depicted in Alternative 2 had been realigned closer towards the center of the interchange. Frank responded that the spacing of the ramp locations afforded better vehicle queue management along the overpass without increasing wetland impacts. Bruce Woodruff added that the realignment would also increase the buffer area between Boston Harbor Road residents and on-ramp traffic.

In summarizing Alternatives 10, 11 and 12 in Newington, Frank noted that common elements include the combining of Exits 3 and 4 at Exit 3; better Turnpike connections to the industrial area located along River Road and Shattuck Way; local connection between Woodbury Avenue and Nimble Hill Road; a local interchange connection to the Tradeport; and the preservation of a future rail right-of-way connection to the Tradeport. Alternatives 11 and 12 relocate the industrial roadway connector and the future rail right-of-way south from the existing right-of-way location to the Exit 3 area. Alternative 12 refines Alternative 11 by simplifying the roadway connection from Woodbury Avenue and Exit 3 to the Tradeport and by modifying the southbound on-ramp at Exit 3 to reduce wetland impacts and to increase traffic weaving distance between Exits 3 and 1. He also noted that Alternatives 10, 11 and 12 could be modified to provide a southbound off-ramp to Nimble Hill Road for the convenience of Newington residents and businesses.

Roy Josselyn, Dover Point Road, inquired if there had been a cost/benefit analysis associated with providing the future rail connection to the Tradeport. Frank responded that no cost/benefit analysis had been conducted; he noted that planning for a future rail connection was consistent with the Tradeport's master plan and could conceivably divert some truck traffic from the Turnpike. Chris Waszczuk added that it was sound planning to consider the future connection and that state legislation required such consideration. He noted that the intent to perpetuate a right-of-way for a future connection did not involve the construction of such a connection as part of the Newington-Dover project.

At this point Chris Waszczuk asked if there were any more questions on the Rationale Report. Tom Fargo inquired as to the public distribution of the report. Chris noted that copies had been distributed, in addition to the ATF members and regional planning officials, to the public libraries and municipal offices in Dover, Newington and Portsmouth. He reminded all that the report was also posted on the project web site (www.newington-dover.com).

Frank then reviewed a modified 4-lane cross section of Woodbury Avenue; recent revisions reflected efforts to minimize the impact of the proposed roadway widening on the historic Isaac Dow House and Beane Farm, which abut Woodbury Avenue. The modified cross section provides two travel lanes, shoulder and sidewalk/utility panel areas in each direction separated by a raised median. Impacts to the Isaac Dow House have been substantially reduced in comparison to initial roadway concepts, and neither the Isaac Dow House nor the Beane Farm buildings are impacted. Chris Cross noted that Alternatives 10, 11 and 12 include the closing of Exit 2, and the rerouting of traffic to Exit 3 and Woodbury Avenue. Frank responded that the traffic analysis of Exit 3 and Woodbury Avenue reflected the increase in traffic and that the interchange would be able to handle the additional traffic. He further noted that further traffic analysis would be conducted during Phase 3 (DEIS) of the study.

Frank then summarized several 8-lane and 6-lane mainline options that combined different levels of infrastructure upgrade with various levels of transit and employer-based TDM programs. The purpose of this preliminary analysis was to initiate discussion on the feasibility, effectiveness and acceptability of various improvement options to meet the project purpose and need. Characteristics were noted for each option such as design year (2025) level of traffic service, extended level of service

(LOS) life (i.e. number of years beyond 2025 that LOS D is provided), degree of flexibility for future management of travel lanes to provide greater traffic flow efficiency, mainline cross section width, construction and other costs, environmental, property and park land impacts, Section 4(f) issues and traffic management during construction. Frank cautioned that the identification and assessment of these options were a preliminary, first-cut to stimulate discussion and to identify common and primary issues that will affect the development of the preferred transportation solution. He also noted that more substantial environmental impacts would potentially be located within the interchange areas, which would be addressed in Phase 3 (DEIS) of the study. Before opening up the discussion and comments on the preliminary assessment of options, Frank stated that the analysis underscored the importance of focusing on the three issues that Chris Waszczuk had mentioned earlier in the meeting – the level of infrastructure upgrade (6-lane vs. 8-lane), the function, cost and 4(f) issues related to the potential reuse of the GSB, and the level of TDM and transit that is appropriate and cost-effective to complement the infrastructure upgrade.

Following Frank's summary, a brief discussion ensued. Tom Fargo noted that Option 3, 8-lanes with the GSB rehabilitated was in fact a 9-lane option. Jack Newick noted that constructing a new bridge to replace the LBB and GSB results in greater property impacts (including building takings) at Dover Point than either of the LBB rehabilitation and widening to the west alternatives, which do not result in the taking of buildings. Bruce Woodruff noted that the new bridge alternative assumed a cable-stayed/signature design. He asked if the bridge tower was a potential issue for aircraft landings and take-offs at Pease. Frank acknowledged that the bridge tower could be an issue. Bruce then noted that the alternative signature design concept – the concrete arch bridge – would eliminate the aircraft related issue and cost less to construct. Bill O'Donnell asked if the multi-use path included on the rehabilitated LBB options with the GSB removed was restricted to non-motorized traffic, or open to local vehicular traffic as well. Frank confirmed that the multi-use path included as part of the LBB rehabilitate/widened options (or new bridge options) was restricted to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Both Tom Fargo and Bruce Woodruff expressed collective opinion that options without TDM and transit programs would receive little community support and were on the surface infeasible. Both questioned the value of HOV or "zipper lanes". Tom Fargo suggested that the cost difference between the "Zipper" Lane Alternative (Option 8) and the 8-Lane Alternative (Option 2) is minor with Option 3 providing a good extended level of service without the capital, operational, and maintenance costs of a zipper lane. Bruce Woodruff emphasized that the City would not support a cross-section wider than 150'. He noted that Dover Point is very narrow, that the pavement width must be used effectively, and that narrower cross sections were far more desirable vis-à-vis minimizing impacts to Dover Point residents. Richard Doucette (FAA) noted that the 8-lane options include either no TDM or moderate TDM, whereas all of the 6-lane options included an aggressive TDM program. Mr. Doucette suggested that the employer TDM program effects are often exaggerated, implying that the service lives of the 6-lane options may be overstated to some degree. Frank responded that capacity constrained conditions tend to encourage more TDM activity than unconstrained conditions. As such, 6-lane options were combined with the higher level of TDM, as opposed to the 8-lane options which provide more capacity. He then added that both aggressive and moderate TDM could be combined with the 6-lane options to provide a range of service life. Another resident questioned the volume of traffic which might utilize the proposed grade-separated connection (under the Turnpike) linking both sides of Hilton Park. Frank noted that the volume on the connector road would be discussed during Phase 3 of the study.

Nora Kelley, Dover Point Road, noted that the Pease Tenants Association had recently conducted a survey of its tenants which touched upon TDM and transit activities. Frank responded that he would follow up with the PDA. In response to a question on service life of improvements, Frank noted that it is desirable, from a planning and design perspective, to build in future flexibility to the preferred

alternative so that travel demands beyond the 2025 design year can be met in the most cost-effective and least impacting manner.

Leon Kenison, PDA, inquired as to the project construction schedule. Chris Waszczuk responded $100 million is currently programmed for the 2010 - 2012 period, and that construction could extend for an approximate 5-year period. However, Chris noted that the project's engineering and environmental work is being progressed to allow construction to begin sooner (as easily as 2008), in the event that additional funding becomes available and all the permits and approvals are secured. Nora Kelley, unfamiliar with the "HOT-Lane" terminology requested the definition. Chris responded that HOT lanes are high occupancy toll lanes. HOT lanes are HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lanes that can be used by single occupant vehicles, provided they pay a fee. Tom Fargo questioned the feasibility of special lanes such as an HOV lane. He questioned the cost-effectiveness of such a facility and inquired as to the access points and limits of such a facility. Frank responded that given the compact nature of the study area, and the spacing between interchanges, it was feasible to run the HOV facility between the Dover Toll Plaza and Exit 1 (Gosling Road) with access/egress at only these two locations. Traffic from US4 and Dover Point Road would not be able to utilize the facility. In light of the roadway widening associated with the 8-lane options which would result in a reduction of the buffer zones currently existing between residential areas and the Turnpike, Cody Cartnick, Boston Harbor Road, inquired as to the potential for noise barriers as part of a noise abatement program. Frank responded that a noise analysis would be conducted as part of the Phase 3 study, and where federal noise criteria were met, noise mitigation would be proposed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Next meeting of the ATF is scheduled for February 23, 2005 at 6:30 PM in Newington Town Hall.