



## Public Participation and Community Awareness for the I-93 Corridor Study

4<sup>th</sup> National Community Impact Assessment Workshop  
August 25, 2004  
Portland, Maine



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## Public Participation and Community Awareness for the I-93 Corridor Study

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## I-93 Project Overview

- Reconstruct 20 miles of I-93 in southern NH
- From Stateline in Salem to I-93/I-293 split in Manchester (see map)
- Project Passes through five Communities
  - Salem, Windham, Derry, Londonderry, Manchester



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## I-93 Project Overview



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## I-93 Project Overview

### Purpose and Need

*Improve transportation efficiency and reduce safety problems associated with this section of I-93. Options include reactivating rail service, improving bus transit, other TDM measures, in addition to widening the mainline and reconstructing the interchanges.*

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## Project Background

- I-93 Built in mid-1960's
- Existing two lanes in each direction
- Growth along the I-93 corridor
- Traffic Volumes
  - Built for approx. 70,000 vpd
  - Current traffic volumes 75,000 – 115,000 vpd
  - Projected traffic volumes 80,000 – 140,000 vpd
- Increasing Congestion
- Increasing Safety Concerns

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## Project History

### Timeline

- Need first identified in mid 1980's
- Began design process with first project moving forward in early 1990's
- Concerns about segmenting the project led to a corridor-wide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 1992
- Development of Statewide Traffic Model completed in 1997
- Restarted the EIS process in earnest in 1999



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## Project History

### Timeline (cont.)

- Scoping Report published in May 2000
  - secondary growth identified as a concern and how to address it in the EIS
- Environmental Streamlining/Partnering July 2000
- Rationale Report published in January 2001
- DEIS published in August 2002
- Public Hearings held in November 2002
- FEIS published in April 2004
- Currently awaiting FHWA Record of Decision and working through permitting



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## Description of Selected Alternative

- Reconstruct 20 miles of I-93 from the Stateline in Salem to I-93/I-293 split in Manchester
- Widen from existing two lanes in each direction to four lanes in each direction and reconstruct five Interchanges
- Includes three new park and ride facilities with expanded bus service
- Leave room in the median to not preclude future mass transit (conceptualized light rail)
- Transit Investment Study with Massachusetts
- ITS/IM



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## Public Participation

- Advisory Task Force
- Corridor/Community Meetings
- Resource Agency Meetings
- Project Newsletters
- Project Website



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## Public Participation

### Advisory Task Force

- Members representing each of five communities
- Members also representing each of the three Regional Planning Commissions affected
- ATF meetings held on regular basis to present and distribute information relating to the study
- Twelve ATF meetings were held between March 2000 and June 2001
- Meetings were open to the general public and encouraged public participation
- As details became more localized, meetings became more town focused



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## Public Participation

### Corridor / Community Meetings

- Several types of local meetings were held in each of the five communities to update the public as the information was being developed:
  - Public Officials Meetings – three rounds of meetings in each town (March – December 2000) including one round of “workshop” meetings (*Open House format*) to provide local officials with a project update
  - Public Informational Meetings – three rounds of meetings in each town (July 2001 – July 2002) to update the public
  - Local Planning Boards / Selectmen / ConComm’s – various meetings were held to provide answers to questions on specific sections or discuss transportation or environmental aspects of the project as requested



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## Public Participation

### Corridor / Community Meetings (cont.)

- Property Owner Meetings – several meetings were held with Property owners to provide answers to noise related questions or other concerns as requested
- Local Conservation / Land Preservation Associations – several meetings were held with local groups to discuss proposed wetland mitigation sites throughout the corridor and incorporate their local knowledge
- Public Hearings – Two separate public hearings were held in November 2002 (in Salem and Manchester) to present the Preferred Alternative.
- Overall this project included over 50 public meetings between March 2000 and July 2002 prior to the Public Hearings.

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## Public Participation

### Resource Agency (RA) Meetings

- Monthly meetings attended by state and federal environmental resource agencies
  - State Agencies – NHDES, NHFGD, NHDHR, NHDOT, RPC's
  - Federal Agencies – USEPA, USACOE, USFWS, FHWA, FTA
- Meetings typically held at NHDOT, not publicized
- Environmental Streamlining/Partnering (July 2000)
  - 12 of 25 RA Meetings held within the corridor (Sept. 2000 – Feb. 2002) with public participation encouraged
  - NHDOT/NHDES MOA on joint public hearings

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## Environmental Streamlining

- TEA-21 Environmental Streamlining Initiative
  - Timely delivery of transportation projects while protecting and enhancing the environment
  - Integrated review and permitting process, coordinated schedule
- I-93 Environmental Streamlining/Partnering Workshop held in July/August 2000 (Sen. Smith)
  - Agree to facilitate decisions at key points, process for resolution
  - Sign-off by all parties at decision points (i.e., range of alternatives)
- Attendees suggest subsequent Resource Agency meetings be held along the corridor, with public input

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## Environmental Streamlining

- NHDOT and NHDES develop Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for joint hearing process for proposed transportation projects.
- NHDOT and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District also participate in a joint hearing process.
- I-93 selected as Priority Project under TEA-21 Environmental Streamlining/Stewardship (2002)

DOT



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## Project Website

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the I-93 Corridor Study website. The page title is "I-93 Corridor Study" and it features a navigation menu with options like "Home Page", "Project Information", "Map", "Study Documents", and "Study Updates". The main content area includes a "Project Information" section with a map of the I-93 corridor and text describing the project's purpose and goals. The text mentions that the project is a major study in the Interstate system and will be completed in the early 2000s. It also states that the project will be completed in the early 2000s and will be completed in the early 2000s.

- Project website developed in December 2000
- NHDOT website development
- Phased build-up of project information

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## Project Newsletters

The collage shows several newsletters. One prominent one is titled "Project Purpose" and includes sections for "Project Purpose", "Project Updates", and "Project Updates". Another newsletter is titled "Project Updates" and includes sections for "Project Updates", "Project Updates", and "Project Updates". The newsletters contain text and graphics related to the I-93 Corridor Study.

- Newsletters provided at Public Meetings and mailed out to meeting attendees and others as requested. Also available on website.
- Two newsletters created to date - September 2000 and November 2001
- Newsletter Update currently being developed

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## Feedback / Concerns

- Instituting Rail Service in the region served by I-93
- Extent of Secondary Growth that may occur in addition to what might be expected if improvements were not completed
- Water Quality concerns from road salt usage

**DOT**  
**VIR**

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## Secondary Growth

What is it?

- Impacts that may result from the I-93 improvements outside of the direct property and resource impacts within the highway corridor and construction footprint
- If you widen the highway, may induce more people to move to the area than otherwise would
- "If you build it they will come"

**DOT**  
**VIR**

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## Secondary Growth

How do we address it?

- Difficult being an incremental improvement to an existing facility
- Complicated subject affected by so many other factors
  - Social (growing area, quality of life)
  - Economic (housing costs, job market)
  - Political (no income tax, live free or die)
- Secondary Study Area consists of 29 communities, 2 states, and 8 RPC's

**DOT**  
**VIR**

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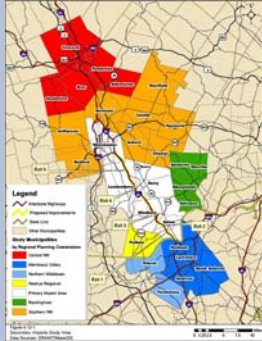
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## Secondary Impact Study Area



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## Secondary Growth

### Delphi Methodology

- Expert Panel made up of 16 panelists
- Knowledge/expertise about local/regional planning, development, real estate, economic analysis, academia, environmental policy, etc.
- Asked to assess likely growth in each of the 29 communities that would result in no-build and the build condition.
- Specifically to allocate population and employment.

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## Secondary Growth

### Delphi Panel Results

- Some estimates were high, Some were low, summarized by a blended or weighted average
- Panel was very clear that they did not reach consensus but informed individual opinions
- Population would increase by 140,000 whether you widen the highway or not
- Widening would increase this by additional 40,000
- Increase in population of 5 %
- Increase in rate of growth of about 25%

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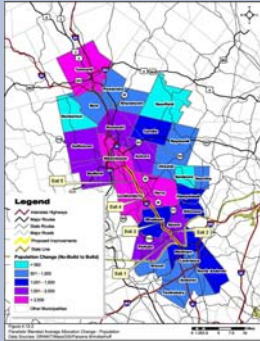
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## Population Change



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## Secondary Growth

### What does this mean?

- Speculative, what might happen
- Purpose was to consider the issue, get a sense of the possible ramifications, and provide this information to the local decision makers to consider in their decision making.
- Growth is coming whether you widen the highway or not
- Heightened the awareness of growth and related issues in the southern NH region

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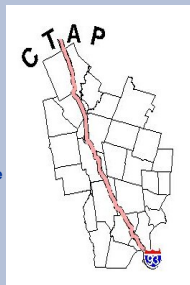
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## Community Technical Assistance Program

- Innovative Project commitment of \$3.5M toward providing communities in the area influenced by I-93 tools to deal with growth related issues
  - Recognition of continuing growth pressures and link between land use and transportation
  - Supplement local approach to land use planning
  - Build off of and continue awareness that was built in addition to other initiatives in the State



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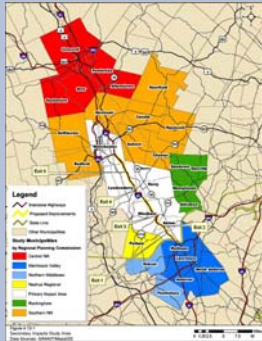
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## Secondary Impact Study Area



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## Community Technical Assistance Program

Provide communities with the help they need to address growth related issues

### Training and Education

- Various training, educational, outreach and marketing efforts
- Basics and Advanced training for local boards
- Smart growth awareness for general public and planners

### Innovative projects

- Resources for community sponsored innovative projects
- Coordination of municipal efforts re: regional objectives

### Technical Assistance

- Focused assistance to communities
- Visioning and community profiles
- Review/revise local regulations and ordinances
- Assistance with local planning efforts

### Planning tools and Analyses

- Build-out analysis
- Future development scenarios
- Accessibility to GIS Tools
- Regional conservation plans

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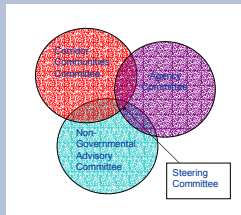
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## CTAP Organization

- Community driven, open, inclusive program
- 3 Committee Structure
  - Corridor Community Committee
  - Agency Committee
  - Advisory Committee
- Steering Committee
  - Policy making body for program



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## Committees

- Corridor Community Committee
  - Represent and be communication conduit to 26 represented communities
  - Provide regional forum and opportunities
- Agency Community
  - Coordinating group for participating regional, State, and Federal agencies
  - Leverage resources
- Advisory Committee
  - Advise on specific tools and strategies
  - Represent a broad cross section of non-governmental stake holders – conservation groups, business associations, etc.
  - "Big Tent"



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## Indirect Goals

- Raise awareness
- Build capacity
- Foster regional approach
- Leverage/consolidate resources and activities



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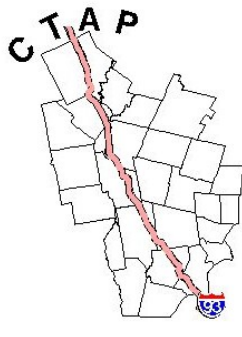
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How to measure Success ?



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## Lessons Learned

- Expert Panel/Delphi method useful in developing idea of what may occur
- Helpful in raising awareness of growth implications in general
- Tendency to view results too definitively, while others dismiss as nothing but opinion
- Regulatory controversy
- Value of public involvement and difficulty achieving consensus



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## Conclusion

**“If you build it, they will come....”**

- Need to understand the relationship between Transportation and Land Use.
- They are coming regardless and what can be done to proactively address it?
- Can this growth be absorbed and assimilated?
- Challenge is to balance the need for housing, jobs, and economic development with preserving our natural resources and quality of life.



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