

**I-93 Corridor Interagency Task Force Meeting**  
**October 10, 2012**  
**NHDOT, Hazen Drive**  
**Room 185, Commissioner's Conference Room**

**Meeting Notes**

**Attendees:**

Bill Cass, NHDOT	Bill Lambert, NHDOT
Bill Watson, NHDOT	Cindy Vigue, FHWA
Denise Markow, NHDOT	Mark Sanborn, NHDOT
Pete Stamnas, NHDOT	Brandy Chambers, NH OEP
David Preece, SNHPC	Tom Mahon, NHRTA
Cliff Sinnott, RPC	Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Tony Komornick, MVPC	Todd Fontanella, MVPC
Becky Ohler, NHDES	
Tom Irwin, CLF	
Patrick Herlihy, NHDOT	

**Review Meeting Minutes**

Bill Cass began the meeting shortly after 1:30pm. Because there were some changes in Task Force members, introductions were made by everyone, with folks identifying who they were and what organization they represented. Bill Cass also summarized the goal of the meetings, with Tom Irwin also referring back to a memo written by Commissioner George Campbell in March 2011 to FHWA. The basic goal of this task force is to determine travel demand management efforts that can be successful in the I-93 Corridor that will compliment and support construction work also being completed.

**Brief I-93 Construction Project Status Update**

Construction work has started at Exit 2, and the contract for southbound barrel of I-93 near Exit 3 will be on the next Governor and Council agenda. In the summer of 2013, the Department plans to release the final contract to complete improvements at Exit 3 and this work should be completed in 2015. At the completion of this contract, the priority improvements consisting of reconstruction of I-93 from Exit 1-3 and reconstruction of Exit 5 will be completed. The Department attempts to schedule construction activities within the Corridor to ensure that travel demand management is in place at all times by maintaining traffic in each direction. Contractors and NHDOT strive to keep key lane shutdowns and related efforts to overnight when traffic flow is much less likely to be affected.

Commissioner Clement continues to advocate for capacity improvements above and beyond this work through the Legislature. Funding needed to complete the capacity improvements is approximately

\$250M. If funding could be found during the next Legislative session to complete the capacity improvements, the entire project could be completed (including Exit 4A) by 2020.

### **Current Traffic Data Reports for I-93 Corridor**

Currently there are permanent traffic data recorders located on I-93 at the NH/MA State line and between Exits 3 and 4. The information from these recorders for 2011 (and older) as shared with the task force. It is also currently available through the DOT's webpage. It was noted that 2011 data seemed lower than previous years, though no conclusions were drawn as to "why" this would have happened. Construction activities and overall economic trends are contributing factors. Detailed information, made available through Smart Work Zone efforts was not available and will be passed along when it becomes available. In response to a question from Becky Ohler, Pete Stamnas noted that there are radar units along the side of the highway that can collect speed, volume, traffic density and spacing and other items.

Bill Cass noted that Travel Demand Management is an ongoing effort in various forms throughout the present construction activities. These efforts are expected to extend beyond the construction and in to the operations of the completed project. A comprehensive traffic incident management plan has been developed and implemented in the corridor. This includes a service patrol program operated during the heaviest traffic volume periods of the morning and afternoon commutes, making a continuous loop through the southern NH on I-93 Corridor, stopping for all incidents encountered. Response to minor incidents such as changing flat tires, providing gas or water, or clearing debris from the roadway is being provided. Significant data collection is done to determine time of day, day of week, season of year, etc. to figure out the needs and issues that the service patrols are able to assist with. There is a significant amount of information available online to assist the travelling public. Items include alternative and emergency route maps, construction schedules, transit information, etc. Also, park and ride utilization information is available and most of this information is updated at least quarterly.

David Preece asked if information discussed by the Task Force could be posted online. Pete Stamnas will work with staff to ensure that this is completed. It was also noted by Bill Cass and many others during this conversation that the DOT does a good job in collecting lots of data, but that there has not been as much historic focus on analysis of the data. This is a change we are trying to make for the I-93 project and many other activities.

Boston Express is on the verge of being self sufficient in terms of revenue. Patrick Herlihy passed out information on ridership. Ridership has increased over the last couple of months.

Todd Fontanella, from Merrimack Valley Planning Commission discussed a study that they are completing that is looking at TDM opportunities along the I-93 Corridor from Boston north into southern NH, specifically HOV lanes and bus on shoulder. Research has been completed into best practices for these two options, and MVPC is collecting data from existing reports that have touched on this subject in the I-93 Corridor. The goal of this feasibility study is to assess which option may work better in the corridor and if there are other options that have not been considered. The study will be worked on

through spring 2013, with meetings scheduled as needed. MVPC hopes to do some modeling with both Massachusetts and NH data sets and staff. PowerPoint slides were shared with the group. Many stakeholders have been brought into the discussion right from the start to get good input right from the beginning of the study.

Mark Sanborn noted that NH is also focusing on increasing ridership within current services by maintaining and retrofitting bus engines, making park and ride maintenance and lighting improvements, etc. Currently, Boston Express is recovering about 90% of their costs from the fare box. The remaining amounts come from I-93/CMAQ funding along the I-93 Corridor and turnpike funding along the FEET. In response to a question from David Preece, Mark Sanborn did express that NH is a full partner with the MVPC HOV/bus on shoulder study and that the study area goes up I-93 into NH to Manchester.

### **Review of NH Climate Action Plan**

Becky Ohler led a discussion about the Climate Action Plan, which was supplemented by a handout that provided a lot of good detail. The Climate Action Plan was released in early 2009 after a year's worth of efforts by many stakeholders. The Action Plan itself has a lot of important information. Many TDM related efforts are located in the appendices, specifically in the Transportation and Land Use Appendix (TLUA). Becky walked through the two groups of recommendations that the TLUA outlined. Many are action items that were felt to be achievable in the near term, and there are a number of others that are not feasible at this time for one reason or another that were tracked for future consideration.

At this point, Mark Sanborn asked if there had been thought about doing this sort of analysis specifically along the I-93 Corridor. Efforts like this could make some practical observations and recommendations that would meet the goals and objections of this I-93 TDM Task Force. The original Climate Action Plan was developed with an indirect focus on transportation, but now would be a good opportunity to focus the efforts more on TDM needs within the I-93 Corridor. Becky Ohler, Tom Irwin, and Mark Sanborn and RPC staff volunteered to work together to take things a little bit further. The group also recognized that it would be valuable to review the Climate Action Plan in the context of the I-93 Transit Investment Study. There are many efforts and recommendations that overlap, and it would be very appropriate to try to address strategies that seem to match within the various studies and plans.

Becky Ohler also noted that she and Bill Watson both sit on the Steering Committee of the Transportation and Climate Initiative, where 11 states are working together on various issues. Specifically, the Sustainable Communities workgroup is developing performance metrics and are looking for data sets that can be used for value and investment. Becky will be bringing back many of the data sets and ideas to TCI for their consideration.

Tom Irwin asked if there are plans in place now in the Exit 4A EIS to include and address many of the items that we are talking about now. It would be good to not overlook the opportunity to have these conversations as part of the EIS. It was noted that the development that is being proposed near the proposed Exit 4A does not have a connection to Exit 4A and there are no other transit type plans. The development will affect both Exits 4 and 5. The Exit 4 Park and ride is very close to the proposed development.

At this point in time, the group recognized that the meeting was running long and that a lot of good information had been shared. The MPOs will review their Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) to identify out projects that are related to I-93 and TDM efforts. The next meeting agenda will start with the review of the LRTPs as this has been pushed off the agenda from each meeting. Becky Ohler will work with a small workgroup looking at the Climate Action Plan, I-93 Transit Investment Study and other appropriate efforts to see what could be applied to the I-93 Corridor.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 11, 2013 at 12:30pm at NHDOT in Room 185, the Kenison Conference Room.

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting, a website has been set up for Task Force activities and documents:

**<http://www.rebuildingi93.com/content/taskforce>**