

I-93 TDM Task Force
CAP/TLU Subcommittee Recommendations

1. Enhance and Expand Intercity Bus Service

In the I-93 corridor, intercity bus transit – with bus stations in Concord, Manchester and Exits 5, 4, and 2 – is experiencing strong ridership demand, playing an important role in reducing traffic demand on I-93. Of note, there is currently no bus service at Exits 1 and 3. Current rolling stock and bus stations are new and not in need of improvement. However, demand is reaching the point where NHDOT will need to decide whether to expand frequency of service by investing in new rolling stock. There also are important questions about whether and how best to expand intercity bus service by adding new bus stations / Park & Ride lots. The Climate Action Plan recommends improving intercity bus service (TLU 2.B.2.h) and includes in Appendix 5 (Actions for Future Consideration) expanding intercity bus service.

Specific Recommendations:

A. NHDOT should conduct a study of current and projected demand for intercity bus service, to determine whether demand warrants (i) increased frequency of service from existing stations in the I-93 corridor, and (ii) bus service from I-93 locations currently lacking service, including but not limited to Exits 1 and 3, Exit 4A (if that exit is constructed), and the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. In assessing demand, the study should take into account the effect of recommended actions below (i.e., improved integration with local transit, transit-oriented development, and marketing) as well as impacts on fare-box sustainability. It also should assess the feasibility and impacts of charging a parking fee at Park & Ride facilities as a source of revenues to support transit services.

B. NHDOT should ensure that planning and construction for Exit 4A (if that project advances, and taking the proposed Woodmont Commons development into account) incorporates intercity bus transit by providing space for a bus station and/or Park & Ride, to accommodate the results of the intercity bus study (1.A., above).

C. NHDOT should develop and implement a service design and funding plan for enhanced transit service.

2. Integrate Intercity and Local/Intracity Bus Service

In the I-93 corridor, local/intracity bus service is provided by the Manchester Transit Authority (MTA) and the Greater Derry-Salem Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART). The MTA has thirteen fixed routes and provides service throughout Manchester and the adjacent communities of Bedford, Hooksett, Goffstown, and Londonderry, providing connections to Nashua and Concord for commuters, as well as bus service to the Manchester-Boston

Regional Airport and Canal Street Transit Center. There are plans to provide connections to CART and Portsmouth-Manchester bus service.

CART provides demand-response and flex-route service in the I-93 corridor communities of Londonderry, Derry, Windham and Salem, as well as Chester and Hampstead. CART's Salem Shuttle currently serves the transit center at Exit 2, though only three days per week (M-W-F). CART has secured CMAQ funding to implement fixed route service connecting Salem, Derry, and Londonderry with potential for service to Exit 4, though the project has been long delayed for lack of adequate matching funding.

In addition to these services in the I-93 corridor, the Nashua Transit System (NTS) provides service in the City of Nashua and along the F.E. Everett Turnpike. NTS currently operates multiple fixed routes along major corridors and neighborhoods in the City of Nashua on weekdays, evenings and Saturdays. The NTS connects with Boston Express service at the Exit 8 Park & Ride on the F.E Everett Turnpike.

Ridership demand for both intercity and intracity bus service can benefit from greater coordination / integration of such services. In particular, bus stations and Park & Ride facilities on the I-93 corridor should be served by local/intracity transit services. The CAP specifically recommends improving and expanding local/intra-regional transit (bus) service (TLU 2.B.1.b and 2.B.1.a) and acknowledges the benefits of integrating local/intracity and intercity services.

Specific Recommendations:

A. Expand local transit services (MTA, CART, NTS) to provide service connections with I-93 Park & Ride facilities, including but not limited to CART service to the Exit 4 Park & Ride and a full weekday schedule to Exit 2, and NTS service to Hudson, Londonderry, Derry, and Windham on NH 102 and NH 111 to serve I-93 Park & Rides.

B. Integrate ticketing between local/regional systems and intercity service such as Boston Express allowing passengers to ride the local and regional systems with the purchase of an intercity provider ticket.

C. NHDOT should coordinate with and among intra-city providers to connect urban areas along and adjacent to the I-93 corridor.

3. Promote Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) can play a powerful role in supporting transit services – by generating both ridership demand for transit, and by generating revenues to support transit capital and operations – and in providing an engine for economic growth. TOD strategies should be developed and implemented with respect to existing intercity bus stations, and for purposes of locating new transit stations. The CAP included recommendations for model development design and supportive local land use regulations to support bus/rail transit (TLU

2.C.2) and higher-density, mixed use development (TLU 2.C.3). The I-93 Transit Investment Study similarly recognized the importance of TOD in its assessment of future transit options, including among its goals the development of “alternatives that will support Transit Oriented Development and be consistent with Smart Growth objectives.” (TIS at 11; see *also* TIS at 115, Figs. 37-44, depicting potential development scenarios adjacent to bus / rail stations in Londonderry, Derry, and Salem). The NH Department of Environmental Services’ Innovative Land Use tool kit¹ can provide a strong basis for towns to develop appropriate land use ordinances to support, and be supported by, transit, as well as to support economic development objectives.

Specific Recommendations:

A. NHDOT should study the potential to introduce transit-supportive land uses at existing I-93 corridor bus stations, at any new I-93 transit stations resulting from the transit assessment (Recommendation 1.A., above), and in locations where municipalities plan to promote compact, mixed use, transit-supportive development . This study should include (i) the integration of new development, particularly integration of the proposed Woodmont Commons development in Londonderry, with intercity bus service; (ii) leasing space, including air-rights over Park & Ride lots, and/or engaging in joint development projects (public-private partnerships) for land uses adjacent to bus stations that will both attract/benefit transit users (e.g., daycare facilities, pharmacies, dry-cleaners) and generate revenues, which should be dedicated to supporting transit services.

B. NHDOT should direct CTAP funding to municipalities in the I-93 corridor to enable and promote higher-density, mixed use development that is closely integrated with and supports transit. This approach would be different from, and complement, the existing highway-oriented approach of large Park & Ride lots / bus stations at I-93 highway exits. It would focus on promoting and integrating higher-density, mixed use development with new stations that could provide intracity and/or intercity bus service (preferably both), as well as – in certain locations – rail service. With respect to the latter, the I-93 Transit Investment Study has identified specific TOD opportunities that could be well integrated with the extension of rail to Salem.

C. NHDOT should actively market and pursue joint-development TOD projects at sites within its control and should dedicate associated revenues to supporting I-93 transit services.

¹ The NHDES Innovative Land Use tool kit can be accessed at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/repp/innovative_land_use.htm.

4. Strengthen Marketing Efforts to Promote Use of Transit Services in the I-93 Corridor

The success of any public infrastructure project depends in large part on the public's acceptance of it. Acceptance requires knowledge. The more consumers know about transit services in the I-93 corridor the more successful those services will be. Information about transit options on the I-93 corridor needs to be easily available, clear and concise, and provide guidance for new users to help them learn the system. A report released by EMBARQ, a global network attempting to create more environmentally and financially sustainable transportation solutions, outlines how public transit systems can improve ridership through more effective marketing techniques.² The report notes that automobile manufacturers spend billions of dollars annually to get people into cars. States need to dedicate funding to take the mystery out of transit, to get consumers comfortable with this alternative transportation mode.

The primary goals of marketing are to attract new users who currently use private transport, retain existing users who may be attracted to private transport, and educate businesses and the general public about the economic and quality-of-life benefits of transportation options. The report discusses eight branding, marketing, and communication steps to achieving these goals.

Specific Recommendations:

NHDOT should:

- A. Coordinate efforts to secure consensus among transit providers and other key stakeholders in the corridor on common branding and coordinated marketing in support of transit options in the I-93 corridor and develop a viable marketing campaign;
- B. Identify and obtain long term funding for a sustained advertising campaign in support of transit use in the I-93 corridor. This campaign should coordinate with existing groups such as Commute Green who are already working on demand management in the state.
- C. Require state-supported transit providers (this includes those operating from state-owned facilities) to populate websites such as Google maps with NH transit data. (Currently if you map Boston to Londonderry and ask for the transit option it comes up blank. Only COAST, Manchester, Nashua, and Advanced Transit are participating in the mapping program.)
- D. Utilize existing highway variable message boards to promote transit options.

² Embarq: "From Here To There – A creative guide to making public transport the way to go" June 2011, http://www.embarq.org/sites/default/files/EMB2011_From_Here_to_There_web.pdf

5. Implement Passenger Rail Service

Currently, there is no passenger rail serving travelers who make use of the I-93 corridor. As part of the I-93 widening, NH and MA engaged in a bi-state I-93 Transit Investment Study, which assessed various transit options including various rail alignments (on the Manchester-Lawrence (“M&L”) branch line, in the median of I-93, and on the Nashua line). The study identified a bus option – specifically, “Bus on Shoulder,” discussed below – “with potential future rail service on the M&L branch from Exit 5 in Londonderry to Boston as the preferred implementation strategy. . . .” (TIS at 81). The I-93 Transit Investment Study’s “Summary” included the following rail-related recommendations:

- Preserve the option of implementing M&L rail service to Boston from some terminus in New Hampshire, with an early emphasis on maintaining state control of the right-of-way in New Hampshire.
- Continue with plans to provide rail service in the NH Capitol Corridor as the probable first route of a regional system.

In addition to the I-93 Transit Investment Study, the CAP acknowledges the importance of rail as part of an integrated multi-modal transportation system. It recommends maintaining and expanding passenger rail service in NH (CAP, TLU 2.B.2.a), including “planning for future service immediately through dedicated, long-term financial support, strategic improvements to service, and protection of active/inactive rail corridors. (CAP at 54). The CAP also specifically recommends implementation of TIS recommendations (CAP, TLU 2.B.2.d)

Specific Recommendations:

A. NHDOT should immediately take steps to safeguard/preserve the right to operate passenger rail on the M&L branch line, including, as recommended in the I-93 Transit Investment Study, formally notifying municipalities and other entities having use agreements with respect to the right-of-way, of the potential future use of the right-of-way for passenger rail purposes.

B. NHDOT, the NH Rail Transit Authority, and the TDM Task Force should support the study of the NH Capitol Corridor, including necessary state funding to match available federal funds for such study.³ This is the top priority of the NH Rail Transit Authority.

³Although the I-93 Transit Investment Study did not recommend a rail alternative on the Nashua line because it would draw comparatively fewer I-93 travelers than rail service on the M&L branch line, the TIS summary nonetheless recommends “[c]ontinu[ing] with plans to provide rail service in the NH Capitol Corridor as the probable first route of a regional system.” (TIS at 149).

C. NHDOT should begin taking necessary actions to extend rail service on the M&L branch line to Salem, consistent with the I-93 Transit Investment Study's suggestion that service on this line could be pursued incrementally (TIS at 148). Such actions should include coordinating with the MBTA and the City of Methuen, MA and conducting the necessary alternatives analysis and environmental review. While implementation of service on this line would occur subsequent to commencement of service on the NH Capitol Corridor, NHDOT should have the analysis and review completed as soon as possible to take advantage of any funding opportunities that may arise.

6. Prepare for the Implementation of Bus-on-Shoulder

The I-93 Transit Investment Study included an evaluation of various transit alternatives, including bus transit options. The study identified Ottawa-style Bus on Shoulder⁴ from Manchester to Boston, with potential future rail service on the M&L branch from Exit 5 in Londonderry to Boston, as the preferred implementation strategy. The study concluded in its "Summary," in part, that NH should:

- Proceed now with planning to implement Manchester-Boston BOS [Bus on Shoulder], beginning with bi-state agreements on phasing details, facility requirements, environmental and engineering review and funding plan.
- Begin formal process of determining financial strategy for any bi-state major transit project. (TIS at 149).

Specific Recommendations:

A. With the current 3-lane configuration being constructed in NH, ensure that the shoulders have adequate width for Ottawa-style BOS service.

B. Establish an implementation agreement among the relevant agencies and establish a bi-state task force to implement Bus on Shoulder (specific recommendation of the I-93 Transit Investment study (see TIS at 147)).

C. Regardless of whether / how / when BOS proceeds on a bi-state basis, assess the benefits of at least authorizing intercity buses to use I-93 shoulders in NH at low speeds when traffic conditions warrant.⁵

⁴ According to the TIS: "Ottawa-style BOS [Bus on Shoulder] would allow buses to operate on shoulders at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour without any restrictions, regardless of general traffic flow speed. The Ottawa version was found to produce an average travel time savings for bus commuters of 13 minutes, and was the operating plan carried forward for the BOS option." (TIS at 4-5).

⁵ This would be similar to the "Minneapolis-style" Bus on Shoulder option, described by the TIS as an approach that "would allow buses to operate on the shoulder at a maximum of 35 miles per hour when general flow traffic is moving under 30 miles per hour." (TIS at 4).

7. Develop and implement ride-share and van-pool programs in the I-93 corridor

Establish a rideshare program along the I-93 and FE Everett Turnpike Corridors. Currently the focus of bus service and future rail service is limited to Boston bound commuters. However a significant percentage of I-93 Commuters work outside of the city along the I-95 and I-495 Corridors and do not have access to public or private transit options. A successful incentivized ride-share and vanpool program will reduce peak hour congestion and reduce carbon emissions.

Specific Recommendations:

A. Coordinate a rideshare program in New Hampshire utilizing the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, Rockingham Planning Commission and Nashua Regional Planning Commission. The rideshare program should address destinations **both within New Hampshire as well as Massachusetts**. Utilize Commute Green NH to develop ridematch software and coordinate with MassRides and Massachusetts-based Transportation Management Agencies. The rideshare program should include the development of a Guaranteed Ride Home Program in New Hampshire. A guaranteed ride home program is essential for a successful rideshare program. It reassures those commuters who do not drive alone that they have a timely and inexpensive way to leave work in the event of a personal or family emergency, illness, or unexpected employment-related delay, such as unscheduled overtime.⁶

8. Implement a stable funding stream to support public transportation

According to the Climate Action Plan (CAP): “[T]he current lack of adequate funding is a major impediment to the expansion and operation of public transportation. A dedicated funding stream to support this purpose could be established by implementing or enabling one or more of several possible funding mechanisms. Options include an increase in the state gasoline tax, local gasoline taxes dedicated to public transportation, increases in vehicle registration fees,

⁶ An example of a New Hampshire-based program has been established by the Central New Hampshire Planning Commission PATH program is shown below:

- Advanced registration—yes
- Minimum carpooling to participate—2 times per week
- Maximum reimbursement per ride—\$34.99
- Maximum annual usage—up to 2 times per month, no more than 3 times total per year
- Ride home providers—local taxi companies (less than 20 miles), Enterprise Rent-A Car (over 20 miles, members also get discount on all non-emergency rentals)

<http://www.path->

[nh.org/Rideshare_GRH.htm](http://www.merrimackvalleytma.com/guaranteedridehome.htm)<http://www.merrimackvalleytma.com/guaranteedridehome.htm>

and revenues from a statewide feebate program or a carbon fuel surcharge. Any of these actions would require legislative action. An amendment to Article 6-a of the New Hampshire Constitution would be required to remove current restrictions on the use of gas tax revenues for public transportation.” (CAP at 54). The I-93 Transit Investment Study similarly acknowledged this need, with its recommendation of “[b]egin[ing] formal process of determining financial strategy for any bi-state major transit project.” (TIS at 149).

Specific Recommendations:

A. NHDOT should identify a source of funding to study options for providing a stable stream of transit funding to meet the needs of the traveling public in the I-93 corridor and to manage traffic demand on I-93. Funding-source options should include those identified in the CAP, as well as public-private partnerships and revenue-generating strategies from transit-oriented development (i.e., from leases at existing bus stations / Park & Rides, and “value capture” strategies). The study also should include an assessment of the viability and impacts (including any negative impacts on transit use) of charging a parking fee at Park & Ride facilities as a source of transit funding.

- A.1. With assistance from the I-93 TDM Task Force, NHDOT should develop and publish an RFP for the above-referenced study.
- A.2. The I-93 TDM Task Force should review the funding study and make recommendations to NHDOT and/or the legislature, as applicable.