

NTE CORRIDOR STUDY MEETINGS

Study Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

**Canton, NY
September 8, 2006**

Agenda: See attachment.

Attendance: see attached sign-in list.

Presentation:

The meeting was opened by Bob Juravich, who welcomed everyone to this third meeting of the Study Advisory Committee. Bob introduced Mike Morehouse from the study consultant Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA). Mike brought the committee up to date on the work WSA has done since the last group meeting, gave a Power Point presentation on this work—summary of corridor needs, improvement strategies and how strategies address study goals. Questions, answers and comments are as follows:

Question: Dave Werner. Are these nationally accepted goals and how do strategies address goals?

Answer: Bob Juravich. There are five goals from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Security was one from NYSDOT but was not well defined here in this report.

Question: Jim Feeley. What does security goal mean to the region?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. It basically relates to the international border with Canada, but is not clearly defined. NYSDOT is still working on this. The border crossing improvement projects, which NYSDOT is currently reviewing relate to the security goal, but they are not part of this study.

Comment: Kathy Mullany. Security was included in original goals and study scope of work as a funding enhancement measure.

Comment: Mike Morehouse. How security is addressed in the larger projects should be examined. For example: security would be better served by a bypass project or a spur improvement, since having more than one option (redundancy in transportation system) serves security.

Comment: Bruce Irwin. A good example of this is in the Village of Malone, where there is currently only one route through that village. A bypass would provide system redundancy and better security in a crisis.

Question: Kathy Mullany. Environmental goal was also part of the original study scope. How does each identified project meet the environmental and other stated goals of the study?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. As we get further into the study, this question will be looked at in more detail. We should have a five-slice goal pie that includes the five original goals of this study.

Note: Mike Morehouse then went through the needs report and requested comments concerning the draft (mainly concerning preliminary corridor improvement strategies). He discussed the yellow, green and orange color codes used in the report: yellow—near-term mobility; green--long-term mobility; and orange--long-term accessibility.

Question: Bob Juravich. Why are there no green or orange coded projects in Watertown area?

Answer: Jim Donovan. The need for the Watertown area projects is now, so the projects are shown as being currently needed.

Question: Bob Juravich. Are there projects, recommended here, which are currently on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?

Answer: Scott Docteur. Some of these projects are on the regional portion of the STIP. Al Ricalton. After this study is completed, NYSDOT will look at what additional projects (recommended by study) can, and should, be added to the Regional Capital Program.

Comment: Kathy Mullany. It would be a good idea for NYSDOT to identify projects from this study which are already on the program.

Question: Kathy Mullany. Where is Fort Drum connector going?

Answer: Al Ricalton. There are three alternates being considered. All alternates tie Route I 81 north of the City of Watertown to Route 11 at the North Gate to Fort Drum.

Question: John Miller. What is the effect of adding the Fort Drum connector project and Fort Drum Expansion into the traffic analysis? Does it change what improvements would be recommended by study?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. The study will consider the Fort Drum expansion plans and the traffic that would develop from the expansion. In other words, the “full build out” at Fort Drum.” In addition, access management (connecting commercial driveways so traffic doesn’t have to go out to Route 11 to get from one commercial establishment to another, for example) has and will be put into effect by NYSDOT and the towns.

Question: Dave Werner. What will the State Route 26 intersection improvements consist of? At some point in time, is it envisioned that an improvement such as a roundabout or an overpass could be built?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. NYSDOT will have to monitor this situation as traffic builds and develops to see if those types of improvements are warranted.

Comment: Russ Wilcox. For clarification purposes and public presentations, the color coding concept needs to be clarified. Why not go with “needed now or near term”, “mid term” and “long term”?

Comment: Joe Baruth. State Route 26 is critical, especially to Lewis County. There will be a lot of impact from the Fort Drum expansion on this route. There will be more impact than is implied in the report. The State Route 26 needs should be moved up in priority. You also need to look at the State Route 12/State Route 26 intersection in the Village of Lowville because of the convoy and truck traffic going through this intersection.

Comment: Kathy Mullany. The Fort Drum connector should be shown in the report. We must take ownership of it and put it in this plan. It will drive the priority of other projects.

Question: Michele Ledoux. Were Lewis County corridor related needs considered?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. We have to take a harder look. We have to look at the STIP to see what projects it shows for all the spurs. The spurs may need more attention.

Comment: Kathy Mullany. The report, in several places, says “traffic counts don’t warrant improvement.” Go back to original study (NCTS) which says the reason for making some improvement is to increase economic development. Considering economic development, will help change the way the report makes its conclusions and make sure that the conclusions of the NCTS are not negated. In other words, traffic counts alone do not drive recommendations.

Comment: Jim Halpen. Make sure we develop the plan as part of the larger Northern Tier Expressway concept.

Comment: Michele Ledoux. Lewis County improvements are needed regardless of what existing traffic volumes are.

Question: John Miller. There is nothing in this report about border projects. Are there any plans for this? The State Route 812 spur was left out.

Answer: Jim Donovan. We will look into that. Add Route 812 to pages 6 and 7.

Comment: Bruce Irwin. You should remember that original corridor study scope of work was much broader, but that scope was not approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

Comment: Bob Juravich. For Gouverneur and other large villages, the study should convey to the public that bypasses are not necessarily economic-driven but rather are needed for congestion reasons and to relieve pressure from truck traffic.

Question: Kathy Mullany. For villages, such as Philadelphia, would bypasses be needed? Putting an expressway through villages would disrupt the desired 55 mph rate for the corridor.

Answer: Mike Morehouse. Maybe the report should show an orange circle code rather than a green one for Philadelphia.

Comment: Kathy Mullany. The NYSDOT shouldn't be making improvements now that would be unnecessary, or have to be redone, if a bypass is built later.

Comment: Bob Juravich. We need statement in report concerning projects now vs. future projects. We should have in this report a general discussion of how the short-term work relates to the expressway idea. The public will have a harder time understanding how the short-term and long-term projects relate if we don't have such a statement.

Comment: Kathy Mullany. Use something in report other than a green circle, because circle might be interpreted to show proposed alignment for a bypass.

Question: Jim Halpen. When did State Route 56 get substituted for Route 420 as a spur?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. The study work team agreed that it was more likely that State Route 56 would be improved vs. State Route 420.

Comment: Bruce Irwin. There is a greater traffic demand in the State Route 56 corridor.

Comment: Dave Werner. The study should look at bypasses for larger villages but four-lane expressway through smaller ones. The study should also look at using Route 11B as the expressway link between Potsdam and Malone as recommended in the NCTS. Perhaps highlight both Route 11 and Route 11B as options.

Comment: Mike Morehouse. We can go through most villages with expressway concept.

Question: Bob Juravich. Was CR 24, from Malone to Brainardsville, and then onto Route 190 examined as a spur?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. No.

Question: Rodney Brown. Would the fact that a section of State Route 190 is adjacent to an Indian reservation prove to be a fatal flaw?

Answer: Mike Morehouse. Probably not, if the reservation land can be skirted.

Comment: Jim Halpen. Be careful about graphic getting too complex in presentation. Let presenter get point across about bypasses of small villages and explain situation in report text.

Comment: Bruce Irwin. The spur to Canadian border from Village of Chateaugay to Canada was inadvertently not shown in this report.

Comment: Dave Werner. For public meetings, the study team has to be prepared to answer bypass questions.

Comment: Rodney Brown. You need to also be prepared to explain the difference between a freeway and a rural expressway.

Question: Dave Werner. Regarding left turns, are there different ways to deal with them?
Answer: Mike Morehouse. Yes, there are different ways to deal with left turn conflicts: traffic signals, turning lanes, overpasses are among the solutions.

Comment: Rodney Brown. Change reference to Clinton to Clinton County, since there is a town of Clinton in the corridor.

Comment: Sam Trombley. I would prefer that the corridor follow Route 11 instead of State Route 190 because the Can Am study is likely to recommend that route be followed. In the debate about Route 11 vs. State Route 190, think about having a preferred truck route and a car route.

Question: Jim Feeley. What is the timeline for the rest of the NTE study?
Answer: Mike Morehouse. Public meetings will be held shortly and study should be completed in mid-year 2007.

Note: Mike also gave an update of study progress and said he would send scope of services to committee.

Comment: Michelle Ledoux. The timeline for study should be placed on study website. The Fort Drum connector timeline could be used as an example of how long it may take to process a project through the construction stage.

Question: Sam Trombley. Can the \$6.1M that is available for this project be used for other purposes besides planning work?
Answer: Bob Juravich. Yes, the money can be used for corridor improvements.

Comment: Jim Donovan. The website is up and running. The newsletter is there. Also, an 800 number is available for the study. Press kits and small kiosks will be available before the public meetings.

Comment: Bob Juravich: The website should have as many links as possible. If you want a link, get information to me.

Comments: Bob Juravich, Mike Donovan, Jim Donovan, Bruce Irwin. There will be five public meetings—one in every county. Bruce Irwin will coordinate setting public meeting dates, places and times. NYSDOT, jointly with DANC, will be sending out news releases and press packages. Material will be sent to Committee prior to public meetings. We are going to the public because we want their comments and suggestions. We need help from

Committee before and at public meetings. We welcome any ideas anyone from the Committee might have to make public meetings as productive as possible.

Comment: Jim Feeley. The locals should deal with news media and newsletters should be made available to everyone.

Public Meetings

Lowville, Monday, November 13, 2006

Attendance: 13

News Media: TV 10, TV 7

Presentation:

A presentation was made by Michael Morehouse of Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant to NYSDOT and DANC on the project. The presentation covered the work performed on the study to date, including: defining the study goals, analysis of high collision locations, projections of future traffic and congestion, needs analysis, and potential strategies for addressing needs. The presentation lasted approximately 25 minutes and the meeting was then opened to the public for general discussion and questions.

Questions and Comments:

Comment: Joe Baruth, Lewis County Administrator, questioned whether Route 12 to Watertown should be the proper connector to Route 11. He and others at meeting would prefer that State Route 812 be the connecting “spur.” The group did see State Route 812, however, as a vital connection to the Thruway, I90. They realized a connection of State Route 812 to Route 11 at Gouverneur as being a problem to overcome.

Question: Is there a specific spur linking to Route 11 identified for Lewis County?

Answer: State Route 26 has been identified because of it’s direct access to Fort Drum, the highest growing land development in the corridor.

Comment: State Route 812 is well used by many in Lowville.

Comment: During the summer months, traffic congestion is primarily due to recreational uses, most of which use State Route 26; State Route 12 is least important as a link between Lowville and Route 11.

Comment: The closing of the back road between Lowville and Philadelphia put more traffic on State Route 26.

Question: State Route 812 is in good shape; is looking to upgrade the roadway part of this study? Improving State Route 12 will help Lowville.

Answer: The North-South spurs are identified for the purpose of facilitating connections to other important economic centers located off of the primary Route 11 corridor. If a new expressway is to ultimately be constructed, the spurs would also need to be upgraded

to accommodate to increased travel demand from Route 11 to destinations such as Lowville.

Comment: State Route 812 is important to those living on or in the west side of Adirondack State Park; it provides their access to surrounding communities and the rest of the State.

Comment: There are many wetlands along State Route 812, which make it less than ideal as the prime spur between Lowville and Route 11.

Comment: Route 11 in the De Kalb area is getting a higher mortality rate, [due to its use] as a speedway.

Comment: Gouverneur has too many reduced speed zones, so drivers by pass it when it's not a destination.

Comment: The railroad trestle is a problem coming into Gouverneur.

Comment: Truck volume does not seem to be a problem.

Comment: This whole study has left out linkage and other contacts with Canada.

Bruce Irwin was asked to discuss the economic growth scenario more, including a discussion of the Can Am Project, Fort Drum expansion and the impact of better roadways. He explained that the Can Am project would consider an east-west highway from the port of Calais, ME to western New York State. The Route 11 corridor is one possible alignment for the highway as it traverses NY. If this highway is ever built, it has the potential to redirect some traffic that currently uses highways in Canada. Such a highway could be a catalyst for economic growth in the North Country.

Mr. Morehouse indicated that the majority of additional traffic, if Can-Am project is ever developed, would likely be truck traffic initially.

Comment: State Route 812 is most important to the region.

Comment: Access to Interstate 81 is more important than access to Route 11.

Watertown, Monday, November 13, 2006

Attendance: 16 signed in.

News Media: Watertown Daily Times, TV 10, TV 7

Presentation:

A presentation was made by Jim Donovan of Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant to NYSDOT and DANC on the project. The presentation covered the work performed on the study to date, including: defining the study goals, analysis of high collision locations, projections of future traffic and congestion, needs analysis, and potential strategies for addressing needs. The presentation lasted approximately 25 minutes and the meeting was then opened to the public for general discussion and questions.

Questions and Comments:

Question: How do you deal with congestion on Route 11 near Watertown?

Answer: Congestion in this area is mainly due to high traffic volume combined with numerous left turn conflicts at driveways and intersections, and sections of two lane roadway that cannot handle the traffic load.

Question: Looking at the corridor east of Potsdam, do you follow Route 11 or State Route 11B?

Answer: Both routes are currently being evaluated.

Question: Is it realistic to expect that a Northern Tier Expressway can be built in a reasonable time frame?

Answer: A full NTE would likely not be built for another 20 plus years. This study is intended to identify shorter-term improvements that will help to mitigate problems that exist today and in the 20-year horizon timeframe. These improvements will serve as building blocks for the NTE.

Question: Would there be bypass routes around communities?

Answer: The study will look at the impacts of bypass certain communities along the Route 11 corridor. The sustainability of the community will be considered in the analysis.

Question: Has rail been considered?

Answer: Rail has been considered as part of the North County Transportation Study that preceded this study. Recommendations for rail were made in that study and copies of the report can be found on the DANC website. Along Route 11, passenger rail would have limited success due mainly to the relatively low travel demand between destinations along the corridor.

Question: What will an expressway accomplish?

Answer: An expressway will improve mobility along the corridor and allow vehicles to move faster, with fewer conflicts, and less congestions. It will better connect the communities in the middle of the corridor that do not have convenient access to a north-south Interstate highway. Some view an expressway as a catalyst for economic development to occur and provide much needed relief to this economically distressed area.

Question: Why is Halifax such a major port?

Answer: Halifax is the most direct trade route from eastern nations and is the beginning of the NAFTA corridor in North America. Currently, the trade route passes north around the State of Maine and through Canada before entering the United States.

Question: What is the process for the remainder of the study? What happens next?

Answer: Following this round of meetings, the Study Team will develop a series of near and long term alternatives – based on feedback from the public and an objective engineering analysis – and develop conceptual plans, cost estimates, project recommendations, and an implementation schedule. We will be holding a second series of public meetings following the publication of the draft recommendations.

Canton, Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Attendance: 84 signed in, with estimates of 120 or more in attendance.

News Media: Watertown Daily Times, St. Lawrence Newspapers, WPDM Radio, North Country Public Radio (may have been more)

Presentation:

A presentation was made by Michael Morehouse of Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant to NYSDOT and DANC on the project. The presentation covered the work performed on the study to date, including: defining the study goals, analysis of high collision locations, projections of future traffic and congestion, needs analysis, and potential strategies for addressing needs. The presentation lasted approximately 25 minutes and the meeting was then opened to the public for general discussion and questions.

Questions and Comments:

Question: Why wasn't the State Route 37 corridor considered as the Northern Tier Expressway, since it doesn't go through so many town centers?

Answer: State Route 37 was considered in the precursor to this study – the North Country Transportation Study. Some of the reasons it was eliminated from further consideration as the preferred route for the NTE are as follows:

- Route 11 had a greater benefit/cost ratio than the other modes.
- State Route 37 is a part of the scenic byways system.
- Cross traffic on Route 11 is considerable.

Comment: Canton should get a bypass. Congestion is almost inevitable now in the middle of the Village. Village residents don't go downtown in their vehicles now since there is so much traffic (applause).

Comment: The bypass in Potsdam has been there for a while. It is not possible to fix the issues there anymore. It's already been done many times over last 30 years. (The response noted that bypasses were not the answer for all locations)

Comment: Provide passing lanes every few miles to allow slow cars to pull over, in addition to just as climbing lanes on hills.

Comment: Putting an expressway through the villages will be more cost to tax payer.

Question: When the study team considers the towns, does it [check to] see if each of them care for bypasses?

Answer: Each of the communities along the Route 11 corridor is represented in the Study Advisory Group. Furthermore, public meetings like this one serve to gauge public opinion on alternatives such as bypasses.

Question: Canton and Potsdam have colleges. Can you change rush hours in these communities by travel demand management?

Answer: Travel Demand Management may provide some relief, but institutions and businesses have to voluntarily implement such policies. They cannot easily be mandated.

Question: What level of congestion do you have to be at to be considered for a bypass? I think Canton is there.

Answer: This will be studied.

Comment: Every four lane highway or bypass around a community eventually gets growth next to it that drains the local economy.

Comment: Most traffic is through traffic and we locals use the roadways at all times during the day—we need the bypass.

Comment: DOT already owns the land adjacent to Route 11 between Potsdam and Canton for widening the roadway.

Question: How are we looking at four lanes now?

Answer:

Question: Can State Route 37 be reexamined as the prime east west route in the region?

Answer: No, State Route 37 was ruled out in the North Country Transportation Study due to a number of issues, not the least of which is that it is a designated scenic byway. Public meetings such as this one were held for that study as well and the reports can be found on the DANC website.

Comment: In Draft Technical Memorandum #2, the discussion of collisions should consider that another source of collisions is crashes with wildlife.

Comment: The Adirondack Council is against four lane highways.

Question: Could you please consider speeds on the roadway? Could there be an appropriate speed for a four-lane section?

Answer: Speeds will be carefully considered as various widening projects move forward. Speeds should be set lower when passing through the village centers.

Comment: I hope there will be consideration of Amish Community and how they interact with traffic on Route 11 and the spurs.

Comment: Must address questions and problems in the Villages. High priority.

Question: What would you do with the railroad if you don't do bypass?

Answer: This needs to be looked at in greater detail but tunneling could be an option.

Comment: The Village of Philadelphia was destroyed by the bypass.

Comment: The distribution of water and sewer utilities can help limit unwanted growth on bypasses.

Comment: Canton and Potsdam should be considered for bypasses. Our Villages are bigger, they have students and major employers.

Comment: Eighteen wheelers ruin the ambiance of Canton.

Comment: Businesses in downtown Canton are done if the bypass goes in for Canton.

Comment: People go to stores on purpose. They don't randomly stop so the bypass would eliminate the trucks and the through traffic but not those that are headed for the stores. The bypass would be good.

Comment: Canton wants to be more Main Street - the problem is trucks. What can you do to alleviate truck impacts such as braking, speeding, crashes, etc.

Comment: Please reopen original study and link the big industries along Route 37 and then provide spurs to the other communities.

Comment: The State Route 12 and State Route 37 corridors makes more sense as a regional highway.

Question: What are NYSDOT's responsibilities for economic development?

Answer: None. The DOT ensures that safe and efficient access is maintained to development along state-owned roads.

Comment: Remind everyone how this got started: 8 years ago in Ogdensburg as a means of increasing access to the borders, the bridges and the industries on northern New York State. If the highway comes, it will definitely help the economy. Don't lose sight of how this started. (applause)

Comment: Are we considering the future of automobile traffic especially as gas gets high? Please consider wildlife movement if you consider a four-lane highway.

Comment: Please Post maps on the web site.

Question: Can you do a truck traffic only bypass?

Answer: You can encourage trucks to use the bypass by making it more convenient for them but you cannot prohibit other types of vehicles.

Question: Does Truck traffic have to use Route 11 if Can Am starts?

Answer: The CanAm project is just beginning and a preferred routing has not been identified. The fact that this study is ahead of the CanAm study gives us the opportunity to decide what we want Route 11 to be.

Question: What are the origins/destinations of the current truck traffic on Route 11? Most comes from Canada crossing into US through Champlain.

Answer: The North Country Transportation Study performed a simple O-D survey. We will look into the truck flow data.

Comment: The Route 11 study is also about creating access to the region.

Malone, Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Attendance: 38 signed in, but there were a few who didn't sign in.

News Media: Plattsburgh Press Republican, Malone Telegram

A presentation was made by Jim Donovan of Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant to NYSDOT and DANC on the project. The presentation covered the work performed on the study to date, including: defining the study goals, analysis of high collision locations, projections of future traffic and congestion, needs analysis, and potential strategies for addressing needs. The presentation lasted approximately 25 minutes and the meeting was then opened to the public for general discussion and questions.

Questions and Comments:

Comment: Move commercial traffic to a bypass.

Comment: It is difficult to cross the wide main street (Route 11) in downtown Malone; a bypass is needed. (Note: Several people commented on the need for a bypass of the Village of Malone.

Question: Commercial traffic, especially in Malone, is a problem. Major employers in the area need better highway access. What is the Can-Am Study and how realistic is it to expect that a Can-Am Highway will be built? What will highway improvements do to our communities? We don't need more people brought into this area.

Answer: The Can Am study is a multi-state, multi-national initiative that is looking at the development of an east-west highway from Calais, ME through New England and New York State. The corridor has been listed as a priority linkage in the highway system but it is uncertain how realistic or when such a project will happen. As it now stands, NH and VT are not very enthusiastic about the project, but they are participating in the discussions.

Comment: Parking in Malone is a problem.

Comment: There is no rail service in this area, but there once was. The state provides roads for trucks, why not provide funding for railroads? There is not enough transportation access to this area.

Question: What is the timetable for the completion of this study and when can the area expect improvements?

Answer: The study is expected to be completed late summer/early fall 2007. Some improvements that are low in cost can be implemented almost immediately. Other improvements will need some funding and can take place in the next 1 to 5 years. More intensive improvements may need to go through an environmental permitting and design phase before they can be built. This study will provide a timeframe for all improvements so that the appropriate next steps can be planned accordingly.

Question: What are the historic growth and the economic growth used for in the study?

Answer: The historical growth is based on historical trends in population and employment and is a more conservative estimate of future traffic growth. The economic growth scenario assumes that more aggressive growth will take place, primarily due to a major improvement such as the Can Am Connector, and is considered a high estimate of future traffic growth.

Comment: We need a more direct route from and into this area.

Comment: A bypass would be good for Malone because it would get truck traffic off the street and therefore improve downtown Malone.

Comment: The area needs an east-west highway from Watertown to Plattsburgh.

Comment: Truck traffic needs a way around villages.

Comment: There is a need to prioritize segments of the highway for improvements.

Question: Were other corridors besides the Route 11 Corridor considered?

Answer: Yes, State Route 12 and State Route 37 were both ruled out in the North Country Transportation Study. Those conclusions can be found in the study reports on the DANC website.

Comment: The study needs to look at economic centers.

Comment: Some corridor spurs also need four lanes of traffic.

Comment: A corridor improvement for Malone should be the study's top priority. There is now only one way to go through Malone. When a bypass of Malone is built, it should be north of the village.

Question: Where will the funding for improvements recommended by the study come from?

Answer: The funds will likely come from both state and federal sources.

Question: What are the corridor spurs and roads and how are they being studied?

Answer: The spurs are the north-south linkages between the Route 11 corridor and other adjacent economic centers. They are be studied with less emphasis than the Route 11 corridor itself, but enough to determine which routes would need upgrading if a major improvement, such as the NTE, is constructed.

Question: Have north-south traffic movements been considered?

Answer: Yes, traffic volume has been collected on all spur routes as well as at the border crossings.

Comment: There is an old rail bed in this area that could be used for a new east-west highway.

Comment: An improved spur, from Route 11 to the St. Regis Indian Reservation is needed because of the expansion there.

Question: Was there input from the villages along the corridor?

Answer: Yes, the villages are represented on the Study Advisory Group.

Comment: Proposed projects need to be prioritized.

Question: Were highway sufficiency ratings considered? When improvements are made, don't cut down trees!

Answer: Yes.

Question: A bypass is a double-edged sword. Can you only move commercial traffic to a bypass?

Answer: It is not likely that we will be able to prohibit certain vehicles from a new bypass.

Comment: The State proposed a bypass around Malone 50 years ago. The community shot it down.

Comment: Pedestrian circulation is a problem. There are three prisons, major employers, on town roads and the schools not on main streets. A highway linking them would degrade residential quality of surrounding neighborhoods.

Comment: We already have Nova Scotia and New Brunswick trucks on our roads.

Question: The problem with Malone is lack of parking on the main street. Where would a four-lane highway go?

Answer: In the town and village centers the roadway cross section would likely not be altered. If an expressway is built, the centers would likely be bypassed.

Comment: We don't have rail service and are dependent on trucks. Big business moved out because of lack of transportation. We need to accommodate the truckers. There is a bad situation for trucks going up Main Street hill around Sawyer Avenue.

Comment: I think a bypass would be good for this community.

Question: I always felt there should be a highway across the North Country. Will there be access to the communities?

Answer: Communities would not be cut off from the expressway.

Comment: Trucks have a hard time of starting up on a grade like they need to do in Malone. A bypass would be beneficial.

Comment: Consider alternate routes around Malone.

Question: Malone to Champlain is about 50 miles and doesn't go through many communities—did you look at shorter segments along the Route 11 corridor? Consider attacking the slowest portions of the 150 miles first.

Answer: Yes, the corridor will be broken up into segments of independent utility. That is, segments that make logical sense in terms of relative ease of implementation, common needs, or connectivity between major points will be defined and appropriately prioritized.

Question: Were there other areas that you considered for a 4-lane highway—when was the decision made?

Answer: The Route State 37 and State Route 12 corridors were considered and subsequently ruled out in the North Country Transportation Study. Details can be found on the DANC website.

Question: Is it local or through traffic causing the problem?

Answer: Both. The rural segment of Route 11 has very low volume but the town and village centers experience heavy traffic during peak periods of the day. This suggests that local traffic mixed with through traffic creates localized congestion.

Question: Would the spurs be 4-lane also?

Answer: They could be.

Comment: In support of doing something on Route 11—Main Street is very unsafe—parallel parking is unsafe.

Comment: There are a lot of collisions in the northeast part of the county. There are lots of milk trucks and log trucks on the road mixing with slower and/or smaller vehicles. A bypass makes sense.

Comment: Removing trees to widen the road is NOT an improvement.

Comment: There are not enough destination signs heading east.

Comment: The narrowing of Route 11 from two lanes to one lane east of Malone is a problem area.

Comment: Trucks should go on State Route 11B—is there a sign for this?

Comment: Bypass would be good for Malone because it would give the community a chance to assess its assets and do some long range planning.

Comment: State Route 37 is the main access into the Adirondacks from Canada.

Comment: Use North South rail beds that worked in the past.

Comment: Should local communities be lining up to meet with DOT to lobby for money?

Plattsburgh, Thursday, November 16, 2006

Attendance: 16 signed in, but there were a few more who didn't sign in.

News Media: Plattsburgh Press Republican

Presentation:

A presentation was made by Michael Morehouse of Wilbur Smith Associates, consultant to NYSDOT and DANC on the project. The presentation covered the work performed on the study to date, including: defining the study goals, analysis of high collision locations, projections of future traffic and congestion, needs analysis, and potential strategies for addressing needs. The presentation lasted approximately 25 minutes and the meeting was then opened to the public for general discussion and questions.

Questions and Comments:

Question: Can State Route 190 from Route 11 to City of Plattsburgh be included in study? The new airport being built at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base is a factor. What is the timeline for the study? Where will the funding for proposed projects come from?

Answer: State Route 190 is included in the study. The funding will likely come from a combination of state and federal sources. This study is expected to be completed in late summer/early fall 2007.

Question: Plattsburgh is the major hub of the area. We should look at this factor very closely. Traffic needs to be able to move faster across the region. Concerning the proposed Can-Am Highway, will a bridge across Lake Champlain be needed?

Answer: It is unknown at this time if a new bridge will be needed.

Comment: It is not easy to get across region from Plattsburgh to Buffalo and points west. People don't go that way (i.e. across top of the state) because of traffic problems encountered going that way. (Note: This comment came from a woman who lives in Plattsburgh but has family who live in Buffalo.) People don't want to get lost on the way. Canada has Highway 401 but it doesn't serve this area well.

Comment: Route 11, as it exists now, is hard to travel.

Question: Is the section of highway from the Village of Rouses Point to the Rouses Point Bridge to Vermont included in the study?

Answer: We will be sure to include Rouses Point in the future.

Comment: Rouses Point needs to be bypassed in any east-west highway scheme.

Comment: There is a lot of truck traffic going through the Village of Rouses Point.

Comment: Would like to see the idea of bike routes being considered. The state needs to cut back bush to keep highway signs exposed.

Question: There are a lot of animal collisions, especially with deer, taking place. Do we have any plans to improve that situation?

Answer: We can try to understand where animal crossings are heaviest and provide better warning signage.

Comment: Straightening curves will help with deer collision problem.

Comment: Both Route 11 to Rouses Point and State Route 190 to Plattsburgh are important. Keep both options in study.

Comment: In the Village of Champlain area, the east-west traffic is more important. State Route 190 needs to be improved. Most of the border crossing traffic will be going in an east-west direction. It's okay driving on Route 11 but you have to be alert.

Comment: Short term solutions are needed. They are important and can be accomplished earlier.

Comment: A four-lane highway would be difficult to build through smaller villages such as Chateaugay, Ellenburg, etc.

Comment: Most of the truck traffic in the village of Rouses Point is going in an east-west direction.

Comment: We should take a look at other studies that have been done so far.

Question: Is State Route 11B still under consideration as part of the Corridor study? Projects in village downtowns should be built first.

Answer: Yes, State Route 11B is still under consideration.

Comment: Roundabouts should be considered wherever feasible.