

Meeting: Steering and Stakeholder Committee

Meeting Date: 06/16/10 - 2-5 pm

Location: Kittery Trading Post, Rte. 1 Kittery

Study Update

**Maine–NH Connections Study
Steering Committee / Stakeholder Committee Meeting
June 16, 2010
Kittery Trading Post, Kittery, Maine**

Attendees: Steve Workman, NH Seacoast Greenway; Cathy Goodwin, Greater York Region Chamber of Commerce; Doug Bates, Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce; Jonathan Carter, Town of Kittery; John Carson, Kittery; Mary Ann Conroy, Town of Kittery; Gail Drobynyk, Kittery; Jim Spencer, Golden Harvest; Stephen Kosacz, Autoworks, Kittery; Roger Maloof, Naval Shipyard; Laura Black, NHDHR; Linda Wilson, NHDHR; Ken Herrick, Albacore Park; James Horrigan, Portsmouth Conservation Commission; Peter Somssich, Portsmouth Democrats; Ben Porter, Save our Bridges; Cameron Wake, UNH; Peter Michaud, NHDHR; Leigh Levine, NH FHWA; Chris Holt, Portsmouth Pilots; Nancy Carmer, Portsmouth Economic Development; Bob Landry, NH DOT; Gerry Audibert, MaineDOT; Russ Charette, MaineDOT; Carol Morris, Morris Communications; Paul Godfrey, HNTB; Benjamin Ettelman, Morris Communications.

Meeting began at 2:05 pm.

Carol Morris: Thank you very much for coming to the Steering and Stakeholder Committee meeting for the Maine-New Hampshire Connections Study. The purpose of today's meeting is to go over the progress of the study over the past six weeks and to update you on the study schedule. Before Paul Godfrey shares that with you I thought it would be helpful to revisit the study's objectives. We started this study a little over a year ago with an aggressive schedule because of the existing condition of the bridges. We knew from the beginning of the study that Maine and New Hampshire DOTs had different priorities for the two bridges. The purpose of the study has been to identify the best long-term solutions to what is a very complex and expensive process. The study data that we're gathering is going to help the two states balance their priorities. The key aspect that the study team wants to stress upon you folks today is that the two DOTs need to find common ground and agree on a solution. In order to move forward we need to achieve common ground and today that is what you folks are here today to help us with. Once we reach the stage where we have two to four alternatives rising to the top, we will look at timing, implementation and funding;

those are going to have a large impact on what the final recommendation is going to be. With that I would like to open the floor to questions.

Roger Maloof: I read the minutes from the last public meeting and it seemed like there were a lot of things left up in the air.

Carol Morris: One of the things that we are trying to address is that there was a sense at the last meeting that New Hampshire could go ahead and build a replacement for Memorial Bridge by itself, and where that may be true from an initial funding perspective, they made it clear that Maine will still be expected to fund half of the project. So this has to be a joint decision where the two agencies find common ground and common priorities.

Roger Maloof: It was implied that if we build a ped-bike bridge, it would not be a state maintained bridge, it would be a city maintained bridge.

Carol Morris: It is my understanding that that is a negotiable point. Is that correct?

Bob Landry: No.

Gerry Audibert: Yes.

Carol Morris: There is still some disagreement there, and that is where that stands.

Ben Porter: Where would the capital funds for the bike-ped bridge come from?

Carol Morris: It is my understanding that there are funding sources for those types of bridges but it comes from a different pot of money.

Ben Porter: My questions, what are those places that the monies come from, state, local, federal?

Carol Morris: It will come from a combination of federal and state for capital costs.

Steve Workman: What concerns me is that transportation enhancement is the typical pot for bike-ped projects, and to even suggest that we build a bike-ped bridge as a replacement for the Memorial would completely drain the bike-ped money for both New Hampshire and Maine. That would start an outcry from trail and bike groups from both states. (*NOTE: NHDOT has \$3 million per year for Transportation Enhancement projects.*)

Gerry Audibert: I'd like to mention that where the money comes from and how we get it is beyond the scope of the study. When we complete the study we will

move on to exploring funding options and that money could be Tiger money, Tiger-like money, bond money. It will most likely be a combination.

Carol Morris: Timing, funding and implementation are going to be the last thing that we look at when we reach the final few alternatives. I can't specify how monies will be allocated but at that point of the study those questions will be nailed down as being part of the final recommendation.

John Carson: We did quite a bit of work after the last meeting about Tiger II money and I don't see that on the agenda. Are we going to have another meeting regarding the Tiger II grant?

Gerry Audibert: No, I think we are getting confused with what the purpose of the study is as opposed to how we will achieve funding for the final recommendation of the study. I can't speak about the Tiger grant, that is a decision that is made at the highest level of Maine and New Hampshire DOT with governor approval.

Peter Somssich: I'd like to read a comment on behalf of the Portsmouth Democrats: In light of the current determination by the DOTs that Memorial Bridge cannot be rehabbed, and in line with the goal of the study to weigh options and recommend the future of the bridges. I would like to move to remove the option of a bike-ped bridge from all of the alternative options we are considering. We feel as though this severs our relationship with the communities across the river and threatens the livelihood of businesses in the downtown Portsmouth area. Since our responsibility is to select and whittle down the options, and since I have not heard any real support for this option, I would like us to consider dropping that option entirely.

Carol Morris: I understand your point, and I want to speak to the process. If you folks would like to informally vote on that comment, that's fine, it will be recorded and in the record. But the DOTs and the data are the decision-making factors as to what decisions are made and what alternatives are removed from consideration, not popular sentiment.

Peter Somssich: I thought the recommendations of the study group were to be considered by the DOT. If the study group doesn't support an alternative and it is still being considered, why are we involved at all?

Carol Morris: The public process for a study like this involves public input and you folks have had a great deal of influence on what has happened. If you reflect on the actions of the study, I think you will agree with that, but the final decision lies with the two DOTs.

Peter Somssich: But we have eliminated certain options?

Carol Morris: Yes, based on data.

Peter Somssich: Well someone needs to support this option, if one of the DOTs supports this option than they need to come forward and say that.

Gerry Audibert: Carol Morris is absolutely right, any reasonable alternative can be brought forward by anybody and must be considered.

Peter Somssich: We don't have the tunnel alternative on the list anymore?

Gerry Audibert: That's right, we did at one point in time, but because of cost and environmental concerns it was dismissed. Alternatives can be dismissed but it has to be for just reason.

John Carson: It seems to me that there is a momentum that this study is going to support the bike-ped bridge. That is not in keeping with the responsibility of Augusta and Concord to support the economic infrastructure of this area. The bike-ped option exists only because of narrow desires of certain groups, and because the State of Maine does not support Southern Maine.

Gail Drobnyk: I would like to thank Peter Somssich for his statement. When you say this is based on data, I question the validity of the data that was presented at the public meeting. I had heard that you were asked to have the survey people from UNH conduct the surveys and you did not use them. The presentation at the public meeting was way off base and the data was misrepresented.

Carol Morris: Ok, thank you for your statement.

Chris Holt: You stated that the DOTs have to find common ground. Do we have any sense of a common ground? How far apart are we, who wants what, who needs what?

Carol Morris: It would not be productive to go through the specific areas of concern but they both agree that the study needs to be completed.

Chris Holt: Is it just a money issue?

Carol Morris: MaineDOT believes that from a state perspective, the bridge of the most concern is the Sarah Mildred Long. New Hampshire has, through legislative directive, prioritized the Memorial Bridge. But we have not reached the point where we have two to four viable options on the table for the two states to sit down and look at. That's where we hope to move the study forward to and I understand your frustration but in order for action to be taken, we need to move ahead.

Roger Maloof: Do the local towns have to pay to build the bike-ped bridge?

Gerry Audibert: Funding is still yet to be determined, but I don't believe the towns would have to pay the capital costs for a bike-ped bridge.

Gail Drobnyk: The thing with regard to the bike-ped bridge is it is tearing apart the community. If you build a bridge that only allows bikes and pedestrians to cross, you have divided a community.

Carol Morris: I understand.

Steve Kosacz: I've attended a significant number of these meetings and my understanding is that as a result of the traffic studies that have been done, if a bike-ped bridge is built, they have to enlarge the Sarah Long bridge by two lanes. Has that changed?

Carol Morris: Yes, and we will be touching on that in a bit.

Ben Porter: I'd like to echo the comment about the economic study. If you lose up to 40% of revenue on the Kittery side and 20% on the Portsmouth side, that will result in a number of businesses disappearing. The study conclusion was that there would be no regional net loss. I would challenge that because when you lose lynchpin businesses in a community you have a cascading effect and it becomes a regional issue. I was very disappointed with the economic analysis.

Roger Maloof: From a data standpoint, it seems like we are talking about future economics. We need to bring into the equation the fact that we are bringing in trucks and goods and by removing that option we are removing the ability to grow. That should be part of the decision process.

Cameron Wake: I'd like to mention that we need to consider that the economic growth in the future will be different; we can't discount growth based on a different transportation system. I'm not arguing for or against the bike-ped option, I'm just saying it's not just about cars right now.

Carol Morris: That is certainly one thing that planning studies everywhere are grappling with right now because it is hard to tell what will happen in the future.

James Horrigan: I think we need to look at the here and now. I'm all for alternative energy but let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater; we need to get back and forth between the communities. The bike-ped option ought to be thrown off the table. It's a waste of money; if people want to ride their bikes let them go over the Sarah Long Bridge.

Chris Holt: Removal of the bridge totally is still an option right?

Ben Porter: That was taken off the table a long time ago.

Carol Morris: I'm going to defer that until we share some of the new information we have with you.

Chris Holt: If that were still one of the options, not having a bridge would be worse than having a bike-ped bridge.

Carol Morris: One of the aspects of this study that we identified as being of great importance is the bike and pedestrian access between the communities.

Linda Wilson: If data is driving this, and a lot of new data has been accumulated, we need to see the new data.

John Carson: When we started this, there was going to be a transportation solution at the end, now there is a transportation / political solution. How does that interaction work, who trumps who here?

Carol Morris: That's a good question, my understanding is no matter who makes the final decision, and it is still in the hands of the two DOTs, we still need to finish the study in order for a decision to be made. It is not going to be rushed by opinion or politics.

Gail Drobnik: From the beginning its been said that both DOTs will abide by the results of the study. I'm hearing Maine trying to unduly influence the results of the study.

Carol Morris: Both DOTs have strong opinions and differing priorities. I have not heard either DOT say that they would not abide by the results of the study.

Peter Somssich: My understanding was that the request for Tiger II funding has a deadline of July 16th, and there is an issue that the study won't be concluded by that time which would prohibit the two DOTs from applying. Is that true or not?

Carol Morris: I am going to say that the answer to that is not yet clear. I think we need to move on so you can get a chance to see the new information we have here. I appreciate you guys coming here today. Paul?

Paul Godfrey: I'm going to share what we have been looking at over the past six weeks. There has been a lot of new discussion going over aspects of the data that we might need to reevaluate. In defense of the process, we have not reached the point where we have made any conclusions. There is a sense that certain alternatives are favored, I want you folks to know that that is not the case. Data does not lie, at the end of the day the economics of the region are important and we know that the connection of the two communities is important. These are aspects of the study that you helped us identify and will be evaluated when we look at all of the criteria and start to sort through all of the alternatives.

One of the things we have been doing is going back and looking at the key assumptions. Assumptions are what drive a lot of the data. We wanted to make sure we looked at everything in the correct manner, and now is the time to revisit all of our assumptions and make sure that we are still on the right track with regard to the goals of the study.

The past six weeks we have gone back and revisited traffic growth assumptions. We looked at the bridge traffic capacity. We looked at the bridge alternatives assumptions themselves to make sure we have considered all possible viable options. In looking at possible alternatives we found that we didn't fully evaluate an option that we need to look at and so we have a new alternative to get your feedback on.

The other thing we have been doing is moving forward with the dismissal of the Memorial rehabilitation option based on the bridge inspection report. Once that documentation is in place, it will be reviewed by the DOTs and Federal Highway Administration.

We revisited the traffic growth assumptions. These are the actual traffic growth numbers per year that we determined. We determined these numbers through a host of pieces of information. We looked at historic growth, we talked to Kittery, we talked to Portsmouth, we looked at each municipality's comprehensive land use plan, we talked to the shipyard, we looked at where the hospital was going and came up with a reasonable growth forecast. We went back and dug through this data again, and some of the key things that we evaluated were job growth at the shipyard. We looked at the population growth in Kittery and Portsmouth, what the numbers have been and what they are moving forward. We also looked at the potential job growth. I want you to know that we have been revisiting this data to make sure it's correct. We have validated the traffic growth, the documentation is in front of Maine and New Hampshire DOT and they are looking to confirm that data.

Moving onto the next piece, as you are all aware, the Sarah and the Memorial are movable bridges. When they go up, vehicle traffic cannot cross. The assumption we had originally was, as is allowed by CFR33, US Coast Guard Regulations, the bridges can lift twice an hour between May 15th and October 31st. That was the assumption that we used originally and it allowed us to determine a capacity. We went back in the last few weeks and we looked at what is actually happening in terms of bridge movement. We looked at July of 2008 and there were 23 peak hours during the weekday in that month. We found out that the Sarah Long during the summer weekday peak hour did not open eleven times, during the peak hour the bridge opened once eleven times, and it opened twice during the peak hour only once.

The Memorial Bridge movement was a little different, it opened zero times twice in the peak hour of July 2008, it opened once 16 times and it opened twice five times during the peak hour.

This is important because if the reality is that the bridges are opening less than two times an hour, the bridge allows more capacity than we originally assumed. What we concluded was that our original assumption of two lifts per hour was probably a little over-conservative. Even though it's allowed by law to make that assumption it's more appropriate to look at the bridges from a one lift to zero lift perspective. We went back through and reran the traffic demand model and I will share those results with you in a moment.

When we increased the amount of traffic that was allowed to travel over the bridge we found that the intersections on each side of the bridge were experiencing congestion. So we had to look at the throughput capacity.

Peter Somssich: Isn't it a requirement that the Memorial Bridge be opened a certain amount each hour?

Paul Godfrey: CFR33 is a regulation that requires that if a boat wants to go through from May 15th to October 30th, and it is not a particular size or shape, the bridge will open every thirty minutes. So the Memorial Bridge is required to open every thirty minutes if there is a vessel waiting. If there is no vessel waiting they do not have to open. If a larger ship comes up the river the bridge opens immediately. The charts that we looked at showed us what was actually happening in terms of how often the bridge needed to be opened. The majority of the lifts were once per hour.

David: Did you just look at July or is that just representative?

Paul Godfrey: That is a good representative month.

Mary Ann Conroy: When you looked at the trip demand assumptions, did you look at the growth in Kittery outlets?

Paul Godfrey: Yes, we did. Okay, the data you see here relates to us revisiting the analysis of the bridge traffic capacities. I will point out the important aspects of the numbers. The I-95 Bridge can handle almost 5,800 cars in the peak hour. In the year 2035 under the alternative of the Sarah Long and Memorial only opening one time per hour, we found that this bridge can handle the demand. From the Sarah Long perspective we increased the capacity from 1000 to about 1250. The Memorial's capacity increased as well. We were able to determine that under this alternative we had acceptable levels of service.

Steve Kosacz: Are they assuming that when either one of the bridges go up that traffic takes another route?

Paul Godfrey: The travel demand model is dynamic, so there are some trips that shift from one bridge to the other. For the most part we assume that traffic will wait in the queue and then cross back over.

Cameron Wake: How much uncertainty is involved in these numbers?

Paul Godfrey: The point of the exercise is not to try and validate these numbers, when revisiting this we try to understand all of the different scenarios based on our assumptions. We found that our numbers may be a little conservative. We are doing a sensitivity analysis to determine if we should be estimating based on one lift instead of two, and then we find out how that affects our assumptions.

Cameron Wake: So if you've done the sensitivity analysis you would be able to tell me what the uncertainty in those numbers are. You don't just run one analysis, you run a number of analyses. I think your answer to my question is that you don't know what the uncertainty is. You've run a model and you don't know if the uncertainty is 10% or 50%.

Paul Godfrey: No, the sensitivity analysis was on the bridge. You're right, we ran one set of numbers and assumed a certain amount of growth in Kittery and in Portsmouth, etc. That is typical of transportation planning.

Peter Somssich: Paul, what about three lifts per hour?

Paul Godfrey: We didn't have any cases of three lifts per hour.

Peter Somssich: I know we didn't but we're talking about the future. What if shipping increased?

Paul Godfrey: I talked to the Coast Guard, and other folks who know a lot about waterway capacity. One of the things we want to understand is what is the picture in the future. We looked back as far as the 1970s in terms of bridge lift data and we found that the number of bridge openings is not increasing. From our position, we see that the bridges are going to open about the same number of times as they do today.

We also looked at the capacity if there was one lift during the PM peak hour, compared to two lifts. The answer is the same, meaning that even with the assumption of only one lift per hour, our conclusion regarding the number of lanes required through 2035 remains the same.. Under the scenario where you have the six lane I-95 Bridge, and the Memorial, the Sarah Long's capacity stays the same even at no lifts in the PM peak hour.

We also have alternatives with the bike-ped option on the table, so assuming the Memorial is a bike-ped and handles no capacity for vehicles, what happens to

the capacity at Sarah Long? Under the previous assumption of two lifts per hour we found that the Sarah Long hit maximum capacity by 2035, and we concluded that we needed four lanes. If the Sarah Long lifts once per hour under this alternative the Sarah Long fills up as well. So the answer is the same regardless and for this alternative we still need to look at a four lane Sarah Long if the Memorial Bridge is closed to vehicular capacity. If we assume zero lifts per hour in the PM peak hour, the capacity increases to 1800 vehicles in each direction and does not fill up. So if the Sarah Long Bridge can handle 1800 vehicles traveling in each direction during the PM peak hour, there does not need to be a four-lane replacement.

John Carson: Have you done any additional analysis on unusual or high volume days? Portsmouth is an event city and there are times when the bridges are very backed up. I assume that is not in your numbers.

Paul Godfrey: No, it is not. This is an average summer weekday afternoon. So July, August, part of September, Monday through Thursday, 3:45 to 4:45.

John Carson: But the bridge has to be there not just for average traffic.

Paul Godfrey: There will be many times during the year when these capacities will be exceeded; when we do transportation analysis we don't model the worst conditions. If we designed for the worst conditions we would be over-designing in terms of capacity. We try and take the upper tier of normal traffic conditions and in the summer time, PM peak hour, with tourists and residents, we get a good idea of that window of the highest average conditions.

John Carson: What if the Seabrook Power Station goes into meltdown? That is a fatal consideration right there.

Paul Godfrey: That is part of our evacuation determination and when we evaluate the evacuation routes in the event of a crisis, the removal of the vehicular component for the Memorial Bridge scores very poorly. This determination explores whether under this alternative whether two lanes is a viable option for the future on the Sarah Long. Evacuation considerations are carefully and thoroughly considered separately.

When we modeled an 1800-vehicle capacity on the Sarah Long we ran into another challenge: we found that the proposed intersections on either side of the bridge did not have enough through-capacity to handle that increase. The plan is that if we want to achieve those numbers we need to look into doing something greater for those two intersections.

So the bottom line is that it is likely that we are going to revise our capacity assumptions. If we do that we will need to revise our intersection design for that alternative.

Roger Maloof: The Naval Yard has a different peak time, was that analyzed?

Paul Godfrey: Yes, we analyzed the hour of 3:45 PM – 4:45 PM, so yes, that is consistent with when the shipyard lets out.

Peter Somssich: You talked about the traffic capacity under the removal of the Memorial Bridge option, where do the pedestrians and bicyclists go?

Paul Godfrey: The removal is meant to infer the removal of vehicular capacity, this assumes the Memorial Bridge as a bike-ped bridge.

I know this is patience-testing to revisit these alternatives but it is very important because if we can achieve higher bridge traffic capacity on the Sarah Long, Maine and New Hampshire DOT may not need to consider a four-lane bridge and that is important to consider.

Ben Porter: In November, we received a newsletter that said “study identified all alternatives” and all is emphasized in the newsletter, it’s not something I added. So that was not correct?

Carol Morris: We believed it to be correct at the time.

Paul Godfrey: We have not been holding this alternative in the wings.

Peter Somssich: So we can come up with alternatives as well?

Paul Godfrey: If there is a viable alternative that has merit, than it will be considered.

We have a new alternative for the Sarah Long. We call it the Hybrid Bridge. It is similar to the mid-level bridge we had on the table that was dismissed earlier in the study due to impacts of trying to get the rail line up to the level of the roadway. The design comes from the Steel Bridge in Portland Oregon. This design has the rail and the roadway on the same deck. They are not separated. The advantage is that it allows us to get the roadway higher up in the air and this is an advantage because if we can reduce the number of lifts necessary for river navigation than we can increase capacity, like we were just talking about. The design also allows us to take that single deck and lower it to the railway where it is today, so there is no impact on the rail line.

Chris Holt: That’s only on the span?

Paul Godfrey: Correct.

This could likely mean that the Sarah Mildred Long only needs two lanes regardless of what it is coupled with in terms of the Memorial Bridge. I'll give you folks a bit of a description of the bridge. As I said it's a single deck, today there are two decks that move up and down. It would be about 80 feet off the water, today it's about 10 feet. It has a six percent approach grade. It would be bigger, taller and higher in the air. The pros are that it can reduce the number of Sarah Long Bridge openings by 70%. That is big. The cons are that it will likely cost more; it will have the rail in the road, but we did plan for the rail to be in the middle of the road so vehicles do not drive on it. Also, when the train comes through the deck lowers, and vehicles cannot travel through.

Peter Somssich: Does that mean the bridge itself is going to be much wider?

Paul Godfrey: The previous cross section was 36 feet, and this span is 40 feet. Just within that span it would be four feet wider.

Peter Somssich: Is it pedestrian and bike friendly?

Paul Godfrey: We have a four-foot shoulder, it could possibly be wider. We tried not to get bogged down in details and make a middle of the road assumption for the study.

Peter Somssich: Is that four feet shared by bike and pedestrians?

Paul Godfrey: Yes, What was changed, before we had a 36-foot cross section that was two 12-foot lanes and two 6-foot shoulders. The modified cross section would be 40 feet with two 11-foot lanes, two 4-foot shoulder and the remaining ten feet is in the middle for the rail. You would have 6 feet of shoulder until you get to the lift span and it would narrow to a 4-foot shoulder. The lift span can lift when a very tall ship comes through and lower when the rail comes through.

Chris Holt: How many rail crossings per year?

Paul Godfrey: Between four and six a year.

Nancy Carmer: With Portsmouth Naval Shipyard having so many employees would they consider using that rail as commuter in the future?

Paul Godfrey: That would be a challenge under this alternative because if there is higher frequency for rail that lowers the vehicular capacity of the deck because this bridge only accommodates one mode at a time.

Peter Somssich: If we expect to have increased rail traffic in the future one lane with a rail line that moves up and down is not enough.

Paul Godfrey: And the long-term viability of this bridge will be considered, and that specifically.

Roger Maloof: Right now, we don't have enough space to park our cars on the Shipyard, so I support that point.

Steve Workman: I would advocate this design have a cantilevered bike-ped path, like the steel bridge in Portland, Oregon.

Paul Godfrey: This does not preclude a wider lift span or a cantilevered bike-ped path.

Steve Workman: Cost estimates are including the narrow shoulders, and I would like us to include the bike-ped lane in the cost.

Paul Godfrey: What we can do is have separate cost estimates.

Leigh Levine: Does this preclude the bike-ped option at Memorial? We have three different points of crossing which serves three different travelers.

Steve Workman: I am not advocating for that.

Steve Kosacz: I'd propose that you take that four foot shoulder and make that ten feet so we don't have to come back and make an addendum.

Paul Godfrey: So you are advocating adding the space back to keep a consistent shoulder width?

Steve Kosacz: Yes

Peter Somssich: I would agree with that entirely, and suggest that we have ten feet on either side like the Hawthorne Bridge.

Paul Godfrey: The reason why we have looked at six is because of cost. We are trying to keep costs relatively low but there is the opportunity to explore all of the different options for this bridge, this design is not a final design.

Chris Holt: Do you need that much space on both sides?

Peter Somssich: I would think so. If we have bikes traveling in each direction it could be dangerous.

Paul Godfrey: Thank you for your comments and I know we will continue to have conversations about this alternative.

Steve Kosacz: If you were going to build this hybrid, would it be built off-line?

Paul Godfrey: We would need to consider that but building off alignment would definitely reduce the impacts to traffic during construction.

The Sarah Long Hybrid is looked at in combination with a two-lane Memorial Bridge replacement, and with a bike-ped option. Because we can achieve a higher traffic capacity with this alternative, we had the discussion internally about whether this alternative could, coupled with a transit alternative, allow us to consider no Memorial Bridge. We looked at and documented the need for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. What we didn't consider was a robust transit scenario. We will need to evaluate these new alternatives and see if they pass fatal flaw; if they do they will need to be thoroughly analyzed.

Carol Morris: Those of you here who were part of the development of our Purpose and Need statement, you remember we talked a little bit about transit, and it was difficult because of interstate concerns and it didn't get looked at as closely as it should have been. Also from a legal standpoint, Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act requires every transportation study funded by MaineDOT to thoroughly explore transit as a viable alternative. We missed this and we are doing this now.

Gail Drobnyk : At one of the earlier meetings I expressed my concern that none of the items being evaluated addressed my concern that the removal of the Memorial Bridge would tear the two communities apart. This is not a mobility issue, it is a division of the communities.

Peter Somssich: I think that transit is something that should be looked at, but we are skeptical because transit service would inevitably deteriorate. Also, bus service does not meet the needs of people who may want to ride their bike across the Memorial Bridge.

Paul Godfrey: That's exactly correct. We clearly recognize the importance of bike-ped connectivity between the two communities. The O&D data showed us that. We looked at how much it would cost and who would use it. We also looked at whether it meets Purpose and Need. We are evaluating all of these questions, we are looking at cost, ridership numbers and we will bring those findings back to you. Again, the big thing is measuring whether this meets purpose and need, and we have not yet determined that, so as of right now it has not passed fatal flaw and it is not officially on the table.

Roger Maloof: I was going to bring up the point, Americans don't like to use transit.

Cameron Wake: Twenty years ago everyone wanted to park their car right next to the University of New Hampshire, now UNH has over 1 million riders per year on their public transit system, so frankly sir, your statement is incorrect.

Carol Morris: You are both correct; Americans in general do not like transit but there has been a definite shift.

Paul Godfrey: We assumed that we would have a bus that would run every ten minutes and it would be a zero fare service. In lieu of building a bridge, there would be a zero fare transit service.

Ben Porter: Who pays for it?

Paul Godfrey: Exactly, that is a good question and there will be a cost.

Steve Kosacz: I would support accommodations for cyclists and pedestrians on both bridges. You haven't done adequate analysis for traffic; you did it for portions of one month in the summer. I would like to see what the bicycle use is in the middle of February.

Jonathan Carter: I would like to make a follow-up statement in reference to your traffic studies. Taking I-95 in the summer is a parking lot. If we eliminate the Memorial Bridge and the Route 1 Bypass Bridge is up for a boat, the seacoast is locked up.

Paul Godfrey: Thank you.

Linda Wilson: I would like to reiterate Gail Drobnyk's point. The community is one community divided by the water, with the same needs. The Memorial crossing serves some very strong economic benefits for the area. This needs to be factored in somehow.

Paul Godfrey: I encourage you to go back and look at the study Purpose and Need. From this we created our criteria.

Gail Drobnyk: I do not think this meets the Purpose and Need statement. Peter Somssich pointed out that one of the goals is to improve connectivity, and this does not do that.

Paul Godfrey: And under the criteria, the transit scenario and the bike-ped bridge do not score very well so it is reflected there.

Gail Drobnyk: We agreed in the last meeting that we were going to separate the color-coded criteria for the two bridges, are we going to see that?

Paul Godfrey: Very soon. We need to get all these alternatives in the same place and for those criteria that we can split apart we will. There are some criteria that cannot be separated. We will separate what we can for you.

John Carson: If we designed a brand new bridge for Memorial Bridge, a transit system would make sense, but this doesn't replace the Memorial Bridge. I think we've lost sight of the fact that there is a bridge there currently, and the community would like the bridge to remain there.

Paul Godfrey: I would trust in the process and the criteria to determine whether or not this makes sense.

John Carson: There is very little community support for demolishing the Memorial Bridge.

?Carol Morris: I have to point out that the Memorial Bridge is deteriorating at a very rapid pace and the likelihood that the Memorial Bridge will exist as you know it for very much longer is unfortunately very small.

Ben Porter: So you are assuming that the bridge is gone?

Paul Godfrey: No.

Carol Morris: I am speaking of the existing Memorial Bridge, this does not preclude a replacement, I'm simply stating that the Memorial Bridge in the current condition will not functionally exist for much longer, everyone in this room has seen the inspections; they clearly state that the Memorial Bridge has only **1-3** years of functional life left.

Peter Somssich: It has been allowed to deteriorate, the bridge was neglected. We did this to ourselves.

Steve Kosacz: The transit system would work if riders had a point-to-point trip. In the business impact study that you did, you found that a significant number of people traveled over the bridge to a location, and then onto another location rather than returning directly to their departing location. The transit system does not replace that need.

Paul Godfrey: Exactly, there are groups of folks who are crossing the bridge who would have no interest in this alternative. The transit system may not be considered in the final list of alternatives, but in fairness this is not the first time a transit system has been considered in place of physical infrastructure. From where we are sitting this is a huge decision and we want to make one hundred percent sure that we don't miss anything.

Roger Maloof: If the transit system doesn't get enough riders, they will lengthen headways, and then they get even less ridership. This is a realistic scenario.

Paul Godfrey: Yes, and if we don't factor that into this study, then shame on us.

Cathy Goodwin: My concern about this is the timing issue and the Tiger II funds. How long will it really take to study this and how long will it take to eliminate it

from the alternatives. We need to move forward to a cooperative agreement between the two states.

Paul Godfrey: The team will deliver the evaluation of this alternative by Friday. We are making sure no stone is left unturned, providing the correct level of detail and keeping things moving forward.

Roger Maloof: How much percentage-wise is the increase in cost of the Hybrid Bridge Alternative.

Paul Godfrey: Our original look is that the Hybrid bridge is 15-20% more expensive than the Sarah Long replacement.

Roger Maloof: On the Hybrid, is there a secondary way to lower the rail, versus the whole deck.

Paul Godfrey: You could do this bridge where you maintain two decks. Your towers would be very tall because the rail deck would need to be 135 feet in the air and the roadway 70 feet above that.

Roger Maloof: The rail is embedded in the road deck, what if it was a floating deck?

Bob Landry: There has been a study on a telescoping bridge. The comment I received was Oregon requested a different design and they were the state that was looking into this, and it has not been created since. To go to a telescoping bridge, the basic response from the engineers we consulted with was that it was not a viable alternative.

Steve Workman: Memorial has the Route 1 designation, what happens if the Memorial Bridge closes to vehicular traffic.

Paul Godfrey: The road will be re-designated. Route 1 would not stop; it would be re-routed.

Steve Workman: With the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway we can't necessarily do that easily without road improvements.

Paul Godfrey: So noted. Moving forward, the study schedule is as follows. We want to finish revisiting our key assumptions and analysis and the analysis of the Hybrid Bridge by the end of the month. If the Hybrid Bridge survives the fatal flaw procedure we will bring it up to the same level of analysis as all of the other alternatives. In early July we want to evaluate these and achieve a top tier of 2 to 4 alternatives. We want to get a draft report out to bring to folks by mid July.

Ben Porter: There is a deadline of July 16th for a notice of intent for the Tiger II grant. Does this schedule mean that the study ending in August precludes us from filing a notice of intent?

Paul Godfrey: The discussion we have had internally is that a draft report would contain a recommendation and if we have that by mid-July it would not preclude us from filing a notice of intent.

John Carson: That is not the same answer that I received at the beginning of this meeting.

Paul Godfrey: How is it different?

John Carson: There is a problem between the two states and it has nothing to do with the study and they are trying to sort that out.

Paul Godfrey: Study recommendation is predicated upon finding a top tier of alternatives and reaching a consensus on that recommended tier of alternatives.

Ben Porter: Does the notice of intent need to be very specific? What I would hate to have happen is that July 16th comes and goes and we missed the deadline. What can be done between now and July 16th so we can apply for that grant in a sufficient manner.

Paul Godfrey: We understand the timeframe in front of us. From our perspective getting all of that done and allowing all of that data to be available for the two states to discuss is our charge.

Ben Porter: I still don't feel like I've had the question answered. Gerry Audibert or Bob Landry do you have anything to add here?

Gerry Audibert: We can't give you an answer because we don't know ourselves.

Ben Porter: You don't know the specificity required in a notice of intent?

Gerry Audibert: I'll defer to Bob Landry on what is needed for the notice of intent. I do know that 4(f) needs to be completed. The entire 106 process needs to be completed. How that fits in to Tiger II timing I can't answer.

Steve Workman It's just a letter of intent; as a resident I could care less if we are going to have a political duel between the states; it is important that we at least attempt to get the grant.

John Carson: That's assuming that the goal is to replace the Memorial Bridge.

Ben Porter: Let's suppose we give a letter of intent for replacement of the Memorial Bridge, and the study came up with a different conclusion. The notice of intent does not obligate us to complete the application for Tiger II.

Bob Landry: It does not.

Ben Porter: So, if we have a letter of intent in place, we have preserved an option to apply; but if we don't we have no option to apply. Is that correct?

Bob Landry: That is correct. One of the biggest things is that is 1) you have a very small amount of money, like a third of the amount of Tiger I and its going to be aggressive and competitive. There are discussions taking place daily within the two departments of transportation and the two states need to come together and agree on a solution that works for both states. We need to get there through this evaluation process.

Ben Porter: What information needs to be included in the notice of intent?

Bob Landry: There is no guidance on that; it has to be a joint letter between the two states. The reason for the pre-application is so that the federal government will know how many applications they will have on August 23rd so they can appropriate the correct amount of staff to work on this.

Ben Porter: So if Maine and New Hampshire filed a notice of intent with a vague description of what the funds were for but a promise of a more specific plan to come, that would be acceptable?

Bob Landry: I don't know.

Ben Porter: Failing to file the notice of intent is walking away from any potential; I think that is irresponsible.

Bob Landry: I agree.

Gerry Audibert: I also heard that the Tiger or Tiger-like grant opportunities are going to become more commonplace. We don't think this is the last opportunity for funds.

Ben Porter: But will we see a repeat of this process of New Hampshire trying to move forward and Maine dragging their feet?

Gerry Audibert: It's not a question of dragging our feet, the issue has been and remains to be that we need to complete the study first. We can't identify where the money will come from until we know exactly what we are planning on investing in. It's not Memorial or Sarah, the study will look at the long-term solutions for both bridges. We need to let the study team complete their

recommendation, which both DOTs will discuss once that report has been submitted. Once we see the top tier of alternatives we can make an informed decision. This is a lot of money and a major investment so we want to make sure we have every part of the study completed before we make any decisions.

Ben Porter: I understand that, but I don't get a sense of urgency in bringing this thing to a conclusion. The community has a sense of urgency because of the state of the bridge.

Gerry Audibert: There is a sense of urgency but we don't want to make a rash decision based on that sense of urgency. The process is talking a little more time, but it was scheduled as a very aggressive schedule to begin with. And the condition of the Sarah Long caught everyone by surprise, and the Memorial's poor condition was known but the severity was a bit of a surprise as well. The two structures are both in critical condition and the likelihood of MaineDOT coming up with enough money to replace both bridges in the short term is very low.

Ben Porter: We have a little more time on the Sarah.

Gerry Audibert: Yes. In the long run, for the State of Maine, the Sarah is more of a priority for our interests. New Hampshire has their own priorities, and neither opinion is wrong, it is just a matter of priorities and constituency interests.

Ben Porter: And the communities have their own opinions.

Gerry Audibert: If I was living here I would want both, but the harsh realities of funding make that difficult in the short term.

Linda Wilson: For the last year and a half a lot of people have been focused on this study and it has been an enormous part of our lives. With less than a month to file a NOI (Notice of Intent) for funding, it completely changes. I have confidence that people could pull together a reasonable NOI. If it can't be done, and if the states can't agree and we lose that opportunity, what other opportunities exist? How in this economy are we going to get the numbers together to address the three crossings if the states can't decide?

Carol Morris: That is the crux of the matter. There is no easy answer right now.

Cathy Goodwin: Why does Maine feel that the Sarah Long Bridge is more of a priority?

Gerry Audibert: It is our lifeline to outside the state, outside of the I-95 Bridge. If something were to happen to the I-95 Bridge, then we would lose the ability, for example, to bring trucks with goods into the state. It would cut us off from major delivery of goods.

Ben Porter: Trucks are not allowed on the Sarah right now.

Gerry Audibert: I understand, but if we were to lose the I-95 Bridge we lose all access to the state, short of going to Dover. It's a critical lifeline to us and also it is the only connection to the shipyard, and they employ a lot of people from both states. There are many other reasons as well but those are probably the most predominant reasons.

Cathy Goodwin: The shipyard has not participated in this process nor are they willing to put any dollars up. In the people's minds, that criterion is not of importance.

Gerry Audibert: For a clarification on their lack of participation; they felt it would be inappropriate for them to sit on this panel. But we have ongoing conversations with them. About funding, we haven't talked about funding but it's probably a reasonable expectation to think that if we are serving the military then they should help us pay for the bridge.

Cathy Goodwin: I'm really frustrated that Maine is dragging their feet to get to an answer and that ties the hands of our congressional delegation that cannot go to bat for us unless Gov. Baldacci asks for help. I think that is a critical political mistake for the state of Maine. Prior to the deadline for the NOI, this group has to convince the governor that he has to give us a letter that buys us a couple more months. The other part of this is that the DOT still works for us. We have sat like good citizens, and to feel as though we have no power is frustrating because we pay DOT's salaries. There is also a lot of talk down here that the real interest in Augusta is for the Tiger II money for the Aroostook County rail line.

Gerry Audibert: There is a Tiger II application for the MMA Railroad in Aroostook County. That is for the rural portion of the Tiger II, this area could not compete for that money anyway. States can also submit multiple applications and each application is looked at equally. The third point you brought up that I would like to clarify is that we are not dragging our heels. This was an aggressive schedule and when we first spoke with HNTB at the beginning of the study, we really condensed the schedule. This would typically be a 3-4 year study. I think we have done tremendously well on moving this project along and the study team probably fields 20 emails a day on this project. It's not that we are stalling, or dragging our feet; the issue is that we need to complete the study and we are very close to the end. Given the several hundred million dollar investment this could be, even before the last public meeting we felt that we had to take a step back and thoroughly evaluate every aspect of this study in order to justify that we are spending the public's money in the most appropriate manner.

James Horrigan: All that said, it doesn't answer the question as to why the State of Maine is not cooperating with the State of New Hampshire to get a joint application in by the deadline. Why are we not doing that yet?

Gerry Audibert: Because we don't know the solution yet, the study has not been completed.

James Horrigan: We already heard that we don't have to have a detailed application. I'm thinking back to the first application and Maine was uncooperative then. We have to move ahead with this.

Gerry Audibert: We partnered with and supported New Hampshire on Tiger I.

Russ Charette: The first application was put in under the predication based on the original inspection that the Memorial could be rehabilitated. Since then we learned that the structure was in much worse condition than what was determined in 1983. We know at this point in time that rehabilitation of the Memorial Bridge is not an option. The section 4(f) and 106 needs to be completed and once the study has been completed we will move forward, and the final decision as to how we will move forward is made at the Commissioner or at the Governor's level. On the financial side, both New Hampshire and Maine know that the outcome of the study will be an extraordinary expenditure, and a budget breaker for both states.

Bob Landry: It's a lot of money.

Gerry Audibert: For us to invest 200 million dollars, which will not address both bridges (NOTE: This is total, of which half is NHDOT's responsibility.), is the equivalent to five years of our bridge program. First of all we can't commit money ahead like that. Secondly all of the other 225 bridges that are in critical condition in the State of Maine that are in danger of being closed or posted in the next ten years would have to be ignored. So it is a huge decision for the State of Maine; we are not dragging our feet.

Comment: So if the study result is that the Memorial Bridge needs to be replaced, what are the chances that it will change anybody's mind in the State of Maine? You are saying that you are waiting to get the study finished but I think you are waiting for the study to finish with the alternative that the State of Maine prefers. Is that an overstatement?

Gerry Audibert: Yes, I believe it is.

Steve Workman: I don't hear anyone saying we need to stop the study. I would suggest that this committee influenced why the study is going long. Personally I think the project team has done a great job. I want to say to Gerry Audibert, you are stuck making a defense of things that are far above your pay grade. We have

not seen Commissioner Cole; he needs to be here for this and tell us that a letter of intent is the minimum we need from him.

Gerry Audibert: Thank you, I can't comment for the Commissioner. It depends on how the letter of intent is written up. We cannot predetermine the outcome of the study. If we were to say as a for instance that we want the money to replace the Memorial Bridge, that would be a predetermination and I don't think our friends at the Federal Department of Highways could support us.

Ben Porter: Then we need to explore what kind of statement would be acceptable so we can at least hold our place in line.

Gerry Audibert: That will occur, the two commissioners are talking and they were together this weekend at a conference. There are conversations that take place above my level that I am unfortunately not privy to. Things will happen, but I don't know if it's germane to completing the study.

Ben Porter: But we have this deadline.

Bob Landry: The study is very close to its completion. We need to get there, we have a lot of good information.

Steve Kosacz: The group here has been very mature in how they have responded to this process. Today you presented two new alternatives and our reactions show their viability. From the people in this room, the reaction to the transit was that it is not viable. Our feelings need to be part of the study. I feel that you don't have to go any further than this meeting to strike the transit alternative. It is not going to work. I think it is a waste of time, and it keeps us from filing a letter of intent.

Carol Morris: Paul did say that the documentation is going to be to DOT by Friday, so that is not going to hold up the study or the opportunity to put together a letter of intent.

Linda Wilson: We have less than a month if we decide to put in the letter of intent. Bob, in your view what are the things that remain to be done?

Bob Landry: Paul's completion of the report for the Hybrid and looking at the evaluation matrix to see if they move through the fatal flaw.

Peter Somssich: It seems to me that there is a political component. Because of your elections, you're getting a new governor, a new commissioner and that slows decisions. New Hampshire has said they will fund Memorial up front, but we want the money back when the Sarah Long Bridge gets built. And you know, New Hampshire can drag their feet when it's time to build the Sarah Long Bridge. I hope they do.

Roger Maloof: It seems that Maine will say that you can have the Memorial Bridge if we can have the Sarah Long Bridge. Is that right?

Gail Drobnyk: Maine just wants to get rid of the Memorial. Who do you think came up with the idea to have buses?

Gerry Audibert: We have a law that requires us to look into transit in every transportation study. The transit may not go far, but it is valuable to look into it.

James Horrigan: Have we looked at alternatives that eliminate the rail line and move that nuclear waste in another way?

Carol Morris: We looked at that in the beginning.

Peter Somssich: I would like to see a show of hands for who is in favor of eliminating the bike-ped bridge option from consideration.

I'd like to request that this group support eliminating the bike-ped option from consideration.

Carol Morris: Because this is a steering and stakeholder committee meeting, please, only committee members raise their hands.

(10 for elimination, 1 for keeping, 6 abstained)

Carol Morris: There is a public meeting at the Portsmouth High School in the Little Theatre next Wednesday; the agenda will be similar. If there is new information we will share that with you.

Bob Landry: Are we going to provide any new information to the steering and stakeholder committee before that meeting if available?

Carol Morris: Yes, if there is new information we will provide that to you prior to that meeting. It may be last minute, but watch your email.

Steve Kosacz: All along we have had a budget, and yet we've said we can't get into the details because we have to do the study first. We need to know how much it's going to cost to build these bridges.

Bob Landry: We've started that. We have had discussions with SHPO. Any new replacement option would not replicate the current model. Because we don't have a design and because this is a planning study we don't have specific numbers. We are using some of the quantities from the old plan, but only in a general sense. That is something that HDR (consultants) developed and was sent out yesterday. Maine's got a lot of experience from the many projects

they've done and we have some experience as well. We don't have specific numbers yet