



Meeting Notes

Attendees: Refer to list at end of notes

Date/Time: September 13, 2007 11:00 AM

Project No.: 10137.00

Place: Fall River City Hall
FRRA/OED

Re: Route 79/Davol Street Transportation Study-
Project Advisory Group Meeting #2

Notes taken by: LMC

The second Project Advisory Group meeting for the Route 79/Davol Street Transportation Study was held to discuss the Existing Conditions Chapter of the study.

1. Introductions

Bill Ashworth (VHB) commenced the meeting by explaining that he will be taking over the role of VHB Project Manager for Joe Wanat, whose Army reserve unit was elevated to active duty.

2. Old Business

Lanny Johnson (OED/FRRA) asked whether any of project advisory group (PAG) members had comments or suggestions regarding the distribution of draft document sections or information related to the project. No comments were noted. There was some confusion with MassHighway/Federal Highway (FHWA) coordination for the PAG meeting, but PAG members believe the coordination issues have been resolved.

3. Presentation of Existing Conditions

Laura Castelli (VHB) presented a brief summary of the Existing Conditions for the study area. The existing conditions report was circulated to PAG members on August 21, 2007. No members had comments on the document.

There was some discussion of the impact to existing traffic volumes resulting from the ongoing construction on I-195 and the weight restrictions on the Brightman Street Bridge. VHB will review available historical traffic volume data (adjusted to reflect "typical" background growth in the area) to determine if the volume data should be adjusted when forecasting future traffic volumes.

Travel Demand Model:

There were several questions regarding the travel demand model that will be used for the No Action and Build alternatives analysis. The following clarifications were noted:

- The new Brightman Street bridge is appropriately included in the 2030 model condition.

- The 2030 model condition includes the economic implications of the South Coast Commuter Rail extension project and the highway related component of the travel demand. However there is no mode share adjustment for trips that may be made by commuter rail in the future.
 - Ethan Britland (EOT) suggested that the study be clear in outlining how the new stations were considered in the analysis.
 - Laura Castelli noted that the mode share adjustment would likely be a hand adjustment completed by VHB with input from SRPEED. Additionally, since this study would assume what was previously permitted for Fall River the process would have to be transparent so that future State and Federal documentation could be modified to include changes made as part of the new South Coast study.
 - Ethan Britland volunteered to be the contact person between VHB and EOT to provide the most up to date information regarding the South Coast Commuter Rail Study
- The economic and transportation implications of the Fall River Executive Park are also included in the 2030 model condition. However, the new interchange on Route 24 is not included, and the model may need to be adjusted accordingly.

4. Proposed Alternatives Discussion:

Laura Castelli presented the proposed alternatives to be evaluated during the next phase of the study:

- a. No Action
- b. Demolish Route 79 and provide a four or six-lane cross-section (depending on need) with landscaped median and turning lanes, as necessary
- c. Maintain the existing Route 79, combine Davol Street on the existing northbound side (one lane in each direction) and reclaim the land within the existing Davol Street southbound footprint
- d. Maintain the existing Route 79 and Davol Street infrastructure but provide pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and transit service to the waterfront.
- e. A longer-term alternative combining options d (short-term) and c (long-term) above.

Bob Gregory (MassHighway D5) noted that combined, Route 79 and Davol Street carry close to 80,000 vehicles per day. Given this volume, it is likely a four or six lane roadway would not be sufficient to accommodate demand. Laura Castelli noted that turn-lanes would also be included as appropriate and that if the analysis showed that the cross-section needed to be wider, the alternative would be adjusted to reflect acceptable traffic operations.

Jim Hadfield (SPREDD) would like the alternatives to be presented at the region's Joint Transportation Planning (JTP) meeting the 2nd Wednesday in October. SRPEED will add this to the JTP meeting agenda, as they feel that it is important to get input from this group before moving forward.

Paul Mission (SRPEED) stated he thought it would be helpful to have a three-dimensional model for the public to help them understand how the alternatives might look. Depending on the results of the alternatives analysis, VHB will look in to a way to accomplish this, perhaps with help from SRPEED.

There were no additional comments on the general alternatives to be evaluated; however, there was some discussion on the work to be done as part of the alternatives analysis. The following was discussed:

- Right-of-Way (ROW) implications will need to be considered as part of the alternatives analysis.

- Bob Gregory suggested that the alternatives analysis consider the increased maintenance costs associated with the City of Fall River taking ownership of the roadway.
- Two regional interchanges - I-195/Route 79 and I-195/Route 24 will be included in the alternatives analysis. While no existing data were collected at these locations, VHB and FRRA had previously agreed to look at traffic operations at these two critical interchanges for each of the build alternatives. The intent is to ensure that traffic operations and safety at these locations were not adversely impacted by any proposed project.
- It was determined that a select link analysis for the segment of Route 24 between I-195 and Route 79 be performed. Combined with the select link analysis performed for Route 79, this information may help the PAG better understand who is using the two roadways and whether changes to Route 79 would increase traffic on Route 24 to unacceptable levels.
- Ethan Britland asked that VHB present the projected traffic volume changes on the local and regional roadways for each of the alternatives to the PAG at the next meeting.

5. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria were briefly reviewed and comments were solicited. Bob Gregory indicated that LOS D, which would be considered acceptable based on the evaluation criteria (and is generally considered acceptable throughout MA), may not be considered an acceptable level of service by MassHighway, as the existing intersections operate at better levels of service.

6. Website Update

The project website at <http://www.vhb.com/route79> is up and running. The website includes an overview of the study, evaluation criteria, project schedule, and meeting notes from the first PAG meeting. Additional information will be posted on the website as the study advances.

7. Public Participation/Project Advisory Group

The PAG decided the next meeting would be in mid November and would focus on the findings of the alternatives analysis. Following the November PAG meeting, a public meeting will be scheduled for December.

8. Miscellaneous Items

Ethan Britland had two outstanding items from the last meeting:

- He is looking for an electronic copy of the downtown Harbor Plan completed by the Cecil Group several years ago. Lanny Johnson is trying to track down a copy.
- He is also looking for a history time line or graphic that explains what's happened along the waterfront in terms of previous planning. Lanny Johnson will draft a description of this history, and it will be included in the final report.

Other items:

- Lanny Johnson will obtain an electronic copy of the City's zoning ordinance and a color zoning map for VHB's use.
- A preliminary list has been provided and FXM can begin to interview identified stakeholders.

Attendees:

Kenneth Fiola Jr., Fall River OED
Lanny Johnson, OED/FRRA
Ethan Britland, EOT Planning
Pamela Hazner, MassHighway D5
Robert Gregory, MassHighway D5
Ryan Phelan, Senator Menard's office
Jim Hadfield, SRPEDD
Paul Mission, SRPEDD
Laura Castelli, VHB
Bill Ashworth, VHB

ROUTE 79/DAVOL STREET TRANSPORTATION STUDY

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

September 13, 2007

SIGN - IN SHEET

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