

Meeting: Public Informational Meeting

Meeting Date: 02/25/10 - 6-8 pm, open house 5:30-6 pm

Location: Portsmouth High School - Little Theatre

Study Update

**Maine – N. H. Connections
Public Informational Meeting
February 25, 2010
Portsmouth High School, Portsmouth**

Presenters:

Paul Godfrey, HNTB

Carol Morris, Morris Communications

Agencies attending:

Gerry Audibert, MaineDOT

Bob Landry, New Hampshire DOT

Russ Charette, MaineDOT

Leigh Levine, NH Federal Highway Administration

Jamie Sikkora, NH Federal Highway Administration

Mark Hasselmann, Maine Federal Highway Administration

John Butler, New Hampshire DOT

Bill Cass, New Hampshire DOT

Marc Dixon, NH Federal Highway Administration

All slides referenced can be found in the PowerPoint for the meeting.

Meeting began at 6:05 pm

Carol Morris:

Thank you for coming out on this very rainy evening. Tonight's meeting is primarily focused on how we're going to move forward with the study, including looking at the criteria we will use for the detailed evaluation, which will lead to our final recommendation in June. We'll also touch on the TIGER Grant, although I'm sure everyone in this room has heard the news on that, and on the results of the Round 3 Fatal Flaw analysis. Any questions?

Q: What is your role in the study?

Carol: My name is Carol Morris. I handle public outreach and communications. My name and phone number can be found on the study website at www.mainenhconnections.org.

As I am sure you all know, Maine and New Hampshire did not get the TIGER Grant. We don't have any information on why we weren't awarded the grant. Here's what we do know:

- Joint Maine-NH application not selected
- Very competitive grant process
- Moving Forward: Study scope and schedule remains the same
- Both Maine and NH **are committed** to implementing Study recommendations
- Schedule to fund/implement recommendations will depend on alternative selected

Q: Do you know why our application was rejected?

Carol: No, we don't. There were a lot of requests and not near enough dollars to cover them.

Comment: A lot of the TIGER money is going to areas which are economically hard-hit.

Q: Were both Maine and New Hampshire going to match funds equally?

Bob: New Hampshire did offer some and the Port and City of Portsmouth did also.

Carol: That was not a requirement, correct?

Bob: No.

Carol: Moving forward now, we'll look at both bridges and make a recommendation on an alternative: a combination of individual bridge options. Both Maine and New Hampshire are committed to abiding by the study results. As background, however, you all know there's not a lot of funding for infrastructure anywhere, so this will be a challenge.

Here are the existing sources of potential transportation funding:

- Regular biennial Federal transportation appropriation
- Bond issues (subject to voter approval)
- Special appropriations from Congress
- Other federal funding yet to be determined

MaineDOT and NHDOT will be developing a suitable funding approach to support Study recommendations.

The appropriation is every 2 years based on a pre-formulated amount for Maine. Most of those funds are used for maintenance or minor upgrades only, with not a lot left over for big capital projects. A more common funding source for big projects is bond issues, which are subject to voter approval. You will see them on the ballot in November in Maine and sometimes June. Special appropriations – which used to be known as earmarks - are less common now. Finally, other federal stimulus funding is rumored to be available at some point. Both states have been and will continue to be working together over next few months to come up with a funding plan and a timeline.

Q: Has any consideration been given to tolls?

Carol: We're not looking at tolls as this part of study. I do not know if that will be one of the funding ideas the commissioners will be talking about. If there are no other questions, I will ask Paul Godfrey, study manager, to talk about the Fatal Flaw Analysis as well as our analytical process going forward.

Paul Godfrey:

My presentation to you is in two parts. First, we'll look at the completion of the Fatal Flaw Analysis, our study team recommendations, and the alternatives we as a study team recommend to carry forward. If everyone in agreement – the DOTs, Federal Highway Administration, stakeholders, and the public – those are the alternatives we will really look at. The second part is to give you a clear sense of how we'll do that. What does the detailed analysis look like? I'll share all the parts and pieces so you can give us feedback.

The Fatal Flaw Analysis process was an opportunity for a broad analysis of all alternatives generated. The initial Fatal Flaw Analysis looked at the Study Purpose and Need to get started.

- Fatal Flaw Process
 - Broad level of analysis conducted in 3 Rounds
 - Based on Study Purpose and Need
 - **16** Evaluation Criteria identified
 - Generated 63 different alternatives

- An OPTION is one piece of the ALTERNATIVE.
- An ALTERNATIVE is an entire solution.

Tonight is the last part of the discussion of the Fatal Flaw Analysis. I want to make sure everyone is comfortable with how we present the information here.

Options and alternatives graphic: I wanted to come up with something to graphically represent our terminology. When you put two options together, that's an alternative. Or, if you have two new options to replace both, that also equals an alternative.

Fatal Flaw Analysis results slide: We did three rounds of Fatal Flaw Analysis. This allowed us to evaluate alternatives to a certain point. If they reached the point where we saw they had a fatal flaw, we dismissed them.

- Round 1: 34 alternatives dismissed (29 remain)
- Met with Steering and Stakeholder committees in November to Review Round 1 Fatal Flaw Results
- Round 2: 14 alternatives dismissed (15 remain)
- General Public, Steering and Stakeholder Committee concurred on Round 1 and 2 findings at Dec. 16th Public Meeting

Round 3: We updated both the Steering and Stakeholder Committees on our recommendation and they gave concurrence. We have compiled the entire Fatal Flaw Analysis into a thick report that has been delivered to the DOTs and Federal Highways. Very soon, it will be available to you on the study website. It documents everything from the Fatal Flaw Analysis. That's a big stepping stone in the process. It allows us to say we started with 63 and brought that down to what we have today, 9 alternatives. Carol will send an email as soon as it's available online, about 1 – 2 weeks.

Round 3:

- Compared options and alternatives against **these criteria**:
 - Impacts at/near Port of New Hampshire
 - Order of Magnitude Life Cycle costs
 - Mobility within Study Area without Sarah Long Bridge during construction
- Result – 15 alternatives reduce to 9*
 - * - *includes No-build alternative*

No alternatives or options were dismissed on cost alone. Generally, our low-end option had a life cycle cost of \$75M and the high end was with the 4-lane designs at around \$250M. Bottom line after Round 3 is 9 alternatives.

Now let's look at what's been considered but dismissed.

SL3: This adds an additional 50 feet of vertical clearance. With that, we reduce the number of bridge openings by 50%. Rail would remain on the bridge. Because the bridge would be higher in the air, the area it impacted is larger. Port of NH sees sizable impacts, and it potentially impacts the historic district in Portsmouth, residences and commercial properties in Kittery. This

would require relocation of Bridge Street. Based on the impacts, study team recommended this option be dismissed.

Audience agrees with dismissal of this option.

SL3A: This option is immediately upstream of the existing Sarah Long Bridge. This option allows the Bridge to remain open during construction. Limits are the same. Impacts are similar, including the Port of New Hampshire, more in Portsmouth, and about the same in Kittery, including Bridge Street relocation. Again, all the information told the study team to dismiss this option.

Audience agrees with dismissal of this option.

Those were the only ones dismissed in Round 3. Now let's look at what's being carried forward for further study.

No-build: The no-build is an alternative that has to be a part of the process. Under this scenario, the Memorial Bridge is closed, the Sarah Long Bridge remains open. Note that this does not meet our Purpose and Need. But again, it must continue to be included in the study just as a baseline comparison.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward.

MB1, rehab on the existing alignment: This is a rehab of the existing Memorial 2-lane bridge. We recommend carrying it forward for detailed evaluation.

Q: With the no-build, is the Memorial Bridge removed?

Paul: Yes, it would be removed. This option is required as part of the process for comparison. We recognize it does not meet Purpose and Need.

Q: With the rehab alternative, would the components use the latest technology for the lift action?

Paul: It's probably a replacement of equipment. If there's an opportunity for new technology, we'll use it if it makes sense – that type of detail comes in final design. The potential is there.

Continued: Wouldn't we have the same problems we have now down the road with certain bridge parts? Wouldn't a replacement bring less problems?

Paul: The question between rehab and replacement - the key here is that we want to make sure all these options have a long and useful life.

Q: What's the life span for a rehab?

Paul: All of the options we carry forward can, be it either rehab or replacement, have a 100-year life span.

Q: What is the cost of MB1?

Paul: I don't recall the exact number, but the rehab is one of the lower cost items. It will be available in the detailed Fatal Flaw report.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward for detailed evaluation.

MB2: This is a superstructure replacement – from the piers up is replaced. Everything below deck – piers, foundation, and so on – is left in place. This is a 2-lane option. We recommend it be carried forward. It's slightly more costly than a rehab.

Comment: I remember in the paperwork you gave us that the Memorial has design flaws.

Paul: With a rehab, some of the existing substandard elements remain. The opportunity with a replacement is you can have wider lanes, shoulders, and other improvements.

Continued: Haven't there been any changes in engineering technology?

Paul: We are looking into that. As we finalize costs, we will make sure we look at all technology available.

Q: Will the bike and pedestrian lanes on a replacement be the same configuration?

Paul: That kind of detail comes in the detailed evaluation: shoulders, sidewalks, how wide lanes are, etc.

Carol: Steve Workman has some good input here from a bicycle perspective. Now would be a good time for him to share it.

Steve: My name is Steve Workman. I'm on the Stakeholder Committee and a Bridge Street resident of Kittery. I work in the bike / pedestrian area for the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway. We talk a lot about deficiencies facing the Memorial Bridge. As of today, I've released a white paper about shared use paths. Goals of this paper are to detail what the deficiencies of the Memorial area and improvements. Portland Oregon's Hawthorne Bridge is the sister bridge of the Memorial – same designer – and side-by-side you can really compare issues. Portland is further ahead of us in terms of their attention to bike / pedestrian issues. They have rehabbed their bridge to be more bike and pedestrian-friendly. You can look at it in my paper. We can do this on a smaller

scale. This is not intended to be divisive but a starting point for dialogue. Find something we can get behind. Hard copies are on the table. And it will be posted on the study website.

Q: For bike and pedestrians, can we have wider sidewalks on both sides?

Paul: We're looking at what we can do.

Continued: Is the substructure below the road in good condition?

Paul: It is fine at this time.

Continued: What about decay? What about rust from the road down?

Paul: That will be looked at in the next phase.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward for detailed evaluation.

MB6: This would be a bike / pedestrian only bridge, no vehicles. On existing alignment, replacing the existing bridge. What could this be? A lift bridge? A fixed bridge? A pontoon bridge with a lift in the middle? We will look at all feasible ideas.

Q: Does this include keeping the upper structure intact like the General Sullivan Bridge?

Paul: No. If we were to maintain the bridge as-is, why not have cars on it?

Comment: With bikes and pedestrians only, we'd have adverse impacts to businesses and access.

Paul: That's what we need to look into.

Q: What about emergency vehicles?

Paul: It depends on design.

Q: What about the political considerations for a shared use bridge – bike / pedestrian only – will both states commit dollars?

Paul: I won't speak for Maine or New Hampshire.

Bob: The state of New Hampshire usually passes bike/pedestrian bridge maintenance and operation on to the municipalities.

Q: What about evacuation routes?

Paul: That's one of the evaluation criteria.

Comment: Factoring in the loss of tax revenue – tax values will go down...

Paul: We have some slides on that topic coming soon.

Q: How do you meet the first two goals without having vehicles on this bridge?

Paul: We need to make a determination if this region could function adequately and safely. That's part of the process.

Comment: Emergency vehicles have to get across.

Paul: If MB6 is the recommended option, we would need to have a 4-lane Sarah Long Bridge because you remove vehicles from the Memorial.

Comment: That will screw up both traffic circles.

Q: Is there any business data from when the Memorial Bridge was closed?

Paul: Coming soon in the presentation.

Q: What's the cost difference between a 4-lane Sarah Long vs. a Memorial replacement?

Paul: A 4-lane Sarah Long is 50% - 60% greater cost than a 2-lane. We will have those numbers soon.

Q: For MB6, do you have economic data on the loss of trade because there are no vehicles crossing to Badger Island or Kittery?

Paul: That's coming soon.

Q: What about a covered bridge?

Paul: I hadn't thought about. At this stage, we're deciding what's the best general alternative to carry forward. Design comes later.

Continued: I read that a covered bridge is easier to maintain.

Paul: Well noted.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward for detailed evaluation.

SL1, rehab of the existing Sarah Long Bridge: This option would have the same navigational opening. Study team recommends we carry forward.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward for detailed evaluation.

SL2, replacement either 2- or 4-lane. A 2-lane option would be a superstructure replacement, maintaining the existing vessel opening. A 4-lane replacement gives us opportunity to improve the vessel opening. This option is on-alignment, so the bridge would be closed for a length of time. We recommend carrying it forward.

Q: If you make it a 4-lane, it impacts the traffic circle because you would have to make the approaches wider. Businesses would have to move back.

Paul: That is not actually true – the he approaches in both directions are already 4 lanes, so the right of way exists. It would have minimal impacts.

Q: What 's the advantage of replacement vs. rehab?

Paul: A rehab is taking the existing structure and rehabilitating it to lengthen life. Replacements are brand new. In a rehab, existing bridge configurations stay the same. In a replacement: you can consider improvement. A replacement is more costly. This is a finer detail that we will get into.

Comment: You can make bike and ped additions to a rehab bridge – when you read Steve's white paper you will see that.

Q: Does replacement include replacing the rail bed?

Paul: Yes, a new rail line. All Sarah Long options maintain the rail.

Q: Look at how the ships pass under the Sarah Long. If you leave it, there would be no change with the traffic pattern.

Paul: The opportunity with a replacement is to improve clearance on the river.

Q: In Woodsville, New Hampshire, a cantilevered sidewalk was added to a historic bridge. With SL2, the 2-lane replacement – wouldn't we try to correct deficiencies with river traffic?

Paul: Depending on the cost.

Bob: Those costs are based on replacement of superstructure and substructure.

Paul: My mistake, then yes, we would.

Q: When you say Sarah Long will see 50 – 60% more costs...?

Paul: The cost depends on whether it's a 2- vs. 4- lane bridge.

Continued: With all the upkeep needed for a rehab, is it still only 50 – 60% more?

Paul: Rehab has a different cost...we are considering that in a separate criterion, as you will see.

Q: Are you taking the maintenance for 100 years into consideration?

Paul: 100-year costs include the capital to rehab or replace it, plus the operation and maintenance required.

Q: The Memorial Bridge was original. Then came the Sarah Long. Then the I-95 Bridge. We can't get rid of the Sarah Long because the Navy wants it. So the federal government should fund it, right?

Paul: Rail is not the only reason the Sarah Long must stay. There is more traffic carried on the Sarah Long than the Memorial and it is essential from a transportation perspective.

Continued: But we can't get rid of the Sarah Long?

Paul: Not having the rail is a fatal flaw. We have been told we need the rail.

Continued: The federal government should put in some money.

Paul: Point taken.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward for detailed evaluation.

SL2A: The benefit here is you can maintain traffic under construction. It can be 2- or 4-lane. You can improve or widen the clearances. There are some impacts on both sides. It depends on how many lanes. That gets determined in the detailed evaluation.

Q: How much life is left in the Sarah Long? The Memorial Bridge is under pressure with a shorter life. Do we phase construction?

Paul: That is likely, because the reality of closing both bridges at same time would be a huge impact. I'd guess it is likely a phased approach.

Gerry: The Sarah Long has 5 – 7 years of life before work is needed. Memorial has 1 – 3 years.

Q: With replacement is the original structure dismantled?

Paul: All these replacement options remove the existing bridge. These are historic bridges. So that cannot be done lightly.

Q: Removed, do you mean pilings and all?

Paul: Yes.

Q: What about marine approaches? Would they be wider?

Paul: Yes. In our discussions with the Coast Guard, if we change the approach, the channel lines need to get redrawn. There could be some dredging needed to widen the channel. We do not know that for sure yet, as this is all part of the detailed analysis.

Q: Would this proposal include a smaller navigation cut toward the Maine side?

Paul: Yes.

Bob: That is part of the current Coast Guard permit.

Paul: Fatal Flaw Analysis final results:

- 63 alternatives reduced to 8 alternatives plus No-Build (9 total)
- 3 Memorial Bridge options
 - Rehab (2-lane)
 - Low-level replacement on existing alignment (2-lane)
 - Pedestrian/Bicycle Only Bridge
- 3 Sarah Long Bridge Options
 - Rehab (2-lane)
 - Low-level replacement on existing alignment (2 or 4 lane)
 - Low-level replacement on upstream alignment (2 or 4 lane)

Q: At the last meeting we eliminated a Memorial replacement being built alongside the old. You eliminated it just because people did not like it?

Paul: The question was why did we dismiss upstream options for the Memorial. It was not dismissed because people did not like it. When we evaluated the level of impacts to property and historic resources, they were relatively high, and we judged this to be a fatal flaw.

Continued: What were the buildings? Is it because they were expensive condos?

Paul: Anything to the other side of Albacore Park, Badgers Island, and structures on both sides. Compared to the on-alignment option, there was significant impact. The drawings in the hallway show this in detail. Take a peek.

Bob: The existing bridge has only got 1 – 3 years of life. With an off-alignment bridge, you'd still have all the impacts and you would still not be able to maintain traffic on the existing Memorial.

Paul: No options were eliminated because of cost. We looked at everything. When we added up everything: property impacts, additional costs, the Memorial's short life span, historic impacts – that was enough to dismiss it.

Q: From your own records, there is nothing on the historic impact of the Sarah Long. We have the 6th oldest house in the US, the oldest in NH. Your office hasn't done an evaluation on the Sarah Long.

Comment (Peter Michaud): I work for the New Hampshire Historic Preservation Office – we review all federal funding projects. To date – we have surveyed the Christian Shore neighborhood. We have surveyed the Route 1 Bypass area. Today, we look at Sarah Long as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The final reports are in Concord, New Hampshire if you want to see them. We are not digitized yet.

Q: If the Memorial Bridge is moved up or downstream, is the Badger Island Bridge also?

Paul: No.

Q: Why isn't the elimination of all vehicle traffic over Memorial a fatal flaw?

Paul: It's a fair question. If you remove a bridge, there are impacts. We haven't looked at it in detail yet. What happens if we move those 12,000 cars that cross the Memorial every day over to the Sarah Long? We may find quickly that eliminating vehicles on the Memorial doesn't work. When we document that, we will know.

Audience agrees with carrying this forward for detailed evaluation.

Next Steps slides: We are going to move into detailed evaluation for the next 6 – 8 weeks. Fatal flaw was the shallow end of the pool; this is the deep end. We revisit the Purpose and Need. We need to point back to that to see if that criterion is met. We will evaluate our alternatives against 44 different criteria. We are here tonight to get your reaction to the criteria?

- For detailed analysis, expanded list of measurable criteria
- Purpose & Need Statement/ensure all categories covered:

- Three Transportation categories
- One Cost category
- Three “Quality of Life” categories
- Two Regulatory categories
- 18 needs and goals to be addressed

Structural improvement Criteria:

- Structural Integrity
- Lift Span Reliability

We are looking to make sure the alternative provides bridges that last at least 100 years.

Q: Are we only looking at a lift bridge?

Paul: All options except one are lift bridges. The bike / pedestrian option could be different.

Continued: What's the cost of a lift vs. a movable bridge?

Paul: There are lift, bascule, or swing. Three types. Lift is the most cost efficient.

Continued: What's the height of openings for the Sarah and the Memorial Bridge?

Paul: 135 feet and 150 feet.

Mobility Criteria:

- Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Vehicle Hours Traveled
- Roadway Level of Service
- Bridge Level of Service
- Mobility During Construction
- Emergency Access
- Evacuation Access
- Regional and Local Business Impacts

Q: You might want to look at the flexibility of the system once everything is built. How many bridges can take traffic?

Paul: Good point.

Q: For VMT and VHT (vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled) does green coding mean more of those or less?

Paul: Green is good: less VMT and VHT. Fewer hours and time on the road.

Q: You included emergency access but what about transit access?

Comment: For boat traffic, one bridge could be better.

Paul: Good point.

Accessibility criteria:

- Accessibility to Downtowns
- Accessibility to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
- Bridge Design Features: Vehicle
- Bridge Design Features: Marine
- Bridge Design Features: Bicycle
- Bridge Design Features: Pedestrian
- Bridge Design: Rail

Cost Criteria:

- Capital Cost
- Operation and Maintenance Cost
- 100-year Life Cycle Cost
- Travel Time Cost
- Benefit/Cost Ratio

Q: Have you considered that if the Memorial Bridge is closed, those cars have to go extra miles and increase pollution?

Paul: Yes. That is measured under travel time cost criterion. It's also under mobility, delays, and in VMT and VHT.

Continued: I mean pollution.

Paul: That's in an upcoming criterion: Air Quality.

Historic criteria:

- Impact to National Register-Eligible Bridges
- Other Historic Resource Impacts
- Archeological Resource Impacts

Q: How long the bridges will be closed should be a criterion. And construction or rehab time too.

Carol: That is measured under Mobility during Construction.

Natural environment criteria:

- Long-term River Quality Impacts
- Short-term River Quality Impacts
- Air Quality
- Aquatic Resources
- Access to River
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Wetlands
- Floodplain/Floodway

Physical environment criteria:

- Neighborhood Impacts
- Impact on Community Resources
- Commercial Property Impacts
- Residential Property Impacts
- Noise

Q: When you say you look at the impacts, have you measured noise levels? Exhaust levels? Cars idling are worse than their loud music. If you add more cars, there is more exhaust.

Carol: Yes, those measurements have been done. Baseline numbers are already on the website.

Q: Would there be any acoustic barriers in design?

Paul: If we find a noise impact, we would want to address that.

Continued: They have diverted trucks to idle at all hours of the night. There's no recourse. We need barriers.

Paul: If there's noise impact, can we build noise barriers – our charge is to identify if there is an impact. That would be a detail that is worked out later.

Continued: Can we get the Governors of Maine and New Hampshire to come to these meetings?

Paul: We will let them know that you asked. The project managers are both here.

Regulatory criteria:

- US Coast Guard Permitability
- Other State and Federal Regulatory Permitability
- Level of anticipated NEPA documentation

We will look at whether or not options require permits, because this could add time or cost.

Q: What is NEPA?

Paul: It's the National Environmental Policy Act. The act requires a detailed evaluation in order to find the alternative that best meets our need.

Section 4f: This gets to things like public parks, recreational areas, historic properties.

If you have any additional ideas after tonight, please make sure to go to the website and comment – www.maineNHconnections.org

Q: What impact, if any, is the TIGER decision to all of this?

Paul: As Carol mentioned, the TIGER Grant was not awarded to us. Maine and New Hampshire are moving ahead and committed to finding funding over the long term.

Gerry: We'll complete the study and the Transportation Commissioners will find funding. We will find the recommended solution; they find the funding for it.

Q: Why didn't you move the Albacore Park road over instead of taking the homes there?

Paul: That requires a detailed answer, can we chat at the end of the meeting?

Q: How do you quantify what is useful between, say, access and historic?

Paul: The criteria are a starting point. As we run through the process, we expect several alternatives to drop off. When we get to the top two or three options, we get to the hard part. No one criterion trumps another.

Comment: I have a concern. As we look at the alternative of closing the Memorial, none of our existing roads connect well to the Route 1 Bypass. This would shift a large cost to the municipality.

Paul: What is the economic impact of shifting cost to municipalities? Good point. We should consider it in our analysis. We will add "local road impacts" as a new criterion.

Paul: This is a transparent process. We'll have a lot of stuff to sort through, very soon. *Refers to schedule slide.*

Carol: Now I'm going to address local business impact issue.

- A certain level of business impact with any transportation change is inevitable: positive *and* negative
- This *qualitative* analysis seeks to estimate level of impact in Portsmouth/Kittery adjacent to Memorial and Sarah Long Bridges
- Will help us assess and better understand any potential short and/or long-term change
- Available non-anecdotal data: O&D 2005 and 2009
- Will look at 2006 Construction Timing Survey and Kittery – may be of value
- November Sales Tax Data/2005-2009 to supplement and clarify
- Ports/Kittery business survey identifies trade areas; perceived impact
- Selected businesses to host customer survey relating to travel patterns/bridge use

The Steering and Stakeholder Committees have been making sure we keep this important issue on the list. In this economy, any negative business impact creates concern. Our challenge is, as Paul said, all these criteria require data. We spent a fair amount of time looking for measurable data we could gather. The only option still on the table that has any potential local business impact is the bike/ped bridge option. Some of you saw this impact when the bridge was temporarily closed last November. We want to try to measure this. We considered looking at sales tax in Maine. November, the month the bridge was closed, is the worst month for retail anyway so the difference may be very very slight. And in New Hampshire, there's no sales tax so there is no measure available.

Our plan is to launch a survey amongst businesses on either side of the bridge. About 250 businesses will receive a 2-page anonymous survey, by mail or delivered, asking them a series of questions that will allow us to attempt to estimate how much business they lost in November 2009. It's not ideal but it's the best we can do. We'll also do some customer intercept surveys to see where customers are coming from. This will help us to see how valid the business response is.

Q: What will customers be asked?

Carol: They'll be asked about where do you live? Did you cross the Memorial? Will you cross to go home? By what mode?

Q: What about looking at parking spaces available during closure periods?

Carol: That's a good suggestion. We will see if we can get parking meter data.

Comment: We should provide a public gathering place for businesses. A meeting to help formulate the survey. It should be fast and easy.

Carol: The question is, will we involve businesses in developing the survey? I met with the Chambers of Commerce, city of Portsmouth, and other stakeholders earlier this week. They will get the survey and review it. A caveat, though: any survey must be objectively stated, so we reserve the right for survey professionals to have final say on the survey questions.

Q: Will you do a survey with the Sarah Long Bridge too? Or just Memorial?

Carol: Our area of concern is the Memorial. But we will be surveying the businesses directly on the Rte. 1 Bypass.

Comment: Parking meters – it might be useful to check with the city. There is weekly meter revenue – parking tickets too.

Carol: I will follow up on tickets and meters.

Comment: How about the Deer St and State St Association - you should check with them.

Comments: Those are subgroups of the downtown business association.

Carol: Christy Cardoso is on the Stakeholder Committee – I will get his information from her.

Comment: There's also that bike / pedestrian survey you guys did before as sanity check.

Carol: Yes. We also have an origin – destination survey for cars. We plan to crosscheck against those.

Q: For the customer survey, are you limiting to customers at specific businesses – or doing a residential mailing? I changed my shopping pattern. Mailing to households could find out how people changed shopping patterns and if so, how.

Carol: The survey we are going to do is in the next month or so at a sample selection of retail stores and restaurants.

Next steps:

- Public: Received feedback today on Fatal Flaw results and Evaluation Process
- DOTs/FHWA review/concurrence on Fatal Flaw by end of February/early March

- Will be analyzing remaining alternatives against all evaluation criteria: February-April

Remember, the website is www.mainenhconnections.org. Send us any comments, please.

Q: Who are Steering Committee members?

Carol: The two state's DOTs, FHWA's, State Historic Offices, Kittery, Portsmouth, and the two Maine and New Hampshire regional planning organizations. You can see a full list of the Stakeholder Committee- about 30 people - on the study website under "participant team" at <http://www.mainenhconnections.org/team/>.

Q: How is this study being funded and is it an amount estimated in advance or as it goes along?

Carol: It's \$1.4 million in funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the Maine and New Hampshire DOTs. It is a set amount based on an RFP issued about a year and a half ago.

Meeting adjourned 8:02pm.