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Coordination and Consultation

How to Read This Chapter: Federal NEPA regulations require that the lead federal agency solicit the views of other state and federal agencies during the preparation of an EIS, and provide early and continuing opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts. This chapter summarizes the ACTS coordination with regulatory and other governmental agencies, and citizen involvement following publication of the SDEIS in June 2006. Chapter 7 (page 7-1) in the SDEIS provides a summary of previous consultation and coordination.

7.1 SDEIS Public Hearings

Public hearings on the SDEIS were held in Frenchville, Caribou, and Houlton on August 14, 15, and 16, 2006, respectively. Attendees included federal, state, and local agencies, community organizations, and members of the public. Table 7-1 (page 7-1) identifies the location, date, and number of commentors who spoke at each of these hearings.

Table 7-1 SDEIS Public Hearing Commentors

Hearing Location	Hearing Date	Number of Commentors ¹
Frenchville	August 14, 2006	16
Caribou	August 15, 2006	24
Houlton	August 16, 2006	5

¹ The number of individuals that provided verbal comments at the public hearings.

Verbal and written comments were submitted to the MaineDOT at the hearings and written comments were accepted after the hearings. Chapter 6 of this FEIS, *Response to Comments*, provides responses to the comment letters submitted to MaineDOT and comments made at public hearing. Written comment letters and public hearing transcripts are provided in Appendix B of the FEIS.

7.2 Federal, State, and Local Agency Consultation

The FHWA and MaineDOT have solicited the input of other state and federal agencies through interagency meetings and correspondence.

The Study Team coordinated with federal and state agencies during the preparation of this FEIS to obtain information on environmental conditions, review potential impacts, and obtain agency input. These agencies included the USACE, EPA, NRCS, USFWS, NMFS, IF&W, Maine DEP, LURC, the Maine State Planning Office, and the MNAP.

The Study Team also presented information on the progress of the ACTS at five Interagency Coordination Meetings held on the following dates:

- April 11, 2006
- August 8, 2006
- March 13, 2007
- April 10, 2007
- June 27, 2007

A two-day interagency wetland mitigation field visit was held on November 1 and November 2, 2006. These field visits were attended by representatives of the USFWS, USACE, EPA, and Maine DEP.

The Route 1-161 Connector in Caribou (Segment 4) will require a Section 404 Permit under the Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Therefore, subsequent to the SDEIS, MaineDOT initiated the Highway Methodology process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Highway Methodology is the process that the New England Division of the USACE uses to coordinate the Section 404 review process with the NEPA process.

In order to coordinate the USACE's Section 404 permitting process with the NEPA process, MaineDOT obtained a Basic Project Purpose and submitted to the USACE a Phase I Avoidance Technical Memorandum (June 2007) and a Phase II Permit Application (December 2007) in accordance with the Highway Methodology requirements.¹ An informal public meeting was held on March 12, 2008 at the Caribou High School to discuss the Phase II Permit Application. Representatives from MaineDOT, USACE, and FHWA attended this meeting.

¹ USACE New England Division. October 1993. *The Highway Methodology Workbook. Integrating Corps Section 404 Permit Requirements with Highway Planning and Engineering and the NEPA EIS Process.*

7.3 Public Involvement

The ACTS has included an early and continuous public involvement program that has involved the citizens of the Study Area and sought their input on study objectives, impacts, and corridor evaluation. Citizen involvement has included a Public Advisory Committee (PAC), public informational workshops, meetings, a newsletter, articles in the Northern Maine Development Commission quarterly newsletter, and a study web site (see Section 7-5, page 7-4).

The SDEIS (Section 7.2, page 7-2) summarized the public meetings and public involvement process prior to publication of the SDEIS.

The PAC is a 20-member group convened to represent all areas of the ACTS Study Area, the Maliseet and Micmac Tribal Nations, and economic interests within the Study Area. Members were nominated by their communities, and selected by the Commissioner of MaineDOT to provide broad multidisciplinary representation throughout the Study Area. The PAC met on two occasions after the publication of the SDEIS on the following dates:

- August 1, 2006
- October 2, 2007

7.4 Coordination with Local Communities and Organizations

The Study Team has coordinated with the local communities and local organizations throughout the study to obtain information on existing conditions as well as transportation and economic needs, and to obtain input on the corridor screening process. Meetings were held at various times with the:

- Aroostook County Commissioners;
- Congressional and Senate Delegations;
- City of Caribou;
- City of Presque Isle;
- Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians;
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians;
- Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development (LEAD);
- Maine Potato Board;

- Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC);
- New Sweden Historical Society;
- New Sweden Historical Commission; and
- University of Maine, Presque Isle.

Meetings with local communities and local organizations occurred on the following dates:

- November 29, 2006 – Meeting with the LEAD Transportation Committee at NMDC;
- May 23, 2007 – Meeting with LEAD at NMDC; and
- March 12, 2008 – Meeting attended by City of Caribou representatives and USACE.

7.5 Study Web Site

The web site established for the study (www.vhb.com/aroostook) includes up-to-date study information, announcements of PAC meetings, summaries of previous PAC meetings, links to related news articles, and maps of the study corridors. The site also has a “Feedback” page that allows users to email comments and questions to the study coordinators. The site can also be accessed through MaineDOT’s website (www.maine.gov/mdot/major-planning-studies/major-planning-stds.php). This FEIS is available on the website.