

**Maine Department of Transportation
Aroostook County Transportation Study
Public Advisory Committee (PAC)**

Meeting Minutes – PAC Meeting No. 26

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Caribou Inn and Convention Center

3:00 – 5:00 pm

Pages 21 and 22 CORRECTED on September 16, 2005

<p><u>Public Advisory Committee (PAC):</u></p> <p>Paul Bouchard Jim Brown Richard Mattila Douglas Hazlett George Howe David Parent Dale Flewelling John Edgecomb Raymond Mersereau Fred Ventresco Linda Anne Cyr Steven Buck</p> <p><u>Not in attendance:</u></p> <p>Sam Collins Fred Corey Carl Flora Gene Green Norman Johnson Anthony Tomah Candy Roy Richard Daigle Michael Corey Donald Flannery</p>	<p><u>Study Team:</u></p> <p>Ruth Bonsignore, VHB David Hewett, VHB Ray Faucher, MaineDOT Charlie Colgan – USM Craig Seymour – RKG Jay Clement - ACOE Mark Hasselmann –FHWA Susanna Liller, Barton & Gingold Tobey Williamson, Barton & Gingold</p>
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Susanna Liller opened the meeting by apologizing for being a little late and explaining that there was a problem with the plane that delayed the study team. She stated that the meeting would run a little later to make up the time. She then introduced the members of the study team. Before turning the floor over to Ray Faucher she explained the agenda for the meeting and that questions and comments would come from the PAC first and then the public.

Ray Faucher explained that since the last meeting MaineDOT and the Federal Highway Administration had been discussing documentation

requirements. He explained that a 4F statement would be required due to the cultural resources identified during the DEIS and that to do this a Supplemental Draft EIS would also have to be prepared. Ray stated that the principal purpose of the meeting was to discuss the economic analysis that would be included in the Supplemental Draft EIS.

Craig Seymour explained that he was going to give a very brief presentation of the economic analysis that he has done as a follow on to the very detailed analysis done in the DEIS. He said that the economic analysis for the DEIS was developed in 2001 prior to the release of census data meaning that some information used in the initial study was based on estimations using the best available data at the time. The new study has been updated using data that has since become available. Craig said that there were few surprises and that he would point out any significant changes, for example in the employment data.

Key Findings - Population

Continuation of population loss – County population dropped by nearly 13,000 people between 1990 and 2000

Most population decrease was in Presque Isle and Caribou, with some growth in other communities.

Population loss is expected to stabilize with very small, but positive growth in the next 10 to 20 years.

Craig showed the population trends and projections on charts in the Powerpoint presentation. He explained that the ageing of the population as a whole was due to two things: 1) people getting older and 2) young people leaving Aroostook County.

Key Findings – Labor Force and Employment

Original DEIS data projected that the loss of employment would stabilize from 2000 to 2003, but it has not, and employment opportunities have continued to decline.

Regional economic decline has shown little sign of recovery.

Labor Force in Maine grew by 1.0% in 2003, employment shrank by 0.5% In Aroostook County and in the Study Area labor force declined by slightly less than 1.0% and employment shrank by just under 2.5%.

Craig said that the employment and labor force data focuses on the status of residents where they live rather than “at-place employment”, which is based on where the firms and companies are located. At-place employment has gone up slightly, which is a positive sign.

Key Findings –Other Economic Indicators

Housing units increased by 0.9% or 338 units. Occurring outside of Presque Isle and Caribou

Gains in Fort Kent, Houlton, and Madawaska were offset by decreases in Presque-Isle-Caribou, as a result of Loring Air Force Base closure.

Craig said that in terms of economic issues and initiatives, the educational opportunities in the County are good, but that the region continues to lose youth. The analysis indicated that many young people would come back if there were jobs available.

Key Findings – Tourism

Few solid statistics on absolute visitor levels and expenditures, especially at the local level.

Good data is needed— recommendation of the study is to gather more local level data on tourism because it is an important segment of the economy.

Tourism is a growing industry, but the rate of growth in Aroostook is lagging the State of Maine.

Maine Winter Sports Center, Snowmobiling, Nordic Skiing, and Allagash Wilderness all attract visitors.

Key Findings – Targeted Sectors To Create New Jobs or Stabilize Existing Jobs

Value added wood products
Specialty agriculture
Precision metal manufacturing
Telecommunications

Over 10,000 acres of actively marketed industrial/business park land, with 5,000 acres available (87% at Loring Commerce Center). Aroostook County Enterprise Zone (ACEZ) covers most.

Craig said that the County is continuing to do a good job at attracting businesses and to grow the businesses that are already in Aroostook County.

He then explained that one of the things that needed to be done for the EIS was to determine baseline conditions for estimating the economic impacts of acquiring land and buildings along the alternative corridors. The analysis looked at all the real estate sales data for 2002-2003 throughout the study area. Developed low, average, and high value ranges by sub-region for different types of land and buildings.

Residential (\$/unit)
Commercial/Farm (\$/SF)
Agricultural Land (\$/acre)
Undeveloped Land/Timberland (\$/acre)

Craig said that this helped them to come up with total values for the acquisitions associated with each corridor. He explained that they were not trying to get takings values as an appraiser would, but trying to make reasonable comparisons between corridors.

Craig stated that when dealing with social and economic impacts for a project there are three types of impacts that get looked at:

Direct – property acquisition and construction costs
Indirect – “Spin-off” or economic multiplier effects. When a dollar is spent on construction, for example the person/business who receives it spends it, etc. REMI economic models help to determine these.
Cumulative – incremental impacts in combination with other activities in the region.

Craig said that the economic analysis for the EIS process tried to measure these impacts. The first step is to determine baseline conditions. The second step is to determine what the impacts are to the extent that they can be quantified. As an example Craig pointed to slides showing the direct impacts of property acquisition for the corridors. The costs range from 14 million for Hm to 27 million for C3 as a combination of the estimated average value of structures as well as land values.

Craig introduced Charlie Colgan to explain the analysis of indirect economic impacts and how they ripple through the economy.

Charlie Colgan began by saying that the basic point of the analysis is to examine the effects on the whole economic system as a result of the changes in the efficiency of the transportation system. To do this they use a simulation model of Aroostook County that the University of Southern Maine has. This allows them to determine one possible future economic path for the county in terms of changes in population, employment, income, retail sales, and gross regional product. First they do a baseline projection out 35 years into the future. Then, they go into the model and make changes in transportation and ask, what would be the effects? They re-forecast the entire economy over 35 years. The difference between the baseline model and the model with the changes are the economic impacts.

The model has 1000 different variables—the analysis focused on the following:

Population
Employment
Income
Retail sales
Gross Regional Product – total value of goods and services produced in Aroostook County

Charlie explained that there are a number of elements that they changed because transportation affects the economy in so many different ways. For example, changes in transportation affects the cost of moving goods in and out of the County. Transportation affects services such as FEDEX, DHL etc. Good transport is just as essential to these companies and all their clients as it is to other industries such as manufacturing or agriculture.

They looked at changes in the ways people commute and put a value on improved commuting in the region. Charlie said that Aroostook County has an interesting problem in that it has a widely separated population. It has few concentrations of people to give it a real economic advantage. So, Aroostook relies on transportation to knit the population together, especially in the Presque Isle-Caribou area and in the St. John Valley. They also quantified the economic impacts resulting from estimates of increased tourism in the region and also the economic impacts resulting from the construction and maintenance of the highways.

Based on the estimated cost of the construction of the various alternatives, they then specify a change in the construction demand within the region.

Change in cost competitiveness of moving goods in and out of the County is measured as the percentage change of Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT) for trucks, which VHB estimates for the various corridors using their model of the transportation network. The difference between the VHT for the no-build alternative vs. the VHT for each corridor becomes the basis for estimating the change in the competitiveness for industries in Aroostook County as a result of each of the corridor alternatives. As an example, Charlie encouraged people to think about one industry. National studies tell us the relationship between an industry's inputs and outputs, which helps us to know how much an industry spends on transportation. So, if an industry spends 1% of its costs on transportation, in the model they reduce those expenditures by .0854 % in VHT, which is what the change is for Corridor Hm. This is the increase in the industry's competitiveness relative to the rest of the country.

Change in VHT for cars is measured differently. When people save a few minutes driving around the region—most of the benefit accrues to particular people as a few extra minutes to spend on other things. Charlie said that

this is the principal economic benefit to non-commercial travelers. How does the economy change with this? Not a big change in the overall output of goods and services—except with commuting. With speedier commuting patterns the region becomes more attractive to move to. The distances are the same but the roads are there to accommodate them. The changes in car VHT is built into the model as a change in the amenity value. Amenity value involves a detailed sub model of commuting between each of the labor market areas and within each labor market area of the county. Those changes are then factored with the changes in car VHT estimated by VHB.

Charlie explained that the original DEIS had a detailed analysis of increased tourism activity as a result of each of the alternatives. This study took the trajectory from the original study and updated it based on more recent numbers developed for the Office of Tourism and the Department of Economic Development. The latest analysis shows that there is an increase in tourism, both winter and summer. The increase is both in numbers of tourists and in their length of stay. The critical thing is that new/upgraded highway would allow people, especially those coming a great distance, to get here sooner and stay longer particularly in periods of inclement weather.

The basic projections from the earlier study were updated with increased sales for Retail, Accommodation and Food Services, Arts and Recreation, and Transportation (car rentals, etc.)

Finally the roadway costs the state a certain amount of money per lane mile per year to maintain a highway—increased expenditures for plowing ,etc. This is additional spending—a very small number but it is in the model.

Construction costs range from \$610 million for Corridor Hm to \$120 million for the Presque Isle Bypass.

Charlie explained that for modeling purposes, a 30-year period was chosen and then because no one knows when the different parts of the highway will be built, construction periods were estimated – 10 years for the larger construction projects and 6 years for the Presque Isle Bypass. These numbers were used to feed the models and may not be accurate.

Susanna interrupted to ask for an explanation of the corridors.

Dave Hewett explained the routes:

Hm follows the existing highways the least. It leaves I-95 at Smyrna, ties into the Presque Isle Bypass, uses Route 1 up through Caribou and a new alignment east of Eagle Lake up to Madawaska. This corridor is almost entirely new.

C1m uses Route 1 in the south from Houlton to Pesque Isle. All corridors are the same in central region, using the Presque Isle Bypass and Route 1 through Caribou. C1m then follows Route 161 up to Cross Lake Township / Daigle and then a new corridor north to Madawaska.

C2m is the same as Hm from I-95 to Caribou and the same as C1m north of Caribou.

C3 is the same as C1m south of Caribou and the same as Hm north of Caribou.

Charlie Colgan reiterated the information about the corridors and said that the Presque Isle Bypass is the heart of all the alternatives. He then referred back to the slide that showed the construction costs, construction periods, and percent change in truck and non-truck (car) VHT, saying that this is the heart of the inputs to the analysis. He noted that there are not large differences among the four major north-south alternatives. The Presque Isle Bypass costs and impacts are much smaller, but it is a much smaller road. What this means is that there are not large differences in economic impact among the four corridors.

Charlie then referred to the slide showing employment changes from 2008 through 2035 for the four corridors and the Presque Isle Bypass. He explained that with some economic models one gets a single number for economic impacts. This model works different because it recalculates the economy each year from beginning of the project as far as the model can see. So the impacts are shown for each year out to 2035.

In the early years employment impacts are about 600 new jobs created per year—almost all construction employment.¹ According to the assumptions used, construction ends in about 2018. The out years show increases in tourism, increased truck efficiency, and increased attractiveness because of better commuting. In 2035, there are about 1,100 more jobs than would be there without the transportation improvements.

Charlie said that the Presque Isle Bypass has a relatively large construction impact in the early years of 216 jobs, but very small in the out years. This is because it does not affect all the goods and people in the County, but is more localized in its impact. There will not be a big boost in tourism from people coming to use the Presque Isle Bypass.

These employment effects also translate to population changes. In the early

¹ These jobs are the difference between the base forecast and the "impact" forecast, so they are the annual change relative to the base forecast, not annual change relative to the previous year.

years population increases are due mostly to construction workers who come to the County for projects. They may stay long enough to be counted as local residents, but their permanent residence is almost certainly going to be somewhere else. By 2035 Aroostook County gains about 1300 people relative to the baseline projection. This is a definite positive in terms of growth, but not enough to make up losses of recent years.

Charlie said that the four major corridors would increase personal income by about \$80 million. They would increase the output of goods and services in the economy by about \$45 million and retail sales by about \$17 million. The Presque Isle Bypass alone would result in increases of personal income of about \$3.8 million, goods and services about \$1.3 million, and retail sales of about \$230,000.

The basic lessons here are that for all the four major alternatives, the impacts are reasonably large, noticeable, and over time constitute a positive change in the economy. The differences among the alternatives are not wide—because the construction costs and effects are similar. The county already has relatively un-congested traffic, so this is not greatly changed based on alternatives. There are some economic differences between the four of them. Corridor Hm produces the largest effects, but the impacts are not significantly greater than the other corridors.

Charlie said that the model only shows so much. It is a very good integration of a lot of effects all at once, but it does not show everything. Craig will talk about some of the things that you cannot see in the model but that are real nonetheless.

Craig Seymour said that these are social and economic impacts that need to be discussed in the EIS decision-making process. Although, some of them are tangible, some not, some are quantifiable, and some are more qualitative and subject to opinion. So, it is difficult to lump all these together and show the numbers, because the data is not available given the geography that it covers.

Relocation is one of these issues. When we build a highway and need to acquire someone's house, they need a place to relocate. We have accounted for the cost of the land, but we also have to ask the question-- Is there a place for those people to relocate? If a business is relocated—is there a place for it to go to continue operation? The analysis shows that given the market in Aroostook County, relocation should not be a problem.

Bypass effects are discussed in the report. For example, if you put a bypass around Presque Isle—what impacts would it have? Heavy truck traffic will be moved out of downtown. Good for some—but if business relies on traffic—such as a gas station or convenience store—impacts would be negative. It is

very difficult to quantify this type of impact—we can recognize it and discuss it, but not put numbers to it easily.

Houlton under the Hm alternative is similar in that it would have a certain amount of traffic leaving 95 at Smyrna. Houlton will miss some of that business—people down there have done a study and come up with significant numbers that would have to be recognized by the EIS.

Depending upon which alternative one looks at, there are some bypasses around small villages. There are economic entities there that depend to a certain amount on through traffic. There would be impacts—but not overly large. The businesses can relocate or use signage to get business back.

There is also potential for new commercial development where the new highway meets up with existing highway. For example, where the Presque Isle bypass would meet with Route 1. But, whether commercial development occurs also depends upon zoning and business decisions.

Craig explained that another issue that the study examined was the potential impact of transportation changes on initiatives to improve development. From the perspective of doing business—it would be positive—it would make it a little easier to reach Aroostook County. Commuting patterns are improved which allows people to look for employment in larger areas. Improvements to the agriculture and forestry sectors were mostly captured in the model as improvements in truck traffic, but also with moving people and equipment. Some alternatives, particularly the Hm corridor, may have a negative impact on these natural resource industries in terms of difficulty of crossing new highways with heavy equipment.

The study shows that there will not be any measurable changes in terms of tax rates and community facilities or minority low income populations. Any tourism impacts are the result of the perception that people may have of being closer to their destination. Much of this depends on where the tourist is coming from. Saving 30 minutes if driving from Houlton to Madawaska is a relatively large improvement. But, if traveling from Boston, 30 minutes is less of a time savings. It is still an improvement, but the perception of benefit is less.

Craig gave the floor back to Susanna who then opened the meeting up for questions on economics first from the PAC and then from the public.

PAC Questions

John Edgecomb said that the numbers up there mean more to the study team than they do to the PAC. He said that they were good-sized numbers and asked that they be made relative for the PAC.

Craig Seymour shared some numbers that he had put together on the way up to the meeting. In 2035, Corridor Hm would result in 1156 new jobs. The baseline for jobs in 2035 is 51,800. So this equals a 2.2% improvement in employment and a 1.7% increase in population over what the economy would do without the new road improvements.

John replied that this is not a very big number.

George Howe said that he was curious how relocation of homes along an existing corridor could be cheaper than a straight acquisition of forest land in a new corridor. He said that the numbers look very close and he did not understand why that would be.

Craig Seymour explained that the Hm corridor takes raw land—mostly forest land. This corridor acquires lots of acres but at low cost because it is undeveloped. Under realignment options, there is already a roadway there that would be widened by buying along side of it. DOT would be acquiring less total acreage, but more structures. To get the numbers, the study team laid out the corridors, looked at the actual number of takings and applied average cost by land use.

George said again that he was surprised that the numbers came out as close as they did.

Craig replied that the costs balanced out about the same even though the makeup of the routes was significantly different.

Dave Hewett said that it was also important to note that the routes are common to each other from just north of Caribou to the south end of the Presque Isle Bypass, where most of the structures occur. The amount of structure taking along Route 161 is fairly small. There are more takings along Route 1, but a lot of these are frontage takings, rather than structures.

Craig said that the realignment corridors have bypasses around the villages, which significantly reduces taking costs. Going around structures that are in close to the existing road and using raw land. Also, coming up Route 1, a lot of houses and buildings and barns are set back from the highway quite a ways. The new roadway might take half of some front lawns, but not taking entire properties in most cases.

Dale Flewelling stated that he could not help but notice that by 2035, there are not a lot of new jobs created. So there is not a lot of relevancy. He said that it is important to get across the County, but that the greatest factor is the communal force within the county. He said that if we develop through routes, that he did not see benefits for County people, except those going

from one major hub to another.

Craig said that this was a good point but was not sure how to address whether it is a benefit or not, which varies by person. For some people the ease of getting around may be more important than the ability to interact with others in the community. From a sociological standpoint, sense of community is impacted negatively by the through routes. But this is difficult to quantify economically.

Charlie Colgan said that they did look at this question. He said that he explicitly changed the economic future of the County to reflect improved commuting patterns within the county. He explained that Labor Markets Areas (LMAs) are determined by the Maine Department of Labor based on census data of where the majority of people live and work. Aroostook has the following LMAs: Fort Kent, Madawaska, Presque Isle/Caribou, Patten Island Falls, Van Buren, Houlton. All of these are isolated islands of where people live and work. Van Buren is by far the smallest labor market in Maine—both in area and in population. This reflects that people do not go far to work. Charlie then explained that he took each of these LMAs and looked at the changes in the time of car travel based on the transportation models done by VHB. Then asked what the proportion of people traveling between each area was and how they benefit from shorter trips. Essentially, what happens when the labor markets are opened up by improved transportation?

Charlie said that the analysis does not include time savings because these do not get translated through the economy. The other major economic benefit that occurs is that because people can move more freely from market to market they are likely to be able to compete for and gain jobs with better pay. If they can get to other places easily, they may have more job opportunities and pay goes up. Some of this is captured in the model, but there is not enough empirical work on this type of effect. The point is that intra-County connections were considered in a detailed way. Not entirely complete, but this is one of the critical benefits of the new transportation options.

Dale said that to him the four communities most affected by new transportation options would be Houlton, Presque Isle, Caribou, and Madawaska. He said that he did not see the logic of moving traffic from Houlton to Oakfield and then back up to Presque Isle. He asked, who benefits?

Charlie said that what you see in the model is that Presque Isle/Caribou are in the hub, then there are connections between Fort Kent and Madawaska; connections from Fort Kent down to Presque Isle; Van Buren is isolated; and that Houlton and Patten/Island Falls interact with one another quite a bit because they already have a 95 connection. Distance is still great between

Houlton and Patten/Island Falls, but the road improves the connection more than would otherwise be expected.

Dale asked which road.

Charlie said that any of the alternatives improve the connections in the region. He said that over time the key to economic success in the County is in the urbanized areas of Houlton, Presque Isle, Caribou, and Madawaska and connecting these areas to other parts of the County. This will give people the chance to expand job searches and improve their employment opportunities. He said that one can make the argument that connecting the labor market areas as these corridors do is critical.

Fred Ventresco asked if there was any way to section off the analysis to determine which parts of each corridor provide the most benefits.

Ruth Bonsignore said that Charlie's analysis was aggregated and that only the Presque Isle Bypass impacts are broken out. Generally speaking, the issue is that the population in the St John Valley is so dispersed. Madawaska is the only one that gains from the option-- straight up the middle. Van Buren not a big player as Route 1 is in good condition and Van Buren is largely locally based activity. Travel time benefits were better to Fort Kent with the Route 161 improvements.

Fred replied that there are small differences in travel times.

[Ruth agreed].

Paul Bouchard reminded people that the distance between Van Buren and Caribou is about 20 miles, while the Madawaska to Caribou or Houlton to Caribou distances are about 45 miles. He agreed that Van Buren was not a major player in the County economy, and stated that they already had two pretty good options in Routes 1 and 1A.

Linda Ann Cyr stated that the EIS needs to include the Canadian people. She said that former Governor King, MaineDOT Commissioner Cole, and Governor Baldacci have all said that our Canadian neighbors must be factored in. She said that if you look in a 20-mile radius around Madawaska you include 60,000 more people in Canada. She said that across the border, towns are getting bigger all the time and asked why Canada was not included in the study.

Charlie Colgan said that it is not the case that Canada was overlooked. The estimates, particularly for tourism, include increases from both the US and Canada. This is the major increase in overall economic activity. Secondly, the changes in transport costs include both north and southbound traffic—

traffic from the rest of the US and down from Canada. The model explicitly includes in its estimate of economic effects, the effect on exports from Aroostook to US and to the rest of world. And since almost all of Aroostook County's exports go to Canada, these are explicitly included in those calculations. So, it is not fair to say that Canada was ignored. It was included, explicitly in the analysis of tourism and implicitly in the way the model calculates the overall change in the cost competitiveness of the region to the rest of the US and the rest of the world.

Craig Seymour said that what the model does not do is calculate the benefits of the roadways to Canadian companies and the Canadian economy. They would benefit, but that was not included.

Charlie said that only the sections of the Fraser operation on the US side of the river were included.

Linda said that it seems that the analysis was quite thorough. She asked if the economic team came up and talked to people and politicians or did they just use data.

Charlie said that he came up more than once.

Linda asked if the cost of a new bridge to Canada was figured in.

Charlie said that they did not look at a bridge project as part of this. Clearly we have talked about how changes in the overall transportation system created by any projects here would impact border crossings and river crossings on the St. John River. The terms of reference for this study do not include that. But the question of upgrades in Van Buren, Madawaska, Fort Kent, if these projects come to pass, would in fact be a follow on issue for MaineDOT and the region.

Paul Bouchard said that there was no question of the value of Fraser Paper in Madawaska and in the whole area. But people tend to focus on that one and forget the other significant operations that employ a lot of people. Fraser employs 1100 people. The second largest employer is Maine Medical at approximately 700. If the University of Maine Fort Kent is added, the total of these two employers is above 1000. So we cannot ignore the impact of these road projects on the other employers in the Saint John Valley.

Susanna said that there was another piece to the presentation, but that the public now had an opportunity to ask questions about the economic study. Then the rest of the presentation would be given. She said that as always people should say their name and where they are from for the record.

John Martin said that the Department of Labor (DOL) had redone the labor

markets for Aroostook, reducing them from 7 to 3. DOL Maine says that this was done by DOL Boston. Either way, they have made a mess of the situation.

Charlie said he knew of the changes, and stuck with old definitions for his study.

John Martin said that while looking at the figure of \$652 million in construction costs on corridor Hm from Houlton to Presque Isle the concept seems to say that one lane is existing highway and that MaineDOT will only purchase the width of another lane. Is that right?

Ruth Bonsignore said that Hm is largely a new corridor.

John asked how the construction is proposed there. Is it a brand new four-lane highway or is it using the existing roadbed for half of the four lanes?

Ruth said that it varies. There are places where it will be the existing roadbed and places where it will be entirely new. Depends on cross section, geometry and land uses. Local access would be maintained along the sections of existing roadway.

Ray Faucher said that these figures are for estimating purposes only and not for advocating any particular decision.

John said that he was not suggesting that MaineDOT was advocating anything. He said that his concern was that looking at the purchase cost of houses, this substantially increases the cost of construction. Instead if MaineDOT used the existing Route 1 but built it into the woods, this would potentially decrease the cost. He wondered why the corridor was chosen in the place that it was. He said it certainly was not cost and asked if it was environmental considerations.

Ray said to correct him if he was wrong but that he thought that the numbers they were using were for construction costs alone and did not include acquisition costs.

Ruth said that the numbers that Charlie referred to were construction costs not acquisition costs.

John asked if they were saying that the \$652 million was the construction costs for Hm. But then for the other corridors another \$25 million had to be added, for example for acquisition costs on top of the construction costs. This changes the perceptions in terms of overall cost. The numbers have to be added to give a picture of reality.

Charlie said that there were two issues. One is that these numbers should not be used to select among the corridor options in terms of total costs. These are the numbers used to depict the infusion of a certain amount of money into the economy to build a highway, wages, materials, etc. So these are construction costs not project costs. To get project costs, land acquisition has to be added in. But, land acquisition does not have the same economic impact because if someone is paid to move their house, essentially the total consumption of housing remains the same. There is no overall change in the output of goods and services in the economy. So, that is why the construction costs were used to estimate the economic impacts.

John said that he understood that, but that if looking at this as a policy maker, one must look at the combined costs.

Charlie agreed that a policy maker would look at the project costs.

John asked if MaineDOT had done that at this point?

Ray said that all costs—acquisition, construction, mitigation, etc— have to be considered to come up with total project costs.

John said that if you are building a highway from Caribou to Madawaska, the land costs would be \$400 per acre maximum. In other places the costs would be substantially greater. He said that he did not think that these comparisons had been done yet.

Ruth said that these comparisons had been done for acquisition costs. The low end was \$14 million for Corridor Hm and the high end was around \$25 million for Corridor C1.

John said that his concern was that these figures need to be added together to come up with the true cost.

Paul Cyr from Madawaska said that he had been coming to these meetings for almost 2 years. His concern has always been that the County needs a highway. He said that at the last couple of PAC meetings there was some movement on the part of MaineDOT and its consultants to really take a fresh look at what they are doing. He said that he had been glad to see Corridor C3 – the piece from Caribou to Madawaska – put back in the study. That is what he believed that David Cole asked the study team to do. He said that he came to the meeting today to get a good analysis of what all the costs and impacts are for the various alternatives. He said that what he was hearing was that this had not been done again. Paul said that he marveled at the ability of MaineDOT and the study team to obfuscate what should be a fairly obvious process to see whether the County will benefit from a connection to Canada and a connection to Interstate 95. It does not matter

where it is connected, the connection alone is what will benefit the entire County. He said that what was shown today has been a hodge podge. He said that it is even worse than what was shown months ago. He said that the study team has failed to study and offer hard data as they did on the Presque Isle Bypass. It would have been just as easy to break out the data of C1 versus C3 versus C2 versus Hm to see what benefits the County as a whole. He said that he was really disappointed in MaineDOT. He said that they came up here with economists who did not look at Canada no matter what they say, because there is lots of data there. He said that what is really important is a highway.

Ross Paradis asked whether upgrades mean four lanes or just passing lanes.

Ray said that this would be discussed in the next section of the presentation but that the discussion was about the addition of climbing lanes on Route 161, not a four-lane highway. He said that from the MaineDOT perspective, the Route 1 corridor from Houlton to Presque Isle does not lend itself to be a four-lane highway. A new location would be required for a four-lane highway.

Ross said that without a four-lane highway in Maine, the traffic will move to Canada. Canadian markets are now in our favor. He said that Paul Cyr was right and that the County needed a connection to Canada. He said Quebec City is 200 miles away. Riviere du Loup with a deep sea port is 75 miles away. Montreal, which is bigger than Boston, 360 miles. He asked what we were doing, since it was right in the objectives of the whole study to improve trade with Canada. He said that we are not serious about it, yet, but that we should be.

Mike Violet, Selectman from Madawaska had a question for Ray Faucher. He asked if Mr. Faucher had a copy of the report from Planning Decisions. He said that on page 2 it talks about Canada and that beyond the numbers, better connections between the heart of Aroostook County and Edmonston and Canada would lead to long-term economic growth. Greater Edmonston has more people than all of Aroostook County combined and it has a growing employment sector, including manufacturing jobs. The Quebec and Canadian economy are critical to the future growth of Aroostook County. He then referred to a comment that he said Ray Faucher made in the margins "this indicates to me that economically Madawaska should be focused on a better transportation connection to the north and not to the south." He asked for an explanation for why Ray wrote that.

Ray said that the study he was referring to talked about most of the economic activity to be north in Canada and did not have a lot of references to connections to Presque Isle. He said that it seemed that most of the

benefits would come from going north to Canada. It was just an observation.

Mike said that he did not understand how they could connect US Route 1 1,200 feet across the St. John River to connect to Canada. That is why he does not understand how Ray could make a comment like that.

Paul Cyr said that the County needs a highway.

Judy Paradis said that there is a morality issue here. She said that we cannot bypass this community. And that everyone is bypassing them. She said that tourism is one thing, but that she is not hearing anything about the fact that the County's acute care hospital is in Bangor. She said that they have a large and growing elderly population. She asked where the calculation is for people who choose to leave because of health issues and the travel time involved in getting to Portland and Bangor for care. She then asked how people can access advanced degrees. She said that these are issues the people deal with every day. She said that there are incredible hardships that people deal with. She said that when she started seeing the numbers for the costs of building these highways that she would be dead and that her younger friends say they will be old before this is built. The generation that fought for this has left us, and the rest of us are ageing.

John Martin said that he wanted to go back to a question that he had asked earlier and share an answer that he came up with. He said that clearly they were being told that if we go through Route 1 from Houlton to Presque Isle that this will not be a four-lane highway. This is contrary to legislative direction of studying a four-lane highway through Aroostook County.

Ray Faucher said that they studied a four-lane highway, and that based on analysis and consultant discussion the conclusion is that widening Route 1 to a four-lane highway would not provide a lot of economic benefits to the communities and would devastate many of them. He continued that MaineDOT's position is that a new location would be necessary for any four-lane highway and that Route 1 is not a candidate.

John replied that the only reason that it was structured that way was to prevent loss of access to Westfield and Mars Hill. Therefore the only way to do this would be to do it the way MaineDOT is now suggesting and not have 4 lanes. The only way to have four-lanes would be to build a new corridor from Oakfield to Presque Isle. He said that he had a second question for Charlie Colgan and asked if it was possible with the economic model to break out arms—from Oakfield to Presque Isle separately and then do Houlton through Route 1 to Presque Isle separately and go up north and do the same thing there.

Charlie said that yes it was possible to do that.

John asked if the MaineDOT and the consultants could see that that gets done.

Linda Cyr seconded this request.

Ruth and Ray agreed to do this.

Susanna said that Ruth would now continue the rest of the presentation.

Ruth Bonsignore said that she would now provide a road map for where the EIS document was headed for establishing projects that could be completed in the foreseeable future. She said that the 4f statement would be needed to document the impacts to cultural resources, so it should be anticipated that a supplemental draft of the EIS would be prepared and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration. She said that they have developed a framework for how these documents can identify projects to move forward with. She said that there are four considerations and the purpose of doing a tiered document is to define a direction and break it into constructable pieces. The team is looking at segments in the overall north-south area that are ripe for decision making and segments that would have independent usefulness—in other words they can be built and be useful without requiring the rest of the corridor to be constructed immediately. She said that the recommendations for the preferred alternative must consider available funds so that there is some reasonable timeframe for moving forward. Finally, the recommendations for the preferred alternative must leave open possibilities for other subsequent projects that may come out of the tiered document.

Ruth continued that the document discusses two different strategies. One is the Preferred Alternative for moving forward and the second is the Deferred Alternatives that will require subsequent environmental documentation and decision making.

Referring to the slide she said that the Preferred Alternatives are the Presque Isle Bypass, Corridor Management for Route 1 between Presque Isle and Caribou, a small bypass of Route 1 in Caribou in the vicinity of the Cary Medical Center, a connector roadway between Route 1 and Route 161 north of Caribou, and an upgrade of 161 from Caribou roughly to Daigle.

Ruth then walked through the elements of this preferred alternative. She said that essentially it is intended to improve mobility around the critical core of Presque Isle to Caribou. It services the employment population nodes of Easton, Presque Isle, and Caribou. It addresses approximately 50 miles of corridor improvements, addressing eight high-crash locations, and 30 miles of geometric deficiencies. It saves about 1,700 vehicle hours of travel daily—essentially about half the travel time of the full north-south corridor. So, the

County would be getting the biggest bang for the buck in this first part of the program.

She said that the supplemental DEIS documents a range of alternatives for the Presque Isle Bypass so it can move forward into design and construction. Alternative 2 is preferred and it has been tweaked to minimize impacts to wetlands, farmlands, structures, and to maintain access to existing farmlands along the corridor.

It would relieve the incompatible traffic through downtown Presque Isle—moving about 7000 vehicles off the Route 1 corridor—1200 trucks per day that would otherwise be going through downtown Presque Isle. It improves access to several, identified, growing industrial areas, including Easton and the growing parts of Presque Isle on the east side, particularly the 163 and 167 corridors.

The Presque Isle Bypass reconnects to Route 1 north of the Aroostook River in the vicinity of Route 210. From that point north to the existing Caribou Bypass, the preferred alternative proposes to address existing deficiencies and work with the community of Caribou to discourage further commercialization of that corridor and to investigate the possibility of setting the stage for right of way preservation or development rights acquisition. She said that again there is not a firm recommendation yet because there is a process locally for setting the recommendations for the corridor management plan.

North through Caribou the plan shows the corridor for the Preferred Alternative, which proposes a small Bypass of Route 1 on the north side of Cary Medical and a new road between Route 1 and 161. So the entire new corridor proposed north of Caribou is just over 4 miles that would improve connectivity north of town, open access to a Pine Tree Zone and a growing commercial node, address some safety and access issues with the Cary Medical Center and address several high-crash locations.

The final segment included in the Preferred Alternative is the Route 161 upgrade. She said that as alluded to earlier, this would not be a four-lane cross section, but rather a recommendation to strategically add uniform shoulders and truck climbing lanes northbound or southbound to provide frequent passing opportunities. This planned improvement addresses close to 30 miles of deficient roadway, 13 vertical deficiencies and many high-crash locations.

Ruth then went on to explain the alternatives deferred to subsequent documentation, beginning with Segment 3 or Corridor Hm to the north and then discussing the southern options of upgrading Route 1 to four lanes or building a new corridor from Oakfield and Presque Isle, each of which will be

deferred.

Next Ruth said that the implementation plan is geared to a 10-year program. Based on travel demand projections, the team is discussing building a two-lane bypass of Presque Isle and the new corridor north of Caribou would be 2 lanes as well, while preserving the right-of-way for four lanes. The deferred alternatives would be revisited once significant progress had been made on the preferred alternatives.

Dave Hewett then explained the next steps for the process. He said that a Supplemental Draft of the EIS and a draft 4f statement would be added. He explained that the 4f statement refers to the use of historic properties and that to comply with Federal Highway regulations, and because of the tiering process, an interim document was needed. He said that the team expects to have that completed draft for comment late in the summer. Review and comment will be done late this year. The Final EIS will then be prepared and followed by the official Record of Decision. This will allow the more immediate decisions and projects to get started and put off for further study the longer-term decisions on the northern and southern pieces.

Susanna opened up the floor for questions from the PAC.

PAC

Linda Anne Cyr said that she was hoping Ruth would explain to the public what is meant by the term “deferred.”

Ruth said that this is a tiered EIS. So, it includes future transportation network and needs. She explained that there are various decision documents for various projects. The Federal Highway Administration gives the green light for the preferred alternatives. This framework does not foreclose on connections, but recognizes that additional documents will be needed for the deferred alternatives.

Dale Flewelling said that he had one question about whether the deferred alternative has a time table or whether they are on hold indefinitely. He said that it seemed that the central projects are locked in, but that the balance of the County would be left hanging.

Ray said that one of the key considerations is that Federal Highway said that to get Federal funds obligated MaineDOT needs to present projects that can be reasonably delivered in the foreseeable future. The projects to the north and south are very large capital investments—between \$150 to \$200 million. Before additional evaluation could be done there had to be some reasonable assurance that some level of funding would be available to construct them. We cannot plan to do work without funding. A funding plan should precede

further analysis on these alternatives. As it stands now, MaineDOT could build components of the Presque Isle Bypass and have the built pieces provide independent utility even if whole thing is not built due to funding problems. He said that in the south almost 40 miles would have to be built to provide independent utility and logical termini—from I-95 in Smyrna Mills up to Westfield.

Dale said that he thought that the choice was correctly made at the beginning. He agrees that the bypass is in the correct place.

Ray said that if money shows up MaineDOT would come back to community and would then ask where they should next focus their efforts.

Fred Ventresco asked if the northern corridors could be clarified. He asked if the preferred alternative of upgrading Route 161 was completed, could then a decision be made to construct Hm or another segment. Could the County get an upgraded Route 161 and a new highway?

Ray said that this was right.

Fred said good.

Jim Brown said that the major concern of Presque Isle has been the conflicts between E-W and N-S traffic in that one block area of Main Street. Although the "first leg" of the overall N/S highway has always been planned to be the "full" Presque Isle by-pass, the "new" plans for central Aroostook revealed at the July 12 meeting (i.e., the corridor study/accommodations between Presque Isle and Caribou and the Route 1 to Route 161 connector in Caribou, and the Route 161 improvements north of Caribou) actually provide more utility at less cost, if done in conjunction with only the "truck route" (Fort Fairfield Road to Conant Road) and not the "full" Presque Isle by-pass. Within that context, is their sufficient flexibility for MDOT within the implementation of the N/S highway to allow a Route 1 to Route 161 connector to be built rather than the segment of the Presque Isle by-pass from Conant Road to Westfield (and, by implication, from Fort Fairfield Road to Caribou Road, bridging the Aroostook River)? Eliminating the conflicts between E/W and N/S trucks on the (now widened) Main Street in Presque Isle by constructing the "truck route" and redirecting E/W truck traffic to use Route 163 and 163/167 rather than State Street and Academy Street, studying and improving the Presque Isle to Caribou U.S. Route 1 corridor, constructing a Route 1 to Route 161 connector in Caribou, and improving Route 161 north of Caribou makes more sense from the perspective of improved traffic flow and efficiency (for 9,000 vehicles per day), if there is money and the will to do it, than constructing the full Presque Isle by-pass as the first phase of the project.

He said that his concern is that there has been a chill on housing development in Presque Isle because for 40 years the town has been sending housing growth to the east and now the full bypass is slated to go to the east. He said that five projects have put themselves on hold due to the uncertainty of this road project—they do not want to be close to it. He said that there are economic

chills resulting from the waiting and the uncertainty. He would like to ensure that there is an ability for the MaineDOT to move to the issues of improved traffic flow and efficiency without constructing in a particular sequence. He said that unless the flow of money improves the waiting and the economic chill will just continue and it makes it difficult to meet the needs for new housing and also to control overall growth like the State Planning Office says.

Ray said that the first segment they are committed to build is the segment between the Conant Road and Routes 163 and 167. This will provide better access. Once this section is completed and additional funding is obligated, the question becomes what next? He said that it becomes a staging thing and that there needs to be some input from the community. He said the questions that will need to be asked are, what do we have for funding and where can we build logical termini? Once the documentation is complete and there is a Record of Decision, the first thing the department would have to do is to come up with final alignments. This would give the ability to have a set location as they look to purchase right-of-way and have the funding available to build components of the highway system. He said that MaineDOT is committed to building the Presque Isle bypass and the Caribou connection and then the upgrades to Route 161 as funding becomes available.

Susanna asked to continue until 5:45.

Ray said yes.

Paul Bouchard asked if the data from the slides was available.

Ruth said that she had a limited number of copies of the slides with her.

George Howe asked if the bypass around Presque Isle would be 2-lanes.

Ray said that yes it would be 2-lanes at first. But the right-of-way acquired would allow for four lanes eventually. In order to build as much highway as possible, only 2 lanes would be built initially.

Susanna said that since there were not enough handouts to go around, anyone that wanted one could give their name to her and they would get a copy in the mail.

John Edgecomb said that the latter part of the presentation got confusing because of the terminology of preferred and deferred. He said that he was very concerned that there is a lack of commitment to this project. He said that he knows what preferred is and that MaineDOT is right on with the spots it has chosen to build. Frankly, he does not think that the effort had to be spent over the last three years to do that and that the planning department could have done this. He said that everyone was here to discuss transportation in and through Aroostook County and he was concerned that he sensed that there was not a full commitment to that.

Ray said that the existing Route 1 corridor from Houlton up to Presque Isle is

a pretty good corridor. There may be some opportunities in the future to add climbing lanes, but people agree that this is one of best roadways in the state. He said that he would not say that MaineDOT was not committed to doing other components. What we are saying is that this is a living document. As long as we are working on this project it will stay that way. When money becomes available there will be supplemental documentation. The questions will be asked, have a lot of things changed or are conditions the same? Has growth occurred as anticipated so that the baseline is the same? Again, the DOT will not build 4 lanes on Route 1. Then where would we put the money? Either build in the south or build in the north. We would do much the same as we have done here to move whichever particular alignment forward in order to come up with documentation and a Record of Decision.

John said that he liked that answer that "this is a living document."
Ray said what we have been saying all along is that we are doing the documentation to move the Presque Isle and Caribou projects forward for final design and construction. The document does not say that the other components do not have merit.

Linda Cyr said that Fred and she had compiled some issues they would like to address. But before doing that she would like all the PAC and study team members to get a copy and please email Fred with comments.

Susanna helped to clarify that people would get the document now and that the deadline for responding would be by the following Tuesday. She then opened the floor up for questions from the public.

PUBLIC

Patricia Boucher of Caribou said that the issue she saw missing in the EIS was that most economic development entities in the County say that they deal with not having enough of a labor force to attract the larger businesses. She said that by improving travel time, this would increase the labor market. She also said that perhaps instead of mailing out the presentation, perhaps it could be put on a website to save the cost of postage, so that maybe eventually the County would see a highway.

Paul Cyr of Madawaska said that he has raised this issue before at previous PAC meetings and was ignored so he was going to raise it again. He said that he loves it when Ray Faucher uses fancy terms like "connecting logical termini" and "independent utility" because these terms have a basis in law. Federal Highway law, which is especially important in a tiered document. He said that it is vitally important that in a tiered document that a highway segment connect logical termini and have independent utility. He said that he thinks that the Presque Isle Bypass meets these requirements. But Paul

Cyr wanted to go on record to say that the connector from Caribou to Route 1 to 161 and the 161 improvements do not have independent utility nor do they connect logical termini. He asked if anyone could explain how these segments have independent utility or connect logical termini.

Ray answered that if the Caribou connector is built from Route 161 to Route 1 it will provide traffic relief in downtown Caribou and divert truck traffic. It has independent utility and it provides connectivity between two highway systems. Any modification of an existing highway has logical termini because it is improving deficient sections between improved sections.

Paul said that they are already connected. Under the same Federal Highway policy, the highway that supposedly has independent utility and connects logical termini cannot point a loaded gun at any deferred piece of roadway. By putting in that little connector and upgrading 161, a loaded gun would be pointed at a deferred piece—the deferred C3 and the deferred Madawaska Connector and the deferred four-lane from Westfield south. He said that he would like the record to show this.

Ross Paradis said that he thinks the Presque Isle bypass is badly needed. Then he asked how I-95 from Augusta to Bangor and Bangor to Houlton was built. Was the right-of-way for four lanes bought and then built only two lanes? (Someone answered, “yes.”) Ross continued that looking at what is here in Aroostook County and tweaking it any way, that it is still not a good system. The whole economy cries for something better. What comes first, the chicken or the egg? Investment is needed here and it will bring returns. Earlier studies, the Mitchell Study, show that \$1 spent returns \$1.35. He said the Mr. Colgan has also pointed that out with his report. Merchants from central Aroostook say if they want to go to Madawaska they have to go through Van Buren. It would be nice if we had a straight shot. From Madawaska one has to go south by west by east right now. With the proposed connector from Daigle to Madawaska one would still have to go south by west. Why not a straight shot? Shortest distance is a straight line and probably the cheapest. Construction companies say that upgrades are more expensive than a brand new highway, which is what the Valley needs and the County needs. He said that there is still a two-Maine syndrome. He said that Aroostook County has paid dearly in their share of the expansion of the Maine Turnpike. He said that he was for that, but how about some investment in Aroostook, too? Building up Aroostook helps the whole state, so let’s start. We need a commercial bridge somewhere in the Valley. Right now modular homes from Quebec have to go to Houlton and then back up to get to Madawaska. He said that does not make sense. MaineDOT gets an A+ for construction but has a lack of foresight of long-range projects. Investment means a modern highway and a commercial bridge somewhere in the Valley.

Steven Buck, Caribou Town Manager asked if the tiered system of preferred alternatives achieves the lion's share of the long-term economic impacts for the region, such as the job gains etc. that have been projected for the construction of the entire corridor.

Charlie Colgan answered that the basic answer is no. The process of starting in the center and then working out over time starts in portions of the County where the local benefits are greatest and connection benefits are not yet established. The economic analysis done is for local benefits in the Presque Isle / Caribou region and the connection benefits north and south. For a variety of funding and legal and technical reasons it may make sense to start in the middle and move outward rather than to start north and then move south or start south and then move north. Charlie said that the necessity to do the work this way was beyond his expertise, so he would not comment. But, he said that doing the projects around Presque Isle will not bring the full range of benefits that he examined.

Steven said that he was slightly disappointed in the 2% increase in employment.

Charlie the job gain equaled about 3 Defense Finance and Accounting Service Centers of the type in Limestone.

Steven asked whether it is it highway system that comes first or is it the job and economic growth first.

Charlie answered that there are a lot of factors that create jobs and economic growth. Transportation is one of them. Doing these transportation improvements will assist with many of the other factors that also create jobs and economic growth, but these will both occur absent the transportation improvements that are being examined. Jobs and economic growth will occur faster and to a greater extent with these transportation improvements. He said that it is not a question of one or the other, but the extent to which the long-term economic growth in the region is accelerated and expanded beyond its current potential as a result of transportation improvements. Chicken or egg is not the way to look at it because there are so many variables.

Beurmond Banville of the Bangor Daily News asked when this most recent study started.

Ray Faucher said April of 1999.

Beurmond asked if there was an estimate on how much money has been spent on it.

Ray said roughly \$4.25 million.

Beurmond said that this seemed to be the wake before the funeral of the North-South highway from Houlton to the St. John Valley. This is the end of it. Even if it is called a living document there will not be a North- South highway.

Ray said that that is one way of looking at it. Another way to look at it is that this document is a Master Plan for implementation when funding comes. That is the more positive outlook, rather than a fatalistic outlook.

Beurmond said that Ray was at a meeting in Frenchville where he told people of the St. John Valley that there would be a four-lane highway and today that option seems to be gone.

Ray said that the analysis that has been done shows that if a four-lane highway is to be built that these are the corridors. It is a master plan for when funding becomes available. When funding does become available, effort can be focused on alignments within these corridors rather than looking at everything in the region all over again. A lot of work has been done to identify the best location.

Beurmond asked if realistically there will be a highway from Houlton to the St. John Valley in the next 40 years.

Ray said that it depends on funding.

Beurmond asked again what was realistic.

Ray said that he could not say because he did not know. That it depends on funding and if Congress decides to give the State of Maine as much as Alaska got this year it can become a reality.

John Belanger, Caribou asked that since the projects are not four-lane projects if the figures used in economic studies were for four-lane projects.

Ray said to correct him if he was wrong, but that the numbers are for four lanes from Caribou south and two lanes from Caribou north.

John said that this means that MaineDOT gets a lot more for the dollar from the new alignments than from upgrades because a more substantial, limited access highway would be built.

Ray said this was correct.

Fred Ventresco asked if any four-lane highway would be limited access.

Ray said that anything built in a new location would be limited access.

Patricia Boucher asked when money arrives for a new highway to be built, would there be a need to sit down and discuss everything again. Will it be this whole process again?

Ray said that some things would need to be re-analyzed to see if any conditions have changed. Then it would be asked if the changes affect the decision. If not, then the alignments would be looked at and chosen to preserve natural and cultural resources. The rest would be engineering and design.

Patricia asked if another \$4.25 million in study costs would be needed.

Ray said, no, that this study looked at everything from Route 11 to the Canadian border in the east and from I-95 to the St. John Valley. The next phase of a study would focus the efforts on a particular corridor because everything else has been looked at. One thing to emphasize is that in moving to the next phase, the question will need to be asked whether this information is still valid. This would not take long and if the information was still good, MaineDOT would move on to the alignment phase.

John Dionne said that all this discussion was about 80 miles of road. Then he asked if anyone knew how many miles of road there are in this country. He said there are 169,000 miles of highways in the USA. He said that people have been talking about these 80 miles for 15 years and asked where the discussion was headed. He said that he came to the meeting looking for positive notes and has only found negative. He said that the money that is being discussed is only one-third of the cost of one stealth bomber. (Read letter from Susan Collins to be inserted into the record.) John said that he has been talking with Olympia Snowe, Mike Michaud and Tom Allen and they say that MaineDOT should bring plans. He asked where the plans were for Washington. He said that someone was asking where the money is coming from, was it the State of Maine? He said no, it comes from Washington, the State does not have the money to build highways.

John Edgecomb said that the two largest growth periods in the County came when the road and rail were built. He then said that US Route 1 has not kept up with the utility of highways today and that Aroostook County not having a four-lane limited access highway puts it at a disadvantage. This study started in 1995 and this has been the issue all along. He said that the study has not moved far enough ahead. He said that Mr. Dionne made a good point and asked where the plan was for Washington where the money is.

Ray said that this EIS document is the plan.

John said that the document is putting in a deferred section and the County does not need a deferred section.

Ray said that the deferred section cannot be moved forward until the money is there from Washington.

John said that this is the chicken or the egg and asked is the money there, is the plan there. He said that moving forward is important.

Fred said to give feedback to him on the letter.

fred.ventresco@townofMadawaska.com

John asked if the department has any plans ready to submit to the Federal Highway Administration.

Ray said that the detailed plans will be part of the Supplemental EIS that will be submitted. The Record of Decision should be signed off next summer and then it will be ready to move forward with design.

John asked when the supplemental draft would be submitted.

Ray said this summer it will be completed and reviewed by Federal Highway and will be ready for comment by Thanksgiving.

Susanna closed the meeting.

Enclosure: (1) Letter to John Dionne from Senator Susan Collins