



**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: C. Waszczuk, NHDOT
P. Salo, NHDOT
P. Clary, VHB
Newington residents
Dover residents

Date/Time: 5/27/2009 – 6:30 pm (Newington)
5/28/2009 – 6:30 pm (Dover)

Project No.: 52012

Place: Newington Town Hall

Dover City Hall

Re: Public Informational Meeting

Notes taken by: VHB/NHDOT

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) held Public Informational Meetings in the communities of Newington and Dover on May 27 and 28, 2009, respectively, to present an update and answer questions for the Newington-Dover Spaulding Turnpike/Little Bay Bridge Improvement Project. Mr. Chris Waszczuk opened the meetings with the introduction of himself as the Chief Project Manager for the NHDOT, Mr. Peter Clary as the Project Manager for VHB, the Consultant design team and Mr. Peter Salo as the Lead Consultant Reviewer for the NHDOT. The materials presented included a PowerPoint presentation, graphic boards displaying various project elements and plans that were displayed on the walls.

Mr. Waszczuk continued the presentation with a brief explanation of the project area which begins in Newington on the Spaulding Turnpike just north of the Exit 1 interchange and continues northerly approximately 3.5 miles to the project limits just south of the Dover Toll Plaza. The project purpose is to improve safety and transportation efficiency on this highly congested roadway by consolidating, reconfiguring and reconstructing the Spaulding Turnpike and the 5 interchanges within the project limits. The project need stems from limited capacity, poor levels of service during peak travel hours, geometric deficiencies, poor local connectivity and an accident history that creates long delays.

The project history identified the authorization of a study beginning in 1989 followed by a suspension of the study while the Pease Surface Transportation Master Plan was completed. The Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement were completed from 2000 to 2008 at which time the Federal Highway Administration issued the Record of Decision. Since the completion of the Environmental Impact Statement, the NHDOT has constructed the Transportation System Management improvements for the Exit 6 SB on-ramp merge area, selected VHB as the final design Consultant and commenced with the final design of the selected alternative.

Mr. Clary then presented the design specifics of the selected alternative which includes the expansion of the two lanes in each direction to three lanes in each direction for the entire corridor with the addition of an auxiliary lane between Exits 3 and 6 to address the high volume of merging and weaving traffic. Full access interchanges are being provided at Exits 3 and 6 while the interchanges at Exits 2 and 5 are being eliminated. The interchange at Exit 4 will be reconstructed with the configuration remaining the same as exists today. The Little Bay Bridges are being rehabilitated and widened to accommodate the future traffic projections for 2025. The historic General Sullivan Bridge is also being rehabilitated for use by pedestrian, bicycle and recreational uses. Soundwalls are proposed in Dover along both the NB and SB barrels from north of the Little Bay Bridges to Exit 6 and north of Exit 6, from the ramps, to approximately half a mile north of the Dover Toll Plaza.

In addition to these corridor improvements, the project includes park and ride projects in Dover, Rochester and Lee, improved intercity, express and local bus service in the seacoast area, increased Downeaster service from Portland to Boston and future railroad access into the Pease Development Authority.

The construction contract breakout graphics were presented that consisted of eight individual construction contracts that ranged in cost from \$2 - \$49 million dollars. The contracts have been scheduled and sequenced to facilitate the construction and rehabilitation of the Little Bay Bridges.

The first construction project is targeted to be advertised for construction in March 2010 and constructs the new SB barrel of the Little Bay Bridges, Hilton Drive beneath the Little Bay Bridges, the pedestrian and bicycle bridge structure from Hilton Park to the General Sullivan Bridge and the roadway approaches in Newington and Dover. The Dover approach work consists of approximately 800 feet of the proposed SB barrel with another 1,200 feet of interim transition to match into the existing Spaulding Turnpike.

There are two options for the pedestrian and bicycle bridge structure from Hilton Drive to the General Sullivan Bridge. The basic difference in the options is the location of the bridge in relation to Hilton Drive. Option One has the bridge on the east side and traverses over Hilton Drive and Option Two has the bridge on the west side and parallels the Hilton Drive. Plans and visualizations of the two options were presented for consideration by the City of Dover.

Two options for a park just off the General Sullivan Bridge in Newington were presented with the elimination of the proposed retaining wall between the Little Bay Bridge and the Shattuck Way bridge. A stormwater treatment area is proposed west of the proposed SB barrel, just north of Shattuck Way, that will treat the stormwater runoff from the Little Bay Bridge and the Newington roadway approach. The remainder of the area could be enhanced to provide parking, lawn space and a picnic area that could provide scenic views of Tricky's Cove and Little Bay. The basic difference between the two options is one point of access to the lawn and picnic area or two points of access. Plans and renderings of the two options were presented for consideration by the Town of Newington.

Mr. Clary completed his portion of the presentation by discussing the wetland mitigation efforts for the 23 acres of wetland impacts required during the construction of the project. To date, conservation easements on the Tuttle Farm and the Day property have been acquired in Dover. The mitigation efforts in Newington have been initiated with the Watson property being the first choice and the Knights Brook area being a second alternative. In addition, the restoration of Railway Brook is being included in the Exit 3 construction contract.

Mr. Waszczuk presented the estimated costs for engineering, Right - of - Way and construction as \$20 M, \$8 M and \$197 M, respectively, in 2007 dollars. Currently, \$83 M in construction funding is not

available for the construction of the roadway, bridge and soundwall improvements in Dover and the rehabilitation of the General Sullivan Bridge. The project is funded primarily with revenues generated from the NH Turnpike System along with approximately \$33 M in Federal Earmark funds directed towards the construction of the new Little Bay Bridge. The NHDOT is reviewing various bonding and financial modeling scenarios to secure funding for the remainder of the construction for the project in the next Ten Year Plan.

During the final design period, the NHDOT will schedule additional meetings with the communities and neighborhoods to coordinate the design and location of soundwalls. The NHDOT will also meet with the Pease Development Authority to coordinate other design issues. Additional communication vehicles on project information include posted information on the project website, project newsletters, press releases, the use of smart work zones during construction and email blasts.

The NHDOT requires the execution of Municipal Agreements with the communities prior to construction that outline future maintenance responsibilities, delegate traffic control to the NHDOT, and include a policy on the utilization of police officers and flaggers.

Mr. Waszczuk concluded the presentation and opened up the meeting to questions and comments.

The following questions and answers occurred on May 27, 2009 at the meeting in the Town Hall in Newington:

Question 1 – Jack Pare – Are navigational considerations included in the design of the drilled shaft pier and the mass pier option for the Little Bay Bridge? The current is skewed across the piers and the drilled shafts may create increased navigational problems.

Answer: The Department will be conducting hydrodynamic modeling of the piers to determine the modifications to the existing flows through the bridge area.

Question 2 – Dennis Hebert – Who will have the maintenance responsibility for the proposed park?

Answer: The proposed park is an opportunity that the NHDOT could provide as part of the project. If the town decides to have the park included in the project, the Town of Newington would be responsible for the maintenance of the park through the execution of the Municipal Agreement. If the Town determines that they do not want the park, the NHDOT will simply replace the current function of this area following construction.

Question 3 – Richard Stern? – Who will maintain the General Sullivan Bridge (GSB)?

Answer: The State of NH will maintain the GSB, as it does currently.

Question 4 – Chris Boldt –Dover – The Exit 6 proposed improvements have a similar layout as Exit 9, with 3 sets of signals in a short distance. Have the traffic impacts and potential backups been evaluated?

Answer: The design accommodates traffic volumes that have been forecasted out to 2025, with the appropriate lane use and storage lengths for traffic during the peak morning and evening hours. The 3 sets of signals will also be interconnected and coordinated to provide optimal traffic flow.

Question 5 - Jan Stuart – Who will maintain the local connector road behind the gas station at Exit 4?

Answer: This local road could be either a private road or a town road. The existing SB barrel from the end of the local road to the former drive-in site will be reduced in width to town standards and likely combined with the sale of the former drive-in site.

Question 6 – Cynthia Copeland – Is the 50 space park and ride lot on US Route 4 in Lee large enough?

Answer: This lot was envisioned to service the Lee and Durham area with 30 – 50 spaces. The NHDOT is currently discussing options with a private developer for a multi-use site. If it is determined that a larger park and ride facility is warranted a separate Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) project would likely be needed.

Question 7 – Cynthia Copeland – Considering the CMAQ program is a 3- year program that requires a local match and the FEIS committed to fund bus service for 5 years, how are local funding matches be developed?

Answer: This is an issue that requires further discussion, but the FEIS committed to enhance the proposed COAST express bus service with and to complement the existing local bus service in the project area with added buses to improve the frequency and service during the peak hours.

Question 8 – Peggy Lamson – How were the soundwall locations determined?

Answer: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations are utilized in determining the noise thresholds and cost/benefit criteria to identify the locations of the soundwalls. In Newington there was only one receptor that met the criteria for consideration making a soundwall cost prohibitive. There are many receptors in Dover that met the criteria, and providing a soundwall in four separate locations was determined to be cost effective for the reduction in noise received. The FEIS also committed to evaluating the use of “quiet pavement”. This is believed to have a short term benefit as the voids in the pavement become filled with sand and sediment over time that create winter maintenance problems relative to freeze/ thaw cycles. This also tends to increase the noise levels back to those of our typical pavement surface.

Question 9 – Justin Richardson – The plans depict detention basins for the treatment of storm water. Are gravel wetlands being considered as a form of treatment?

Answer: The Water Quality Certificate has not yet been received from NHDES that will set the parameters for storm water treatment. However, an FEIS commitment was made to provide water treatment structures that would produce a no net increase in pollutant loading. The use of detention basins, gravel wetlands, as well as wet and dry ponds will be evaluated for use on the project. The soil conditions and groundwater elevations also are considered in the selection of the appropriate treatment type. The pollutant loading will be addressed for the project as a whole and not on an outfall by outfall basis.

Question 10 – Jack Pare – How will pedestrian and bicycle access be provided when the GSB is being rehabilitated?

Answer: It is anticipated that the proposed SB outside shoulder will be utilized for pedestrians and bicycles with a concrete barrier system providing positive protection from traffic. In addition, there may be other short periods of time during construction that the bridge must be closed, without pedestrian and bicycle access, to complete construction operations.

Question 11 – Chris Boldt – If Dover does not receive funding, how flexible is the plan to add tolls at the Exit 6 ramps or to move the tolls south of Exit 6?

Answer: The NHDOT would look at other alternatives first before considering new toll facilities.

Question 12 – Mike Marconi – Would noise levels be reduced if the elevation of the Spaulding Turnpike were lowered 7”-8” ?

Answer: One of the original design alternatives considered raising the elevation of the Turnpike. The elevations are now designed close to the existing elevations. The noise levels are anticipated to be roughly the same with the Spaulding Turnpike being moved slightly away from the neighborhoods. The final grade will also be dependent on groundwater and geotechnical conditions.

Question 13 – Sam Bidford – Which contract includes the construction of the soundwalls ?

Answer: The first contract will construct 800 – 1,000 feet of soundwall. The soundwall construction limits will be determined based on design constraints and the practicality of constructing the soundwall within each contract. The elevation of the Spaulding Turnpike will be approximately the same near Pomeroy Cove.

Question 14 – Sam Bidford – Will the Spur Road traffic approaching Route 4 be limited to right turns only?

Answer: Yes, the raised median island on Route 4 will prohibit left turns.

Question 15 – Justin Richardson – Has the visual impact of adding soundwalls been compared to the noise impact, as there are many more travelers that enjoy the views of Pomeroy Cove?

Answer: There has been strong support for the soundwalls by the affected property owners during the development of the selected alternative. There will be neighborhood meetings to verify that at least 75% of the affected property owners still support the soundwalls. The NHDOT is also investigating the use of transparent soundwall panels along Pomeroy Cove, and will evaluate associated cost, durability and maintenance issues. The soundwall panels would be constructed on top of a crashworthy, concrete barrier.

Question 16 – Dennis Hebert – Is the profile of the existing Little Bay Bridge being retained? The vertical geometry, and associated sight distance, appears to create a congestion problem during the peak traffic hours?

Answer: Yes, the profile is being retained as it adequate for 60 MPH and the posted speed is 50 MPH. The existing, narrow (2’ wide) shoulders and the close proximity of the exits (5 in less than 2.5 miles) are conditions that contribute to the congestion. The proposed design, that includes 4 lanes, 12’ wide shoulders and eliminates Exit 5 will improve safety and traffic flow. In order to improve the profile to meet a 65 MPH design, the abutments of the bridges would need to be raised about 8’ and the entire bridge would need to be reconstructed (the USCG requires the existing navigational opening to be maintained).

Question 17 – Denise Whittier – What are the construction hours for the project?

Answer: The majority of construction will occur between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm with some night time operations. The Contractor can work through the winter if it is determined necessary.

Question 18 – Chris Boldt – Where are the soundwalls located?

Answer: There are 4 soundwall locations. The first one starts just north of the Little Bay Bridge along the SB barrel and extends northerly where it ends near Route 4 along the SB on-ramp. The second soundwall starts approximately 800' north of the Little Bay Bridge along the NB barrel and continues northerly up the NB off-ramp and easterly along Route 4 where it ends near the Dover Point Road intersection. The last two soundwalls begin north of Route 4 on both the NB and SB barrels and continue northerly around the Dover Toll Plaza and end approximately 0.5 miles north of the toll plaza.

Question 19 – unknown person – Will the Exit 4 NB on-ramp be gated off?

Answer: No, the selected alternative maintains the Exit 4 NB on-ramp.

Question 20 – Mike Marconi – When does the town need to provide feedback on the proposed General Sullivan Bridge approach park?

Answer: Construction of the park is proposed with the rehabilitation of the General Sullivan Bridge, so there is time for the Town to consider if they want a park in this location. The storm water management area will be constructed with the initial 11238L Contract to address the storm water from the new bridge and roadway.

Question 21 – Representative Jackie Cali-Pott – How is this project being funded and is there any “Stimulus” funding?

Answer: The project is primarily funded with Turnpike funds along with a \$33 million of Federal Earmarks. This project did not receive any “Stimulus” funding.

Question 22 – Gail Pare – Did the “Stimulus” funding free up any funding that could be utilized on this project?

Answer: The Turnpike System did not receive funding from the “Stimulus” program, which freed other Turnpike funds to be applied to this project.

Question 23 - Dennis Hebert - What is the cost of the soundwalls?

Answer: The cost of each segment of soundwall is approximately \$2 million.

Question 24 – Dennis Hebert – How many homes in Dover will benefit from these soundwalls?

Answer: The number of properties in Dover that will benefit from the addition of 4 soundwalls is depicted in the FEIS. We will research and provide a response. [Subsequent to the meeting, on page 4-177 of the FEIS, 167 homes will benefit from the soundwalls under the current design].

Question 25 – Dennis Hebert – Is the noise level measured from inside or outside the homes?

Answer: The noise levels are measured as an average for each house. The noise level is a function of traffic volumes, traffic speeds and the distance from the highway to the receptor/home.

Question 26 – Dennis Hebert – Could the NHDOT utilize a sound deadening approach to noise abatement, similar to what happens around airports to help maintain the visual resources that are present along the corridor?

Answer: The current federal regulations on the noise abatement measures do not include this as an option.

Question 27 – Richard Stern – What happens to the noise that is directed towards the soundwalls? Will the soundwalls in Dover funnel noise across the bay towards Newington?

Answer: The sound will be redirected and dispersed by the soundwalls. We do not believe the noise will be funneled across the bay.

Question 28 – unknown person – Is the General Sullivan Bridge stable enough to last until construction is started?

Answer: The rehabilitation of the General Sullivan Bridge is a project commitment. The bridge is scheduled for inspection this summer. If the inspection indicates that the condition of the bridge is not compatible with the intended rehabilitation, the commitment will be re-evaluated.

Question 29 – unknown person – Will Fox Run Road be closed at the Turnpike and, if so, how will Wal-Mart customers exit?

Answer: The ramps at Exit 2 will be closed under the project. Those who utilized this exit to travel north on the Spaulding Turnpike will need to travel east on Fox Run Road, to the signalized intersection with Woodbury Avenue, for access to the Spaulding Turnpike at Exit 3.

Question 30 – Beatrice Marconi – Will access from Gosling Road to Arboretum Drive be discontinued?

Answer: No, the existing connections will remain. The proposed Spaulding Turnpike access to Arboretum Drive at Exit 3 provides another access point into Pease. This will extend the useful life of the Gosling Road interchange as traffic has more options to gain access into and from Pease.

Question 31 – unknown person – Is there any access granted to the Pease property along the northern edge of Woodbury Avenue?

Answer: There was one point of access granted as part of the Public Hearing process.

Question 32 – unknown person - Where are sidewalks proposed at Exit 3?

Answer: There are sidewalks proposed on both sides of Woodbury Avenue from the Fox Run Road intersection west to the NB ramp termini. The sidewalk on the southern side is terminated at this location. Pedestrians will be able to cross Woodbury Avenue at the signalized crosswalk to the sidewalk along the northern side which extends over the

Spaulding Turnpike, through the Arboretum Drive intersection, and terminates several hundred feet beyond the intersection.

Question 33 – Justin Richardson – Is there a way to address a concern regarding the use of the proposed (General Sullivan Bridge approach park) parking lot along Shattuck Way primarily by fisherman and not the park users?

Answer: The NHDOT has identified the park area as an opportunity to enhance the recreational use in the area. A parking lot is viewed as an element to support recreational use. If the town doesn't want the park or parking lot, it will not be included in the project.

The following questions and answers occurred on May 28, 2009 at the meeting in the Town Hall in Dover:

Question 1 – Representative David Watters – Has the 3' rise in sea level identified in the Climate Action Report been considered in the design?

Answer: The existing vertical clearances for the bridges will be maintained and the elevation of the Spaulding Turnpike will be at or above the existing conditions.

Question 2 – John Scruton – Who will maintain the pedestrian bridge to the General Sullivan Bridge?

Answer: The City of Dover, through the Municipal Agreement, would be responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalk and the pedestrian bridge from Hilton Park to the General Sullivan Bridge.

Question 3 – Dean Trefethen – How will the opening of travel lanes be addressed in Newington when there will only be 2 lanes in each direction over the SB Little Bay Bridge while the NB Little Bay Bridge is being rehabilitated?

Answer: The ultimate 4 lanes will not be opened initially as the need to match into the 2 lanes over the Little Bay Bridge will dictate how many lanes can be opened safely.

Question 4 – Dean Trefethen – Given NHDOT funding concerns, and the estimated cost for the General Sullivan Bridge rehabilitation of \$26 Mil, has consideration been given to adding a sidewalk to the Little Bay Bridge for \$5 Mil in lieu of rehabilitating the General Sullivan Bridge?

Answer: The General Sullivan Bridge is the second highest rated historic bridge in the state and the commitment to rehabilitate the bridge was made during the FEIS. The addition of a recreational connection to the Little Bay Bridge would cost approximately \$8 Mil and it would cost an additional approximate \$8 Mil to remove the General Sullivan Bridge. This would result in a net difference of \$10 Mil. Given the total estimated cost of the project of approximately \$200 Mil, the savings would be 5% and the historic structure would be lost forever. The Division of Historical Resources (DHR) has strongly advocated for retaining this structure. The inspection of the General Sullivan Bridge is scheduled for this summer. If rehabilitation is determined infeasible, then a re-evaluation of the bridge treatment will need to occur and will be coordinated FHWA, DHR and others

Question 5 – Beth Oler – Is there a specific cost to rehabilitate that the General Sullivan Bridge that would trigger an evaluation of the cost vs. benefit?

Answer: The NHDOT will perform due diligence but there is not a specific number.

Question 6 – Beth Oler – Will the soundwalls along Pomeroy Cove eliminate the views?

Answer: The NHDOT will be investigating the use of transparent soundwall panels constructed on top of a concrete, crashworthy barrier. The project website has visualizations of what these transparent soundwalls may look like.

Comment 7 – Bruce Woodruff (City of Dover Planner) – During the development of the FEIS, the Advisory Task Force process extended over a period of three and a half years. During that process, the City Council agreed on the rehabilitation of the General Sullivan Bridge and the construction of soundwalls based upon support from the neighborhoods.

Question 8 – Dave Sweeney – Does the crest (profile) of the Little Bay Bridge affect the traffic flow and will it be improved?

Answer: The profile is being retained as it adequate for 60 MPH and the posted speed is 50 MPH. The existing, narrow (2' wide) shoulders and the close proximity of the exits (5 in less than 2.5 miles) are conditions that contribute to the congestion. The proposed design, that includes 4 lanes, 12' wide shoulders and eliminates Exit 5 will improve safety and traffic flow. In order to improve the profile to meet a 65 MPH design, the abutments of the bridges would need to be raised about 8' and the entire bridge would need to be reconstructed.

Question 9 – Dave Sweeney – Since the General Sullivan Bridge isn't being utilized for the original purpose, should it still be considered historic and couldn't the recreational connection be constructed beneath the Little Bay Bridge?

Answer: The construction of a recreational connection beneath the Little Bay Bridge could not be permitted as it would reduce the vertical clearance of the navigation channel.

Question 10 – Marty Coyle – Will Davis Bacon wage rates be utilized for this project?

Answer: Yes they will.

Question 11 – Marty Coyle – Will there be an agreement for this project that utilizes non-union and union labor?

Answer: This project will conform to the required labor laws and the prevailing wage rates as established by the Davis Bacon Act. Fr further information regarding labor, the NHDOT Office of Federal Compliance should be contacted.

Question 12 – Nora Kelley – Are there methods to reduce “rubber necking” during construction?

Answer: This is very difficult issue to implement as the project area is highly constrained however some sort of shielding may be possible along with a reduction of the posted speed by 10 MPH during construction.

Question 13 – Nora Kelley – Will Arboretum Drive be a new entrance into Pease?

Answer: The main entrance to Pease will still be via Exit 1. However, Arboretum Drive will provide a northern entrance that will prolong the useful life of Exit 1, as some traffic will utilize Arboretum Drive to access and egress the Spaulding Turnpike.

Question 14 – Nora Kelley – Although there is access to Pease from Portsmouth via the trolley, there is currently no direct bus service into Pease. Will this project improve public bus service into Pease?

Answer: As part of the FEIS, Exit 1 has been identified as a common connection point of access for bus services. A future meeting will be scheduled with Pease representatives to discuss the possibility of direct bus service into Pease.

Question 15 - Nora Kelley – Will this meeting be with the Pease Board of Directors or the Tenants Association of Pease (TAP)?

Answer: The meeting can be scheduled with both entities.

Question 16 – Unknown person – Will widening Hilton Drive to two lanes increase traffic speed ?

Answer: The design speed for this roadway will be 25 MPH. Curb and sidewalk will be designed along Dover Point Road within the existing pavement width. The curbed section, with narrower pavement widths, should serve to encourage reduced traffic speed along this roadway segment.

Question 17 – Dave Sweeney – Can natural growth and vegetation be utilized instead of a soundwall?

Answer: The width of natural vegetation needs to be several hundred feet wide and there isn't sufficient right-of-way width to consider this as a noise abatement solution.

Question 18 – unknown person – With most of the noise coming from tires can “quiet” pavement be utilized to reduce noise?

Answer: The FEIS committed the NHDOT to evaluate the use of “quiet pavement”. This is believed to have a short term benefit as the voids in the pavement become filled with sand and sediment that create winter maintenance problems relative to freeze/ thaw cycles. Over time noise levels tend to increase back to those of our typical pavement surface.

Question 19 – Dean Trefethen – How much wider are the soil tray soundwalls in Manchester, and are they being considered for this project?

Answer: This type of soundwall is several feet wider and requires an irrigation system. The NHDOT does not feel that this system was successful and therefore will not consider them for this project.

Meeting Notes Completed
And Submitted By:

Peter A. Clary, P.E. (VHB)

Noted By: P. Salo & C. Waszczuk

Cc: B. Cass
C. Waszczuk
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City of Dover
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