

December 28, 2016

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: DERRY-LONDONDERRY
IM-0931(201)
13065
I-93 Exit 4A

DATE OF CONFERENCE: September 27, 2016

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Derry Municipal Center

ATTENDED BY:

Keith Cota	NHDOT
John Butler	NHDOT
Chris Bean	CLD Engineers
Mark Hutchins	Normandeau Associates
Leo Tidd	Louis Berger
Mike Fowler	Derry Public Works Director
Janusz Czyzowski	Londonderry Public Works Director
Jamie Sikora	Federal Highway Administration
Approximately 125 citizens	

SUBJECT: Public Officials/Public Informational Meeting

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Presentation

Keith Cota opened the meeting by noting that the purpose of the meeting is to update the public on the status of the Exit 4A project and receive feedback.

The project is still being led by the towns of Derry and Londonderry; however, the NHDOT is now more actively involved in the project, providing administrative oversight of the development of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). After completion of the SDEIS, NHDOT will take over the leadership of the project for the rest of the design and construction phases. Construction is currently scheduled to start in 2019, with completion around the same time as completion of the I-93 widening. Each town has committed to provide \$5,000,000 of funding toward the project.

NHDOT continues to work on the widening of I-93 between Salem and Manchester, with completion targeted for the end of 2020. The final two construction contracts were recently advertised. They are in the area of Exit 4A. The current widening of I-93 will result in a 6-lane highway; however, there are future projects in the State's Ten Year Plan to achieve the ultimate goal of an 8-lane highway. The website for more information on the widening of I-93 is www.RebuildingI93.com.

Funding for the Exit 4A project has been included in the latest State Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan, which was recently approved by the Legislature. The estimated total project cost, including design, right-of-way acquisition and construction, is \$56.8 million.

Chris Bean gave a summary of the various consultant firms that are working on the project and what their responsibilities are.

A project website has been created: www.i93exit4a.com. It contains past project-related documents, and will have links to the PowerPoint presentation and video recording of tonight's meeting.

Chris discussed the basic Purpose and Need of the project:

- Reduce congestion and improve safety along NH 102 east of I-93.
- Promote economic vitality in the Derry/Londonderry area.

A brief project history was reviewed. Early planning began in 1985. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) began in 1998. A public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was held in 2007. Several alternatives were evaluated in the DEIS, and Alternative A (see description below) was presented as the preferred alternative. Comments from the 2007 public hearing included concerns over project cost and funding uncertainty, environmental impacts, and impacts to private property. In late 2015, the governor's office expressed support for accelerating the project, which led to the inclusion of the project with dedicated funding in the State Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan. Because so much time has passed since the 2007 public hearing, it was decided that the DEIS needs to be updated to determine if the conclusions reached in 2007 are still valid. Therefore, a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) is currently being prepared.

The SDEIS will evaluate the same "reasonable range of alternatives" that were considered in the DEIS. In addition to the No Build alternative, there are five Build alternatives:

- **Alternatives A and B** both involve a new diamond interchange on I-93 in the town of Londonderry, approximately 1 mile north of Exit 4. Under Alternative A, a 1-mile connector roadway would be built on new alignment from the interchange to Folsom Road, near the intersection of North High Street and Madden Road, in the town of Derry. Folsom Road and subsequently Tsienneto Road would be upgraded and the intersections would be improved to the project terminus at the intersection of Tsienneto Road and NH 102. Under Alternative B, rather than utilizing existing roads, a new alignment roadway would be constructed north of Folsom Road and Tsienneto Road to connect with NH 102 at the Tsienneto Rd. intersection.
- **Alternatives C and D** both involve a new diamond interchange on I-93 in the town of Londonderry, approximately one mile south of existing Exit 5 (and north of the interchange location under Alternatives A and B). Both Alternatives C and D also include a connector road to NH 28 (Rockingham Road/Manchester Road), as well as upgrades to NH 28. Alternative C would then follow a new alignment similar to Alternative B, north of Tsienneto Road, before connecting to NH 102 at the Tsienneto Road/NH 102 intersection. Alternative D would follow NH 28 to the NH 28/ Tsienneto Road intersection, then upgrade Tsienneto Road to the intersection with NH 102 (similar to Alternative A).
- **Alternative F** involves the upgrade of approximately 1.7 miles of NH Route 102 through downtown Derry, from Londonderry Road, at the Londonderry/Derry town line to the NH 28 Bypass.

Some of the environmental issues that will be updated in the SDEIS include:

- Traffic and Transportation (including Interstate Access Modification Report)
- Surface and Ground Water Resources (including chloride)
- Land Use/Socioeconomics
- Air Quality and Noise
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Wetlands and Vernal Pools
- Cultural Resources
- Contaminated properties
- Indirect Effects/Cumulative Impacts (including Woodmont Commons)

Any groups or individuals who are interested in becoming more involved in the review of the project's impact specifically on historic properties may have an opportunity to become a "Section 106 consulting party". Section 106 refers to the National Historic Preservation Act. Contact any member of the project team after the meeting to get more details.

Keith Cota reviewed the project schedule:

- Mid 2016 to late 2017: Complete the SDEIS, conduct a formal public hearing, issue a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision documenting the selected alternative and its associated environmental impacts.
- Early 2018 to late 2019: Complete final design, permitting approvals, and right-of-way acquisition.
- Late 2019 to late 2022: Project construction.

Leo Tidd gave a brief walk-through of the project website. It includes an area for providing comments or asking questions.

Janusz Czyzowski, Londonderry Public Works Director, noted that the Town of Londonderry supports the project as it will provide an opportunity for significant economic development of properties to the east of I-93. Previous project delays were primarily due to a lack of funding being available to complete the project, which now appears to be resolved.

Mike Fowler, Derry Public Works Director, noted that a major recent change is that the towns now have the assistance of NHDOT in moving the project forward, and funding beyond the two town's financial commitments is now in place. From Derry's perspective, the major benefit of the project is traffic congestion relief, and the town supports the project.

At this point, the meeting was opened up to questions and comments.

Public Input

Derry resident on NH 102 near Tsienneto Road intersection

Concerned with increased traffic on Tsienneto Road. Tsienneto Road is residential. How will the NH 102/Tsienneto Road intersection handle the increased traffic? Will traffic signals be installed? Concerned with the speed of traffic on NH 102.

Anticipated traffic diversions associated with each of the alternatives will be quantified in the SDEIS. Intersections will be upgraded as necessary to handle any increase in traffic, including potentially signaling the NH 102/Tsienneto Road intersection if warranted.

Derry resident on Tsienneto Road near Scenic Drive

There have been numerous accidents on Tsienneto Road, including fatalities. There are “knolls”, sharp curves, and poor sight lines along Tsienneto Road. Will these be addressed? Speeding is a common problem. The east end of Tsienneto Road is in a flood zone. Concerned with the chloride issue and wetland impacts. All houses have private wells with no Town water. Reducing traffic on NH 102 (Broadway) through downtown is not a good idea as it will hurt businesses. Virtually all of the developable property for “economic vitality” is in Londonderry. Questions if this is really a beneficial project for Derry. She also asked if the recently collected raw traffic data would be available to the public.

Alternative A, and its associated impacts to Tsienneto Road, is being re-evaluated as part of the SDEIS. If Alternative A does move forward as the preferred alternative, improvements to the Tsienneto Road alignment, profile, and sight lines would be included. The project's impact on water quality and natural resources will be addressed. Some water quality issues can be addressed by constructing measures such as treatment swales and detention basins, however, the chloride issue will be more challenging. All traffic data collected for the project is available to the public.

Mark Connors, Derry resident and vice president of the Derry Rail-Trail Alliance

Mr. Connors noted that the project crosses an old railroad corridor that is envisioned for use as a rail-trail. There is an approximately one mile long gap section in the developed rail-trail between Hood Park in Derry and NH 28 in Londonderry. This section has not been developed to date because it is privately owned. He requested that the Exit 4A project construct an overpass or underpass where the new road crosses the rail-trail corridor, and that the project should construct the missing gap section of rail-trail. He also requested that the Derry Rail-Trail Alliance become a Consulting Party to the Section 106 process.

The project will be designed to not preclude the extension of the rail trail.

Colleen Madden, Derry resident

Ms. Madden expressed her concern for the acquisition of homes and property that will be required with any of the alternatives. She questioned who ultimately decides which alternative is selected and recommended that it be done by a local referendum.

The final layout as brought forward in the DEIS will be presented to a formal Public Hearing with a Special Committee, who will determine the need for the layout and, ultimately, it will be FHWA who provides final approval of the selected alternative in their issues of the “record of decision”.

Derry real estate broker and property owner on Alternatives A and B

He noted that the Walmart formerly on Manchester Road (NH 28) has relocated to Ashleigh Drive and expanded since 2007 when the previous environmental document was done. This has increased traffic on Manchester Road. He noted that Alternative B connects to the Manchester Road/Ashleigh Drive intersection. He expressed concern with the additional traffic being added to the intersection, and to the segment of Manchester Road between Ashleigh Drive and Tsienneto Road. He asked if there was additional cost to study Alternatives C and D. He thought Alternative A was already chosen. He asked how much traffic will be using Exit 4A, and how much will be diverted off of Broadway (NH 102) downtown.

All of the Alternatives in the 2007 DEIS need to be updated and re-evaluated. This is included in the current project scope. One of the issues that will be updated is the traffic model. This will account for the Walmart relocation. The volume of traffic expected to use Exit 4A and the associated reduction of traffic on Broadway (NH 102) will be determined by the updated traffic modeling. The 2007 DEIS is available on the project website, and it contains the anticipated traffic volumes at Exit 4A and on Broadway with various alternatives based on traffic modeling completed at that time.

Unidentified speaker

Asked about project funding. Each town has committed to \$5,000,000 of funding. What happens if there are cost over-runs? He also asked if input from the local police and fire departments has been considered. *Janus Czyzowski, Londonderry Public Works Director, stated that the two towns funding commitment is capped at \$5,000,000 each.*

Keith Cota responded that the project cost estimate and funding allocations are based on the current project scope. This includes the funding in the State Ten Year Plan and includes the local commitments. If additional items are added to the scope of the project, there will need to be discussions as to how those new items are to be funded, be it State, local, or private. Local police and fire departments have been, and will continue to be, involved in the project development.

Chris Oliverio, 1 Trolley Car Lane, Londonderry

He noted that there are major impacts to the Trolley Car Lane residences. He rarely sees traffic congestion at Exit 4, and believes that the project is primarily only a benefit to private development. He asked if there will be access to the west from the new interchange. He asked when people will know more details about impacts to their individual properties. He noted that noise measurement were taken recently along Trolley Car Lane, but questioned if the times they were taken are really the highest noise periods.

The project is only constructing access to the east of the interchange. Any future access to the west would need to be pursued through a separate project including a separate environmental study. The design layouts and associated impacts to individual properties will be getting refined over the next several months. Another public informational meeting is anticipated in the spring of 2017 with a public hearing in the summer of 2017. The noise measurements were taken at peak hour times on I-93 and will be used to calibrate the noise model.

Tom Cardon, 2 Cunningham Drive, Derry (State Representative & former Town Councilor)

Who decides which alternative will be selected and when will that decision be made?

Choosing the preferred alternative will be a cooperative process between the two towns and NHDOT, guided by public input and consideration of environmental issues. Ultimately, the Federal Highway Administration will need to approve the proposed action after a formal public hearing and comment period on the Environmental Impact Statement. The public hearing is targeted for mid-2017.

If project costs get “way out of hand,” will the DOT ask the towns for more money?

There will need to be a dialogue with the towns about any significant cost increase. This does not necessarily mean that more money would be required from the towns. There may be other Federal or State funding sources that could be pursued, or the scope of the project could be reduced to meet the current funding.

Wanted to confirm that the State and Federal funding applies to the entire project length, not just from Exit 4A to Ross’s Corner.

State and Federal funding will be applied to the whole project as defined under the ultimate Record of Decision.

How will the chloride issue and the impact on Beaver Brook be addressed?

This is a very significant and challenging issue. The Exit 4A team will need to work with the Department of Environmental Services (DES) to come up with an acceptable chloride management plan. Exactly what that will entail is unknown at this time.

What about the Northern Long Eared Bat?

Monitoring has recently been completed in the project area and there was no evidence of the Northern Long Eared Bat. Many other bat species were recorded.

The project should include construction of the missing rail-trail section, including a bridge where the new connector road crosses the trail. The Woodmont Commons developer is supportive of the rail-trail, and it was my understanding as a former town councilor that including the rail-trail had been agreed to.

The project does not currently include construction of the missing rail-trail section, but it will not preclude the ability for it to be constructed in the future. The trail's crossing of the roadway could be accommodated at-grade at the signalized intersection with North High Street, but a grade-separated crossing will also be considered. The Exit 4A team understands that the rail-trail is an important issue to the community, and further discussions will be necessary.

John Farrell, Londonderry Town Council chairman

The town of Londonderry has a written agreement that the cost to the town will not exceed \$5,000,000. The Woodmont Commons developer has agreed to construct an emergency services facility within the development to address increased service needs.

Joseph Picaro, Derry resident

Mr. Picaro expressed doubt that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) would fund the project as it seems to address only local issues and provides no benefit to the Interstate highway system.

The project has been deemed eligible for federal funding. An Interstate Access Agreement will need to be prepared and submitted to FHWA, justifying the need for a new interchange and documenting its impact to the Interstate and local highway systems.

Roger Wint (sp?), Londonderry resident

Concerned with impacts to the church on the corner of Tsienneto Road and NH 28 Bypass. Do we get to have input on the impacts to the property?

The church, and all other abutting property owners, can provide input at any time. Input can be via the project website, speaking at public meetings, or other communication with the project team. In addition to tonight's meeting, there will be at least one more informal public informational meeting (targeted for the spring of 2017), and a formal public hearing (targeted for the summer of 2017).

Gary Lynch, Derry resident

Requested that the missing rail-trail segment be constructed as part of the project, including a grade-separation structure at the crossing with the new connector road. Noted that traffic is already heavy on Folsom Road and Tsienneto Road, so diverting more traffic onto these roads is not a good idea. He favors Alternative C, an entirely new roadway.

There will need to be more dialog relative to the rail-trail issue, and to what degree it can be included as part of the project. As a minimum, the new roadway will be designed so as to not preclude the ability for the missing rail-trail segment to be constructed in the future. If Alternative A is chosen, Folsom Road and Tsienneto Road will need to be upgraded to safely and efficiently handle the anticipated traffic.

Mike Speltz, Londonderry resident

Noted that a 45 day comment period on the SDEIS document is too short, and asked if the project website can be used to distribute information for review more efficiently. He also asked how indirect and cumulative impacts will be addressed.

The project website will be used to make portions of the SDEIS document available for public review as they become available. In terms of addressing indirect and cumulative impacts, there were lessons learned in the recent development of the SEIS for the I-93 widening project. A key will be to make sure that land use and traffic data projections are linked, to provide a true measure of the potential future environmental impacts both with and without the proposed project.

Jim Morgan, Derry Town Council

Asked for consideration of Alternative B/C. It appears that this corridor would have limited property impacts, whereas Alternative A will affect property values and safety for residents of Tsienneto Road. He also suggested that Alternative B/C may provide more economic development potential for the town than Alternative A.

All of the alternatives in the 2007 DEIS need to be updated and re-evaluated. As a clarification, there will be property impacts on all alternatives, including Alternative B/C.

Colleen Madden, Derry resident

There are lots of homes along Alternative C that would be negatively affected, including hers. The top priority of the project should be minimizing impacts to people's homes, not the rail-trail. If homes are going to be acquired, the process should be more personal than just getting a letter in the mail.

Property impacts are taken very seriously. Minimizing impacts to private property will be a high priority; however, some impacts will be unavoidable. The Department has a right-of-way process for interacting with impacted property owners in a sensitive manner.

Unidentified speaker

I don't understand why you are revisiting all of the alternative corridors when Alternative A was already chosen as the proposed route.

Alternative A was presented as the preferred alternative at the 2007 public hearing. The environmental impacts associated with each alternative need to be updated to determine if the previous decision to select Alternative A is still valid. It is important to have up-to-date documentation to defend whatever alternative is ultimately selected.

Brian Chirichiello, Derry Town Council chair & State Representative

Tsienneto Road was built years ago to accommodate the Exit 4A project. Alternative A is still the preferred alternative, correct?

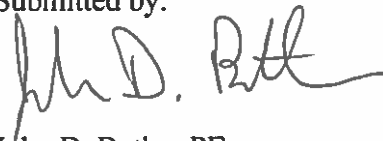
At this point, Alternative A appears to be the leading alternative, however, there is still a lot of updating of information to be completed before it can be determined if that conclusion is still valid.

Mark Beland (sp?), Derry resident, Greater Derry Arts Council

The Greater Derry Arts Council operates the Derry Opera House on Broadway in the downtown. Concerned with the reduction in traffic that would occur downtown with any of the bypass alternatives, and the negative effect that would have on downtown businesses. What are the details and impacts of Alternative F (upgrade of existing NH 102/Broadway)?

An upgrade of the existing NH 102 corridor would likely require significant roadway widening through downtown to efficiently and safely manage the traffic. There would be substantial impacts to the abutting properties. If a bypass corridor is built, some traffic will divert to it (primarily through traffic), but there would also likely be some local traffic that would return to Broadway from the local street system.

Submitted by:



John D. Butler, PE
Preliminary Design Supervisor

Noted by: K. Cota, C. Bean

cc: Peter Stamnas
Keith Cota
Marc Laurin
Chris Bean

Jamie Sikora
Mike Fowler, Town of Derry
Janusz Czyzowski, Town of Londonderry

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