

Public Involvement Plan

Date: 05/01/09

Maine New Hampshire Connections Study: Public Involvement Plan

The Public Involvement process for the Maine-New Hampshire Connections Study will clearly communicate the purpose of the Connections Study and, on an ongoing basis, provide details to the public on the analysis and screening of each proposed alternative. Much more than an effort to determine what happens to a particular bridge or bridges, this Connections Study will analyze the area's overall transportation needs and opportunities to determine which transportation improvements will best position the region for the future.

We will provide multiple ways for the public to follow the process and provide feedback. Because people like to access information and provide comment in different ways, we hope by this to increase the amount and diversity of feedback and give a clearer picture of the public's concerns and needs. If you have questions, please call Carol Morris, public outreach, at 207-329-6502 or email her at cmorris@morriscomm.net

Learning about the Study

Here are the ways to get information on the study:

Web Site: At www.MaineNHconnections.org, the public can view the documents involved in the Connections Study, as well as find out when meetings are scheduled, read minutes from past meetings and see regular updates on the progress of the Connections Study. An interactive section also allows you to see responses to the questions and comments from other interested parties.

Quarterly Newsletters: Four times during the Connections Study, a newsletter will provide updates on study activities and progress. The

newsletter will be available at the Kittery and Portsmouth municipal offices and libraries, as well as in key downtown retail locations. The newsletter will also be emailed to those who request it.

Email Updates: Those who want to hear Connections Study news more often can elect to receive monthly updates via their own email address.

Posters: To increase awareness of the Connections Study and its findings to the general public, posters with updates on progress and meeting dates will be made available to local businesses for posting on their bulletin boards.

Public Informational Meetings: Public meetings will be held at two different locations and times at six key points during the study. One meeting will be held in the afternoon and a second in the evening. This will allow more people to fit a meeting into their schedule. The topics and estimated timing for the six meetings is as follows:

- Meeting 1: Study process, Data collection, public input for Purpose and Need Statement: Late April 2009
- Meeting 2: Finalize Purpose and Need Statement, Data Findings, Bridge Inspection Report: August 2009
- Meeting 3: Identify Alternatives, Introduction to Fatal Flaw Approach Final Purpose and Need: September 2009
- Meeting 4: Fatal Flaw Analysis, Economic Analysis Input: December 2009
- Meeting 5: Identify Preferred Alternatives, Evaluation/Feedback: April 2010
- Meeting 6: Final Report: June 2010

Media: The news media will receive regular updates on the progress of the Connections Study. Since this study is of major interest to many residents of the area, coverage will be ongoing.

Providing Feedback

Here's how you can provide us with feedback:

Web site: At www.MaineNHconnections.org, you will have the opportunity to ask questions online. You'll receive an answer directly from a member of the Connections Study Team, and you'll have the option to choose whether you want your question to be answered publicly on the site or simply have the answer emailed back to you.

Email: Should you prefer, you may simply email us directly with questions and comments at cmorris@morriscomm.net

Public Informational Meetings: At each meeting, the public will have the opportunity to ask questions, comment on the Connections Study findings, and help make sure the final alternatives meet community needs. As noted earlier, there will be 12 meetings covering six topic areas scheduled over the duration of the study.

Letters: As always, letters are welcome. Any written comments should be mailed to Morris Communications, 12 High Tide Road, Kennebunkport, ME 04046.

Committees: Two major committees provide direction and guidance for the Connections Study team. A Steering Committee that includes representatives from Maine and New Hampshire DOT's, Maine and New Hampshire Federal Highway Administration, Maine and New Hampshire Historic Preservation Officers, Town of Kittery, City of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Pan Am Railways and, as resources, the Rockingham County Planning Commission and Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, provides direction for the study. In addition, to provide a broad-based spectrum of viewpoints and help to provide insight and guidance around public concerns, a diverse Stakeholders Committee will be formed. The Stakeholders Committee will include members from the following groups and organizations:

- Historic
- Business
- Conservation
- Bicycle
- Pedestrian
- Rail
- Ports and Harbor
- Community/Neighborhood
- Emergency Rescue/Police/Fire
- Tribes
- Consulting Organizations
- Others to be determined