

Meeting: Stakeholder Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: 03/26/10 - 1-4 pm

Location: Kittery Trading Post, Rte. 1 Kittery, Katahdin Room

Progress Report: Alternatives Evaluation

**Maine–New Hampshire Connections Study
Stakeholder Committee Meeting
March 26, 2010, 1pm – 3pm
Kittery Trading Post, Kittery, Maine**

Presenters:

Paul Godfrey, HNTB

Carol Morris, Morris Communications

Stakeholder Committee members:

James Horrigan, Portsmouth Conservation Committee

John Butler, NHDOT

Cristy Cardoso, Portsmouth Citywide Neighborhood Committee

Cathy Goodwin, Greater York Chamber

Kinley Gregg, Town of York

Mark Hasselman, FHWA Maine

John Cater, NH FHWA

Gerry Audibert, MaineDOT

Steve Workman, NH Seacoast Greenway and Kittery resident

Doug Bates, Greater Portsmouth Chamber

Nancy Carmer, City of Portsmouth, Economic Development

Rose Eppard, Portsmouth

John Carlson, Kittery Port Authority

Bob Landry, NHDOT

Peter Somssich, Portsmouth Democrats

Russ Charette, MaineDOT

Ben Porter, Save our Bridges

Linda Wilson, NHDHR

Peter Michaud, NHDHR

Richard Candee, Portsmouth Historical Society

Chris Holt, Portsmouth Pilots

Myranda McGowan, SMRPC

Roger Maloof, Portsmouth Naval Yard

Beth Wheland, Strawberry Banke Museum

Gail Drobnyk, Kittery

Slides referenced can be viewed in the PowerPoint for this meeting.

Meeting began at 1:10pm

Paul Godfrey:

Let's do introductions. *Audience members make brief introductions.* Thank you for coming today. Today we will primarily share what we've completed to date and hear your comments and input.

Final Fatal Flaw report

We talked about this at the last public meeting. We are still incorporating comments. We'll get the final report to you via email next week and also put it on the website. There are no changes in alternatives at this point. The report is about 1 mg in size.

Update

The team has done the detailed evaluation, including travel demand forecast, study area capacity analysis, and conceptual engineering designs for each alternative. When we talked about different bridge options, we showed a box indicating impact. Today, we have a much more detailed plan showing more of the impact to properties, to wetlands and so on.

Let's refresh our memories about remaining alternatives.

Sarah Mildred Long 1 – 2 lane rehabilitation: These are refined designs. This option starts with a Sarah Long 2-lane rehabilitation of the existing structure. Therefore, it remains in the current location with no change to the navigational channel. As part of the rehab, some improvements happen on either side to better address traffic needs. With all options we will install signals at Albacore Connector and the Bypass and would provide turn lanes into the Albacore Connector. The impact in Portsmouth is in the existing right of way. In Kittery – this intersection becomes problematic in the future in terms of safety. We are proposing to add a signal to the Bypass/Bridge Street/Oak Terrace intersection. Could these designs change? Sure. Not cast in stone but these are fair and prudent

assumptions. *Each detailed option slide shows the measurements of the cross-sections for that option.*

Ben: Is there no impact in Kittery?

Paul: No, we are within the right of way.

Sarah Mildred Long 2 – 2-lane replacement: We have 2 sub-options: we can replace the superstructure only, which means the navigational channel is not increased. Or, we can replace super- and substructure and have the opportunity to increase navigational channel. With full replacement, we increase the navigational opening to 300 feet, which is the same as the Memorial today.

Sarah Mildred Long 2 – 4-lane replacement: This is on alignment. It would take advantage of the increased navigational opening and be 4 lanes from the Bypass in Portsmouth to the Bypass in Kittery.

Roger: I have a question for the pilot. Is this what you want?

Chris: It's better than what we have now.

Paul: We met with Chris and the Coast Guard. This is the dimension they'd look for.

Roger: I'm worried about the LNG tankers.

Paul: This is 100 feet more than we've got today. The challenge is skew and current, balancing those factors out. If you get to a 400 – 500 foot opening, we're talking a much more costly bridge. At that point, a lift structure is not practical.

Rose: Will there be no train crossing during the replacement of the bridge, with the replacement options?

Paul: There is always train service in the final product. We'll coordinate the construction with the Shipyard. But with the SML2 options, there is no traffic crossing during construction and that includes trains.

Richard: Can you bring the train track up to grade level and put it on the bridge?

Paul: The maximum rail grade is a percent or a percent and a half. We tried to raise it – we are picking it up by 20 feet. To make it higher is not feasible with existing track and rights of way.

Russ: The other issue is that rail is private.

Chris: With the 4-lane, what's the span?

Paul: 315 feet. We are trying to mimic the 260-foot opening at the Memorial

Chris: It doubles the width of the bridge.

Paul: It's 81 feet. Today, it's 56 feet.

Roger: Would you be able to get tugboats through at the same time?

Chris: With certain vessels, not all.

Bob: Yes, tugs attached to a 120-foot wide ship, vs. tugs on a 106-foot ship today. We don't get to the full Memorial opening clearance but we get greater accommodation.

Paul: Chris would now get bigger ships coming through. The change may be on paper or real. We'd have to redo old piers. Other improvements are still within the right of way. In Portsmouth, we'd need retaining walls so as not to encroach on properties.

Q: How big?

Paul: 4 – 8 feet.

Roger: How about a curved bridge with rail going around the curve? That could also allow the towers to be appropriately aligned with the current.

Paul: We could. From an engineering standpoint, a lift cannot be on a curve. Curved bridges are more costly. It's not impossible but we're on alignment right now, trying to minimize impact. Let's talk about this more when we look at the off-alignment alternative.

Russ: The other issue is super-elevation transitions with speed limits...it is much more costly to do superelevated options.

Bob: The towers cannot be parallel to the current – you would have a 15 to 20 degree tower change or more. You also can't easily tie it back in.

Roger: When I arched it with my finger, against the chart up there, it looked doable.

Steve: Did I miss the Kittery impacts?

Paul: Sorry, let me cover those. We do have potential impacts – three properties – because of the wider, 4-lane aspect of this alternative.

Rose: Signalizing the intersections will back up traffic.

Paul: Yes. It's our duty to make sure backups are not overwhelming. We want to make sure backups are not too near the lift section of the bridge. We looked at a lot of options: roundabout, do nothing, etc. this is viable and details would be determined during final design.

Steve: Where Post Road ties into Bridge Street, is the signal where the lights are now or...?

Paul: The big change is that when we add a signal, we restrict left turns from Bridge St. onto Rte. 1. There are safety concerns.

Richard: I suggest blocking off the Old Post Road.

Paul: That's possible.

Sarah Mildred Long L2A – 2-lane upstream: Here we have the same cross section as a 2-lane replacement. The bridge is immediately upstream of the old one. The advantage is we keep it open during construction. We have a 300-foot opening. Details on either side are the same. The intersection in Portsmouth is slightly to the west but outside of Albacore. In Kittery, we get some property impacts.

Ben: Those are all land impacts?

Paul: Yes, but this is close to buildings.

Sarah Mildred Long 2A – 4-lane upstream: Here we have the same thing. We get a 315-foot opening. As you can imagine, we're pushing

even further out over Market St. In Kittery, more properties to the west are impacted.

Q: Will the rail be centered under the median?

Paul: Yes.

Continued: On a single track?

Paul: Yes. There might be some opportunity to raise the rail up a little.

Roger: If we could get a more straight-on approach, you'd have the highway to the left passing Albacore Park on the northwest.

Paul: In that regard, this roadway pushes even more west, and we are already close to the edge of design standards. I do not think that curve would work. And in Kittery, because it's upstream, it's even closer to properties there.

Chris: Are we talking total removal of the old Sarah Long?

Paul: Yes.

Memorial Bridge 1 – 2-lane rehab: This is a rehabilitation of the existing bridge. It will still tie in at the same places on either side. We can keep what we have today OR it may be possible to create 2 10-foot multi-use paths on either side. We are evaluating if this is feasible. Can the rehabbed structure handle the additional weight from the multi-use paths? It's an additional 11 feet in cross-section. It could be one side for bikes, one side for pedestrians. It's an attractive option.

Richard: Does that include analysis of newer composite materials for road and path?

Paul: Yes. If we can reduce the load, yes.

Carol: Except for the open gridwork. We won't consider that.

Paul: We will not keep the open grid.

Rose: Are these changes subject to the new TIGER grants? Or do we have to go for those with what we already submitted as a design? Can we get the extra bike and ped path?

Paul: Rose, we have a slide on that later, so if you can hold on that would be great.

Memorial Bridge 2 – 2-lane replacement: This is a superstructure replacement. We maintain the clearance and the tie-ins match what's there today. There is opportunity for a greater cross-section. We propose the same travelways but increased shoulders. We could add a shared path on this as well. The big advantage is we can increase shoulder width.

Chris: On the Sarah Long, the travel ways are 12 feet. So why just 11 feet on the Memorial?

Paul: We have the flexibility to go narrower but we have to consider it's an urban environment.

Roger: What's the minimum bike lane?

Paul: We are trying to get 5 feet.

Q: This bridge has a lot of historical implications. Would a replacement try to preserve its appearance? Would it be rededicated to WWI vets?

Paul: That is on the table. Could it look like it does today? Yes. Be rededicated? Yes. We'll focus on that once we determine the best option.

Gerry/Bob: Both DOTs agree on this.

John Cater: What's the current loading on this bridge? Is it restricted?

Paul: It limits the weight of trucks to three tons.

Memorial Bridge 6 – pedestrian / bike bridge: We talked about a few different options for this: Movable, fixed, etc. At this point, we are at the point where this would be a movable bridge rather than using elevators to make it fixed, based on safety, security, maintenance, and operability. We assume maintaining the existing 260-foot clearance. 15 foot pathway, 18 feet overall. There would be roadway

modifications on both sides. We could have parking in Portsmouth. Maybe in Kittery too.

Carol: Any thoughts on this one?

Rose: Emergency vehicles need to get through, and it needs to be wide enough so two vehicles can pass each other.

Ben: The turnaround on Badgers Island is close to impacting a building and sewer station.

Paul: It's tight.

Roger: I suggest 20-foot width. You should see the Brooklyn Bridge, with pedestrians and bikes, people are always getting hit.

Cristy: Do you lose some connectivity from Marcy Street to South Street?

Paul: No, you can still connect. (He shows this on the map.)

Cristy: Could you explain the road changes on the Portsmouth side?

Paul: You have a turnaround today. We are saying it is as far as cars could go.

Christy: That's the turnaround we have now.

Paul: Nothing would change. We'll put in some parking. The roadway is just a turnaround. A gate, something prohibiting cars from driving across.

Chris: The off-ramp from the bridge is the only thing eliminated.

Capacity analysis results

We performed level of service (LOS) analysis for key intersections and on bridges within the Study Area for 2009 and 2035. LOS is shown for both signalized and unsignalized intersections. LOS is for system peak hour, not location specific peak hour. Peak hour is different on one side of the river than from the other...you've got the shipyard, downtown Portsmouth. It's hard to analyze. We focused on peaks on the bridges.

Existing 2009 LOS: In Portsmouth, you see lots of blue. This is good for us. It's like receiving a grade. A – C is good. D and below is dicey. The box shape indicates an unsignalized intersection. A circle is signalized. In downtown Portsmouth, we have some LOS at D. In Kittery, there's good LOS. Shapely is an F, as is the Route 236 intersection.

Q: What is level of service, again?

Paul: When we analyze intersections or roadways, we give a letter grade based on amount of volume, capacity, and congestion.

Ben: It is peak volume against capacity.

Paul: Yes, thanks.

Rose: Is Market Square a D?

Paul: Yes.

2035 LOS no build: Remember, this assumes the Memorial is closed. You see more poor LOS cropping up at Market Street and the Albacore Connector, as well as Bridge Street and Government Street.

2035 Alternatives 1 – 6: Here, the volumes are close enough so we could group them because all the alternatives have 2 lanes on the Memorial and 2 on the Sarah Long. We get improvements with some new signalized intersections. The poor LOS would likely be addressed over time.

Rose: Why did Market Square go to F?

Paul: Because traffic under these alternatives vs. under the no build would include traffic coming over the Memorial Bridge.

Comment: If State and Daniel Streets are no longer one-way, you could get shifts.

2035 LOS alternatives 2 – 6: This assumes a 4-lane Sarah Long. The most noteworthy item here are the improvements in Portsmouth. There is not a lot of difference in other locations.

Q: Where is that other F on this chart?

Paul: It is Market Street and Russell Street.

Comment: That could be signalized.

2035 LOS alternatives 7 – 8: This is pedestrian / bike only. We are getting some improvements in downtown Portsmouth. Why? Because traffic shifts to the Sarah Long.

Rose: If you put this type of bridge in for the Memorial, you kill downtown Kittery.

Paul: Generally, traffic conditions are not too bad under this option.

Chris: Wouldn't those types of things be considered city problems?

Nancy: Yes. We were talking about these issues on the traffic stabilization committee.

Ongoing activities:

- Mode Choice analysis
- Multi-Modal Evaluation
- Air and Noise Analysis
- Business Impact Assessment (Carol Update)
- Life Cycle Costs
- Preparation of Technical Documents/Maps

Business Impact Survey

Carol: The survey has been completed and we are in the process of inputting data. Here is an overview: we mailed surveys to 325 businesses in Kittery and Portsmouth. 25 or so came back rejected due to bad addresses. 86 were returned. This is a good response rate, about 28%. The envelope contained the survey plus a cover letter and map, and were marked "Important Memorial Bridge Survey" in red. We asked about the type of business, where their customers came from, how much they estimated their business went down during November 2008 during bridge closure, and how likely it would be for their customers to continue visiting them without a Memorial Bridge. All responses were anonymous.

Part B of the survey was a customer intercept survey. Over three days, we surveyed customers of 15 stores in different categories. The locations were Golden Harvest, Loco Cocos, Warren's, Irving, We Care

Cleaners, Auto Works, Hoppi's Barber Shop, Jackson's Hardware, Agave, Botanica, Google's, John's Barber, G. Willikers, Colby's and LaRoux Kitchen. We had people at those locations for each of the 3 days asking four questions:

- What street and town do you live on?
- Did you cross the Memorial Bridge immediately before coming to this business?
- Will you cross the Memorial Bridge immediately after leaving this business?
- Did you drive, walk, or bike to this business?

We needed 800 intercepts and got twice that: 620 in Portsmouth, 1000 in Kittery. We should have the analysis back by mid-April. The only glitch was that the ramp on northbound I-95 is closed and will be through May. But we had to go with it since we can't wait until June to do the survey. We will check it against the Origin and Destination data.

TIGER Grant Application Round II:

- USDOT has indicated another round of TIGER Grants in Fall 2010
- No details or criteria known at this time
- Maine and NH are anticipated to submit an application based on findings of Study
- Maine and NH continue to work closely to identify funding opportunities

Paul: We should have a recommendation from this study in June that can be submitted to TIGER.

Rose: Is this separate from the discussions with Senator Collins and Ray LaHood?

Bob: No. The NHDOT had a meeting with the US DOT. We heard there is only \$600M available for this round. It will be more of a \$30M handout for 20 states. That's part the reason our commissioners are working on other funding opportunities. Our application would look better if we looked for other innovative funds.

Roger: Did he give you specific feedback on our first application?

Bob: We were in the top 10%, but only 3% got funded. Out of that, the program only got partial funding - \$1.5B out of \$4B asked for.

Rose: Almost none of it was rehabilitation. It looked like new construction.

Bob: They (USDOT) suggested we look at a bridge in Tulsa, Oklahoma's application.

Richard: I saw the same thing as Rose did: very little bi-state funding. If we could encourage crossing state lines, I think we'd have a higher chance.

Brief discussion about the TIGER Grant process and agency meetings that are ongoing.

Doug: This went to the Vice President of the United States. You did a great job. Susan Collins jumped in right away for the next round.

Linda: Is there any funding from this new jobs bill? Maybe some packaging? At the beginning of the 20th century, we had uncontrolled logging. So what happened was fundraising to buy land and school kids saved pennies. There were liberty bonds in World War II. Could we have bridge bonds? That would give citizens an opportunity to buy in. Can we mobilize that on the private side?

Roger: It would show the feds we are in it for any funding. That's how the shipyard was saved.

Linda: The Seacoast is important to all of New Hampshire. We all relate to it.

Steve: There is precedent for this in the Golden Gate Bridge and Chesapeake Bay Bridges. The US government opposed those both but citizens pushed them through. Also, if you're not aware, a policy statement was just released on the importance of bike / pedestrian accommodation. The state and feds are responsible for improving and integrating walkers and bikers. They are charged to go beyond the minimum standards.

Rose: Is there special funding attached?

Steve: Not sure, but finally, we have something strong at the federal level to support bike and ped use. We can use this statement.

Q: Does anyone know if money went to areas of high unemployment?

Bob: Yes, over half did.

Ben: This is out of the box: why don't we sell naming rights to the bridges?

Russ: In Maine, bridges are named at the legislative level.

Carol: The legislature could vote to accept this, then.

Richard: Remember, this bridge was originally funded in this way: 1/3 of it was a grant and then the states gave 1/3 each.

Comment: Not a bad idea. The government takes credit for the bridge but they only put in a third.

Richard: Can we make the Sarah Long a toll bridge?

Bob: We looked at this for both bridges. The Golden Gate is tolled. But with a toll, we would need electronic tolling – Open Road tolling would work.

Comment: Let's have the Navy pay part of the cost of the Sarah Long since they run rail over it.

Paul: The nice thing is that we are writing this all down! Thank you.

Linda: We need to stress the "memorial" aspect over and over. This matters to people.

Chris: I think people are more concerned with jobs than with sentimental stuff now.

Next steps:

- Stakeholder Committee: Feedback from you today on materials presented
- Finalize Detailed Evaluation by mid-April
- SC and SHC Meeting on April 27th
- Next Public Meeting –May 5th with Open House
- Draft Report by Mid-May

Q: Can you give us a general idea of the price tag for the different alternatives?

Paul: We are still sorting through it but somewhere around \$100M (including capital and long term maintenance and operations) to \$400M for one bridge. These are lifecycle costs.

Gerry: The minimum capital – construction, that is – cost is \$70 – \$120M per bridge.

Kinley: When we finish the report, then what? If Maine does not step up...

Carol: Maine has said that they are looking for funding and will be ready for the recommendation when we have it.

Gerry: We've committed to abide by the recommendations and are working on how to pay for it.

Rose: Do we get a final recommendation on April 27?

Paul: You'll get a final matrix of the options and a sense of what's rising to the top.

Carol: You get the draft recommendation in May.

Paul: The study team will share it with everyone.

Chris: How much does this committee influence the Steering Committee?

Paul: Many of them are here right now. They care and they listen.

Gerry: All of the Steering Committee sits on this one.

Bob: On April 27, we'll have pictures from the inspection reports.

Q: Is it worse than you thought?

Bob: I thought the Sarah Long was in better shape than it is. These inspections have defined our rehab options in particular. The work we've done with Chris and the Coast Guard is eye-opening. Your input is good. Interesting comments.

John Carlson: Every time I watch the bridge go up for a sailboat, I think, what a waste. Could we get them under the bridge without raising it?

Paul: We looked at that early on but those alternatives didn't carry forward.

Meeting adjourned 243pm