

# Meredith US 3/NH 25 Improvements Transportation Planning Study

## Project Advisory Committee Meeting No. 9

### MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** June 1, 2007  
**DATE OF MEETING:** May 15, 2007  
**LOCATION OF MEETING:** Meredith Community Center  
DW Highway, Meredith, NH

#### ATTENDED BY:

#### Advisory Committee Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Robert LeCount	Meredith Conservation Commission
Frank Michel	Meredith Board of Selectmen
Robert Snelling	Town of Holderness
Tim Drew	NH Department of Environmental Services
Mark Morrill	NHDOT
Carol Granfield	Meredith Town Manager
John Edgar	Meredith Town Planner
Kevin Morrow	Meredith Police Chief
Chuck Palm	Meredith Fire Chief
Michael Faller	Meredith Public Works Director
Linda Johnson	Meredith Chamber of Commerce
Pam Bliss	Meredith Planning Board
Mike Iazard	Lakes Region Planning Commission
John Moulton	Meredith Citizen Representative
Sandra Sullivan	Meredith Citizen Representative
Warren Clark	Meredith Citizen Representative
Rusty McLear	Greater Meredith Program
Chris Williams	Latchkey Group
Roger Nash	Meredith Transportation Advisory Task Force
Herb Vadney	Meredith Transportation Advisory Task Force
Fred Hatch	Meredith Transportation Advisory Task Force/ Historical Society

#### Others

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Nancy Mayville	NHDOT, Project Manager
Jim Marshall	NHDOT
Bill Oldenburg	NHDOT

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Cathy Goodman	NHDOT
David Saladino	Resource Systems Group
Russ Thibeault	Applied Economic Research
Michael Kitch	The Laconia Daily Sun
Gene McCarthy	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Vicki Chase	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.

## **MEETING MINUTES:**

The Agenda for the meeting is attached and the meeting generally followed the Agenda. These minutes are formatted to follow the Agenda Items.

### 1. Opening/Project Overview

Nancy Mayville, NHDOT Project Manager opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. She stated that she has a new position at the NHDOT as the Municipal Highway Engineer. She plans to remain with this project through Part A, but will begin to transition the project to the new project manager. Jim Marshall will be the new project manager and Nancy introduced Jim. Nancy stated that the committee will see them both for the remaining portion of Part A and Jim would take over completely during Part B.

Nancy presented the project steps slide and mentioned that the project is now at the Brainstorm Alternatives step. She finished by discussing the meeting agenda.

### 2. Traffic Model Update

David Saladino of Resource Systems Group gave an overview and update on the traffic model development. David described how the existing traffic data was collected and then input into the computer program. He mentioned how the project geography was drawn into Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ's) with the help of town and regional planning staff. These TAZ's are defined by the type of land uses within them. The model is run based on the land use and then evaluated based upon the actual traffic volumes counted. This process is called calibration. This is a more time consuming process but it produces a more robust model. It ensures that the model is accurately generating traffic. Dave presented information on the calibration that indicated the model is well within the established standards. He felt very comfortable with the base model and the volumes it is producing.

David presented a brief video showing the base model in action. The video presented the current traffic conditions the model is replicating.

There were many questions and comments made by PAC members after David's presentation. Below is a list of the main points.

- Fred Hatch mentioned that locals stay home to avoid traffic and wondered if this is a problem when using land use to generate traffic. Dave stated that the purpose of the calibration is to tie the land use generated traffic to actual counted traffic. Therefore, the

model takes into account that the land use in the Lakes Region generates traffic at a different rate than other places.

- Rusty McLear asked if regional traffic volumes are included. The answer is yes, regional traffic volumes are included. They are and will be determined from the NHDOT statewide model.
- Warren Clark asked whether pedestrians are included in the model. There is not a pedestrian volume included in the model. However, the two mid-block crosswalks on US 3 have been modeled using a traffic signal as a meter.
- Mike Izard mentioned that the one area of calibration that did not meet the standard was for regional volumes. He wanted to know how this could be improved. David stated that additional counts would be needed and it would take a great deal of time to incorporate them. David was confident that FHWA would be fine not meeting this one criterion by only 1%.
- John Edgar asked whether seasonal traffic volumes were factored into the model. David answered they were and that the license plate survey helped with this.
- Robert Snelling asked whether the model propagated uncertainty. David stated that the only uncertainty the model takes into consideration is the route a particular trip would take. In most cases the route taken would be the one that takes the shortest time. However, the model does alter this at times because not every trip uses the shortest route.
- Chris Williams began a discussion by asking how does the model deal with altered travel patterns as a result of higher gasoline prices. Russ answered the question by saying it is difficult to handle a behavioral change. Studies in the past concerning gasoline prices have indicated that travel is not significantly reduced by higher prices. Russ stated that as the price of gasoline went to \$1, \$2 and now \$3 a gallon, there has been very little behavioral change. Rusty stated that in Europe where gasoline is about \$7/gallon, they drive just as much as they used to but are using small cars that get 50 miles to the gallon.
- John Edgar asked how much of the traffic is locally generated and how much is regional. Dave stated that the license plate survey determined that it is about 50%/50%. The project team committed to providing more detailed information at a later date.

### 3. Land Use Allocation

Russ Thibeault of Applied Economic Research presented the growth projections he prepared for the project that would be used in the traffic model to determine future traffic volumes. The projections are for the number of housing units and the number and type of jobs. Russ described that there are two steps to the projections. First, the overall size of the growth must be determined. Second, the overall growth must be allocated to the TAZ's. Russ then described the process he used.

The overall population and housing projections were based on the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP) population projections. Russ stated that the NHOEP does a good job in their projections. He is familiar with their procedures. Russ converted the population projections into single family and multi family housing construction. Russ stated that these housing projections are on the high range of probabilities, but he felt they are appropriate for

this type of corridor study. The employment projections are based on projections completed for the NH State Transportation Model.

Russ explained that the allocation of housing and jobs for Meredith was done in collaboration with John Edgar, the town planner. John went over the entire town explaining the potential for growth, the type of growth and places where growth is unlikely to occur, in light of land availability, market appeal, zoning and utilities. John compiled a list of likely developments, which the projections reflect. The projections also took into account the Route 104 build-out analysis recently completed by the Lakes Region Planning Commission. Russ took this information and developed six sub-areas. The sub-areas were determined by their potential growth. The six sub-areas included:

- Route 3 North
- Route 25 East
- Meredith Neck
- Route 104 West
- Route 3 South
- Core Area

Russ then presented the population and housing trends for Meredith. The population of Meredith is projected to increase from 6,350 in 2005 to 8,340 by 2030. The number of housing units would increase from 4,625 in 2005 to 6,795 by 2030. Russ also mentioned that seasonal units are important in Meredith. Currently, about 43% of the units are seasonal and Russ has assumed this percentage would remain the same in the future. The employment projections for Meredith have total jobs increasing from 1,434 in 2005 to 1,898 by 2020.

Next, Russ explained the differences in the six sub-areas. He explained the basis for the projections for each area based upon zoning, utilities, views of the lakes, and other existing features. He then presented the projections for housing and jobs for each sub-area.

Russ then explained that the process used for each of the surrounding communities; Center Harbor, Holderness, Moultonborough, Ashland, and Bridgewater. He explained that there were fewer TAZ's for these towns so the allocations were based on town-wide data, allocated based on current activity in each traffic zone at the town level. The allocations for each town were shown but not explained in detail.

There were many questions and comments made by PAC members after Russ's presentation. Below is a list of the main points.

- Rusty McLear asked whether the projections accurately account for seasonal occupancy. Russ explained that although the population figures represent full time residents who live in the area on April 1 of each year, the model's design hour is in the summer and assumes full occupancy of seasonal units.
- Warren Clark asked about the area where the Christian camp was to be built. John Edgar explained that the projections assume some development of that area. He explained that each area was evaluated based upon its potential for development and what type of development was likely to occur.
- It was mentioned that Laconia was not a surrounding town. Laconia is not part of the geography of the model; however, the traffic entering from Laconia is an external zone. The traffic coming into the model from outside the model geography is handled by external

zones. The traffic volumes for these external zones are determined from the Statewide model.

- Herb Vadney mentioned that the development in Laconia may be different in the future than it is today. There are large potential developments in Laconia that could change projected traffic. Chuck Palm asked if the same consideration has been made for the other communities. Russ responded that these developments do not change the overall projections for an area, just the allocation. David Saladino mentioned that the Statewide model addresses these external zones. Nancy Mayville added that the assumptions in the Statewide model came from the regional planning commissions and therefore includes local knowledge of potential development. Mike Izard mentioned that the LRPC provides annual traffic count data to the state and that the data is more detailed in Meredith than the outlying areas.
- John Edgar mentioned that the traffic counts indicate that there is a siphoning of traffic as traffic heads north along US 3 and NH 25. He wanted to be sure the model takes this into account. The model does because these counts are part of the calibration effort.
- Fred Hatch mentioned that the Route 104 Study analysis determined that there would be ten times more demand than capacity based upon build out. The build out was for a 1000-foot corridor along Route 104.

At the end of the discussion, the members of the PAC were comfortable proceeding with the projections and allocations. These would be incorporated into the traffic model.

#### 4. Break

#### 5. Alternatives Development

Gene McCarthy explained that the Alternatives Development process would be collaborative. He stated that the project team would present information and plans to the PAC for their review and consideration. Based upon the number of alternatives and concepts that were developed, it will take several meetings to get through them all. Many of them need the traffic model to fully evaluate, but the team felt it was appropriate to develop certain concepts for presentation at the meeting. Also, it was not certain that some of the concepts were even possible. Gene presented the following concepts:

- Pedestrian Underpass on US 3
- Pedestrian Bridge over US 3
- Bypass from Barnard Ridge Road to US 3

The Pedestrian Underpass on US 3 is a concept that was developed during the Meredith Village Core Revitalization Design Charrette conducted by Plan NH in May 2005. This concept would provide a grade separated pedestrian crossing near Dover Street on US 3. US 3 would be raised about 10 feet to allow the underpass to cross underneath. Gene presented a profile that raised US 3 between Lake Street and NH 25. This would require that the municipal parking lot adjacent to US 3 be raised as well. The existing boat ramp could not be accommodated with this option. In summary, this concept is possible and would provide a safe alternative for crossing pedestrians and bicyclists.

Several of the questions pertaining to the underpass concerned its width. Some felt that a wide crossing would be the best because it would be less intimidating. Others felt a small narrow crossing would be fine and less obtrusive. In summary, members of the PAC agreed that this concept has merit and should be considered.

The Pedestrian Bridge over US 3 is also a concept developed during the Meredith Village Core Revitalization Design Charrette. A bridge would be placed near Dover Street to allow pedestrians and bicyclist to cross over US 3. The concept from the charrette used stairs to access the bridge. Gene presented a layout with ramps that would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and also allow bicyclist and strollers to use the bridge. The ramps occupy more space than stairs. The general feeling from the PAC is that this is not a concept they support.

The Bypass from Barnard Ridge Road to US 3 is a concept developed by the Town of Meredith to address several issues. The bypass would connect the town schools near the Barnard Ridge/NH 25 intersection to the recreational facilities on the north portion of US 3. It would also allow vehicles headed north on US 3 to avoid having to use the US 3/NH 25 intersection. Gene stated that the topography of the proposed route is quite steep and he was not sure it would be feasible. The project team took the original layout from the Town and developed an alignment and profile. The profile developed has an 8% grade on the bypass and a 10% grade on the connection to True Road. These grades are steep but not compared to the 10%+ grade on existing NH 25.

A question was raised as to who would own this bypass. Some PAC members stated it should be a state road because it is a bypass of two other state roads. Representatives of the NHDOT felt it should be a local street since it connects town facilities. The PAC agreed that the bypass has merit and agreed to address whose road it would be at a later date.

## 6. Next Steps

Jim Marshall began the next steps by reminding the group that the process being undertaken for this project is different. He read the definition of CSS from the agenda to emphasize this point. He asked whether meeting on the third Tuesday of the month was still okay. Everyone felt it was working fine. Jim stated that the next meeting would tentatively be on June 19. The meeting is tentative because the project team needs to integrate the traffic model and land use projections to see how they work. If there are problems with the model, it would be appropriate to meet in June. If the model works well, the project team would need more time to use the traffic information to develop alternatives. Under this scenario, the next meeting would be on July 17. A determination would be made well in advance of the June meeting.

## 7. Adjournment

Submitted by,  
Gene McCarthy, P.E.  
McFarland-Johnson, Inc.



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



CHARLES P. O'LEARY, JR.  
COMMISSIONER

JEFF BRILLHART, P.E.  
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

**Meredith 10430 US 3/25 Improvements  
Transportation Planning Study**

Project Advisory Committee

May 15, 2007

Tuesday, 5:00 to 8:00 PM

Meredith Community Center  
DW Highway, Meredith, NH

**AGENDA**

1. Opening/ Introduction: Nancy Mayville, NHDOT Municipal Highways Engineer
2. Traffic Model Update: David Saladino, Resource Systems Group
3. Land Use Allocation: Russ Thibeault, Applied Economic Research
4. Dinner break
5. Alternatives Development: Gene McCarthy, McFarland-Johnson
6. Next Steps: Jim Marshall, NHDOT Project Manager
7. Adjourn (8:00 PM)

**Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)** is defined as “*a collaborative interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.*”

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