

**Gorham East West Corridor Feasibility Study
Steering Committee Meeting
November 24, 2009**

Steering Committee: Tex Haueser, John Duncan, Carl Eppich, David Cole, Burleigh Loveitt, Dan Bacon

Study Team: Paul Godfrey, Carol Morris, Ray Faucher, Evan Richert, Conrad Welzel, Sara Devlin, Rebecca Grover

Introduction

Conrad welcomed everyone, saying he was very impressed with everything so far, and he appreciates the interest and attention from the communities and PACTS. Last week, we had the MTA quarterly meeting at the Gorham Council Chambers. The Study was presented to the council and the Maine Turnpike Authority, with excellent feedback.

Charlie Colgan Job and Population Projections

Evan, presenting for Charlie, said that we have been meeting with the communities to ground truth the town-specific numbers in the projections to 2035 of population, housing and jobs. He said we are trying to determine how the units of jobs and housing should be distributed in concert with zoning regulations, energy issues and demographics. If the traffic impacts out to 2035 turn out to be benign or desirable, the job is easy. If there are serious congestion and safety problems, the alternative scenario may make a difference. Today we are going to talk about the trend scenario.

In the revised REMI model, Cumberland County jobs are projected to increase by about 50,000 by 2035. Evan said that Charlie projects the population will increase by about 72,000 by 2035. Evan said the model tends to see Maine in a more positive way and Charlie always dials it back based on other data. Evan believes the projected 72,000 growth in population is reasonable. It's about 26% growth and in line with the previous 20-year trend.

John asked about migration from other parts of the state. **Evan** said this is caused mainly by job creation and the subsequent migration of people to fill those jobs. The REMI model shows most other counties in Maine will lose population. The urban center communities have lost population over time; the inner suburbs have seen their share go from

30.6% to 34%. **Evan** outlined the change in growth for the three parts of the study area: urban, inner suburbs and outer suburbs. That then produced our community-specific population projections. Scarborough is projected to grow to about 35,000 people. That translates into about 8,000 additional housing units. The inner and outer suburbs are a very dynamic region for growth due to their available land and proximity to strong job centers of Portland and South Portland.

Paul said it is important to share this with the communities and the Steering Committee so everyone is comfortable with how the numbers have been developed. The foundation needs to be right. **Carol** asked how the SC thinks the public will receive this information. **John** said he was comfortable with the refined numbers. He wondered what Portland thinks. **Evan** said they are going to talk to Portland, Standish, South Portland and Westbrook. **David** said as far as we can see there is a pattern that has existed and will continue, and nothing is going to dramatically affect this. **Paul** asked if there are other ongoing studies, projections that might be counter to this one. He wants to make sure that we are touching all the bases. **Carl** mentioned the Tri-community study for Saco-Biddeford-Old Orchard Beach. He has given them Charlie's numbers, and they were surprised. But, their projections are to 2025, not 2035. Paul will follow up with them. **Tex** said he thought GPCOG was doing a regional comprehensive plan and **Carl** said it was just beginning. **Paul** said we are already getting requests for this data. While it was done for this study, it will be utilized by others. **John** asked if fuel prices had been put into the discussion? **Evan** said yes, to a degree. **Carl** mentioned that Buxton always sticks out as an important area, that it is a location that a lot of people could go to with higher population pressures. **Evan** said the projection is for 1,100 new dwelling units in Buxton, a 32% increase over the 27 years. There was some discussion of development in the various towns. **Paul** asked if the group could help ground truth the next level of detail – the Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs). All were willing and **Paul** will work with the four towns to see if we got the order of magnitude right at the TAZ level.

Carol said that at the land use workshop last month, the group broke out into small sessions to discuss whether Evan's alternative land use development patterns made sense. Overall, we came out with four revised patterns to look at, and Evan will review them now. The Advisory Committee has not met since September, and the land use work has taken longer than anticipated. Consequently, she feels a comprehensive update should be sent to the Advisory Committee

soon. January 7th is confirmed as the second land use workshop. Then the next week an Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled.

Evan said that his interpretations of the group's intent are as follows:

1. Urban to Rural Form: This is a hybrid. The urban area would retain its share of population and jobs. That is a big reversal in trend. The internal suburbs maintain their share, with multiple nodes that are susceptible to alternative modes of transportation. The outer suburbs get a bit less in terms of population and jobs.
2. Sub-Regional Balance Form: This is a modification of the Community-Centered Corridor Form, noting that the urban areas are places people want to live. The housing-rich communities need more jobs and the job-rich areas need more people. This form provides a balance.
3. Suburban Community Centered Corridor Form: This is also a modification of Community-Centered Corridor. It favors community centered corridors but is not put off by growth in the suburbs or declining growth in Portland. However, more compact centers are important, and eventually it could evolve a transit friendly environment.
4. Greenbelt Development: This form does not specify where growth would go, but first starts by asking where should the large blocks of unfragmented open space be. Once that is established, we would look at where the development should go. This can also be done as part of other patterns.

David added that we need to look at what is actually doable. We would be lucky if we could do number 1. Number 2 and 3 he doesn't think we could get to. We need to have this discussion with the larger group. **Carol** said this is a good point; and we will have to provide folks with specific criteria and background information when they are trying to determine the best alternative. One would be what is politically feasible; another would be how serious the transportation issues will be. When we have the January meeting, we will have the 2035 projections as to where the problem spots would be. **Tex** said if we get into a discussion on what can be done politically, we will need to be more specific, and provide graphic images of what kind of transportation you are thinking of. **David** said he thought it would be helpful if we are able to say that to achieve #3 you would have to do X policies. Then we would have something concrete to discuss. **Carl**

pointed out that political feasibility is very dynamic, if things come to a head, reaction may be different today than tomorrow based on external factors. **David** said Carl's point is well taken, if we produce a report, there needs to be a time frame on it. **Carol** agreed with all these comments and the Study Team will work them into the January meetings and discussions. **Evan** agreed that looking at the level of problems, satisfying Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs), and political feasibility are all good ways to structure the discussion. **Tex** asked if increasing transportation choice is one of the MOEs? **Paul** answered yes. **Carl** said he thought that if the study can provide choices based on the state of the world, like an ala carte menu, it would be effective.

Transportation Strategies

Paul said that we need to begin looking at transportation strategies, and as part of these we will consider Transportation Demand Management, Transportation Systems Management, other modes, existing infrastructure improvements, new capacity or new alignment, and certainly a combination of the above. He showed a map of the existing trouble spots.

Burleigh pointed out that Route 25 still has congestion; it carries more traffic than Route 114. He said that should be added to the map as a trouble spot. The Route 25 study indicated it would still be a problem even after the bypass was built. We still have an enormous problem on Route 25 and this affects Windham and Westbrook as well.

Paul listed corridors where there is congestion today, and others added to the list. Congestion is an issue on Routes 25, 22, 114, 295, 302, 1, 95, 237, River Rd, Running Hill Rd, and Spring St.

Dan asked if it would help to address just the intersections? **Burleigh** said it is a problem of convergence. The major numbered routes in this area are convergence areas. So we need either new capacity or a new way to move people in these convergence zones.

Paul said you can put bypasses (roads) around sticky convergence points, but by the time you go around, you need more capacity on the other side - another road. **Paul** said those points in the interior are going to become worse. **Burleigh** said a ring road around any problems means more miles of road, but he would appreciate hearing what a ring road could do. A linear road will transport people in a linear fashion, but a ring road could make a lot of sense. **Carl** added that we have the good spokes, so a ring would free up the spokes.

Paul said that in view of the time constraints we would continue this conversation at the next Steering Committee meeting. Today was about opening the door.

The meeting ended at 3:10 pm.