

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

August 13, 2009

HEARING OF BERLIN, 12958B

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1 Chairperson Ashley: Good evening, everybody. This meeting is called to order. I'm
2 Barbara Ashley, Chairman of the Commission appointed by the
3 Governor and Executive Council. Richard Hamilton, on my left, of
4 Littleton and David Woodward of Milan on my far left are also
5 members of this Commission. This hearing is concerned with the
6 reconstruction of NH 110 realignment to create a more direct route
7 for the roadway between Green Street and Wight Street and to
8 remove through traffic from the largely residential neighborhood in
9 the city of Berlin. It is pursuant to RSA 230.14 and the Surface
10 Transportation and Uniform Relocation Systems Act of 1987. The
11 purpose of this hearing is to determine the necessity of the occasion
12 of the layout and to hear evidence of the economic and social
13 effects of such a location, its impact on the environment and its
14 consistency with the goals and objectives of such local planning as
15 has been undertaken by the City. Following the hearing the
16 Commission will evaluate all matters brought to our attention and
17 make definite decisions relative to the layout. We will contact each
18 owner whose property is affected and discuss individual concerns.
19 It is, therefore, important that all individuals desiring to make
20 requests for suggestions do so tonight. I would remind you that you
21 have ten days from the date of this hearing to submit any other
22 material you would like considered by this Commission. I would
23 also like to comment at this time that up back on the table in that
24 direction are some written sheets that you can use if you do not
25 want to get up and speak tonight but would like to have your
26 opinion or your thoughts shared. So if you would like, you can fill
27 one of these out and turn them in to us after. At this time I would
28 ask Christopher Waszczuk, Project Manager of the New Hampshire
29 Department of Transportation, to present in a formal manner the
30 layout which he has proposed. After this I will open the floor to
31 those who wish to address the Commission. I will request that all
32 desiring to speak signify their desire and upon recognition they step
33 to the microphone, state their name and address and make their
34 statements. This hearing is being recorded and a transcript will
35 later be prepared. Chris Waszczuk will now present the layout.

36 Christopher Waszczuk: Thank you, Madam Chair. Members of the Commission, good
37 evening, and ladies and gentlemen. Certainly I invite the Chair of
38 the Commission to sit in the front as I do the presentation. It is a
39 pleasure this evening to present what the Department proposes for

1 alterations to NH Route 110 here in the city of Berlin. My name is
2 Chris Waszczuk and I am the project manager for this project and
3 the project manager for the previous Main Street project. (Cell
4 phone ringing.) If anyone else has any cell phones, I know it does
5 interrupt/interfere with our equipment. I'd ask you to please, if you
6 could just turn those off, that would be appreciated. Thank you.
7 Quite a few meetings have been held for this project. For those of
8 you folks that have been following this project right from the onset,
9 the folks at this evening's meeting, the public hearing, is to present
10 to you what the Department and City's preferred alternative is and
11 to get your public comment and testimony. Before I begin I'd like
12 to introduce several of my colleagues from the Department who
13 will be helping with tonight's presentation. On my right is Victoria
14 Chase. She's the Right-of-Way Engineer and she'll be providing a
15 brief summary of the right-of-way process for the project. On her
16 right is Marc Laurin and he's the Environmental Manager with the
17 Department's Bureau of Environment and he will provide a brief,
18 very brief overview of the environmental assessment that has been
19 completed for the project. Some of you may of heard, if you
20 haven't heard, there will be a second public hearing. It's a NEPA
21 Public Hearing in two weeks at the City Hall at 7:00 p.m. at which
22 the Department will present more information on the environmental
23 document and the environmental aspects of the project. And you're
24 all welcome to attend that hearing. It's not necessary for you folks
25 to attend that. The hearing process will cover from this date will
26 cover all the testimony at the second public hearing and a comment
27 period that extends out to September 11th. I also want to introduce
28 Trent Zanes. He's the Senior Engineer with our Preliminary Design
29 section and he will be presenting the plans this evening and
30 discussing the more detailed aspects of the design. Also in the
31 audience I want to acknowledge our Commissioner, George
32 Campbell is with us here this evening and the Assistant
33 Commissioner, Jeff Brillhart. I know he was here and he just
34 stepped out for a moment. And then lastly I want to also
35 acknowledge Don Lyford who is going to be the Project Manager
36 for the final design. And also here with us this evening I want to
37 acknowledge our Right-of-Way folks that are doing the recording
38 this evening –Lynn Riel and Lisa Denoncourt. The displayed slide
39 here just shows a brief kind of outline of what our presentation will
40 involve. We will try to be as succinct as possible in presenting all

1 the information but anticipate our presentation to be approximately
2 thirty to forty minutes and then as Commission Chairperson Ashley
3 stated that then the floor will be open for you folks to provide your
4 comments at that time. As shown on the regional map here, NH
5 110 is a key east-west highway that connects Route 16 and
6 downtown Berlin with the western part of the state and Route 3, the
7 state's western-most north-south highway in Groveton. The
8 highway closely parallels the St. Lawrence-Atlantic railroad
9 corridor and is a major trucking route within the North Country.
10 The highway not only is of local importance, used by people and
11 businesses traveling to and from Berlin, but it also has regional
12 significance with increasing tourism use. As shown, within the
13 project limits as 110 gravitates from the west, 110 is designated as
14 an urban minor arterial highway. The road is situated within the
15 city's urban compact and classified as a class IV highway. As 110
16 enters the city limits from the west it traverses along several
17 different city streets. From the west, 110 continues on Wight
18 Street, follows onto Third Ave., onto Madigan Street, Second
19 Avenue and then finally onto Green Street as it makes its
20 connection with Route 16 in downtown Berlin. The project limits
21 essentially match into the Green Street Bridge project that was
22 recently completed in 2008 and to a point on NH 110
23 approximately 800 feet west of Duguay Street. Relative to the
24 project background – the NH 110 connection was identified as a
25 problem as early back as the sixties and seventies. The City
26 commissioned several studies – the Campbell Study, the Hayes
27 Report to identify various opportunities to improve the 110 the
28 Route 16 connection with little success at that time. In the early
29 nineties a Route 110 Committee was formed by the City's Planning
30 Board to gauge whether community support existed towards
31 pursuing an alternative and a relocation of 110 through Berlin.
32 Based on the Committee and Planning Board's efforts, an
33 application for a project was submitted to the Regional Planning
34 Commission and as part of the State's 10-year Plan Process back in
35 2003 two million dollars was programmed for Phase II
36 construction. The Phase I project which addressed the Green Street
37 railroad bridge was recently completed as I mentioned earlier, in the
38 fall of 2008. Since the projects inclusion in the ten-year plan
39 several key elements have transpired. The conceptual alternatives
40 weren't developed back in 2001 and 2002 when several scoping

1 meetings were held in City Hall in each one of those years to garner
2 input. Concurrently the City's Planning Board was also part of the
3 meeting to gather community input and build support for the
4 project, doing outreach in the project area. Several studies were
5 completed including historic investigations and socio-economic
6 reports which resulted in federal highway issuing a preliminary
7 determination on the project's potential impact on historic resources
8 in 2004. Also in 2004, the City's Planning Board voted in support
9 of Alternative 4E as the alternative that best meets the long-term
10 planning needs of the city. Between 2004 and 2007 work involving
11 City staff, Federal Highway, Division of Historic Resources and the
12 Department progressed to resolve the historic issues surrounding
13 the project. The project received earmarked federal funding to
14 bring \$7 million – 5.6 million of which are federal dollars that are
15 specifically designated for improvements to this area, to this
16 corridor. Presently the project is included in the State's 10-year
17 Transportation Improvement Plan, 2009-2018 version. The primary
18 purpose and need for the project is to safely and efficiently convey
19 the NH 110 traffic through downtown Berlin. Presently Route 110
20 traffic, including large trucks, travel through the middle of a dense
21 residential neighborhood around tight corners, narrow city streets,
22 and along steep grades. During the winter months this is even more
23 problematic as snow builds up and the roads are icy. Detour routes
24 for trucks have been in effect until most recently to afford the
25 deficiency of the clearance that pre-existed at Green Street. One
26 consolidated and designated route is desired by the City to improve
27 safety and alleviate congestion for this area. The average day of
28 traffic along Route 110 through downtown Berlin was estimated in
29 2008 to be a little over 5200 vehicles per day and that's projected to
30 grow to over 6700 vehicles per day in 2031. The design period for
31 this project is 2031. That's why we've identified that timeframe.
32 Truck counts back in 2003 were identified to be nearly 11% and
33 that percentage was substantiated in a more recent count in 2008.
34 As part of the project we also have identified crash data and 127
35 accidents have been reported in the project area over the 14-year
36 period between 1994 and 2007 or nearly 10 accidents per year.
37 Initially six alternatives which traverse through the area were
38 conceptually developed. Those alternatives were presented at those
39 scoping meetings and other public meetings and then basically
40 those alternatives boiled down to two alternatives – Alternative 2

1 and Alternative 4E. Tonight's presentation is going to mainly be
2 focused on Alternative 4E. Based on previous input at a number of
3 public meetings and through correspondence and survey,
4 Alternative 4E has risen to the top as the preferred alternative by the
5 community. Several important issues have been included or
6 considered in the design. Certainly safety, efficient operation,
7 neighborhood/community impacts, property acquisitions and
8 relocations, impacts to historic resources, consistency with the
9 City's long-term planning and ensuring the community's support.
10 And as I mentioned, based on input from the City, based on
11 feedback that we've received at the two most recent public
12 informational meetings, based on the correspondence and a project
13 level survey that was done, Alternative 4E has been identified as the
14 preferred alternative. And at this time what I'd like to do is ask
15 Trent Zanes to present the plans in more detail and we do have
16 plans on the wall but they will be supplemented with a computer
17 projected image so that everyone can better see the details of the
18 project. Trent?

19 Trent Zanes:

20 Thank you, Chris. In a minute, if you'll forgive me, I'm going to
21 turn my back to you to try to show you some zoomed in images of
22 the project, the same plan that we have on the wall here but I
23 figured it would help you to see better if I can bring it up on the
24 screen here. What you'll see, to give you a description of how the
25 plans are laid out, is some of the colors we use. The existing streets
26 are gray. The buildings are red and any wooded areas are green, a
27 darker green. And then you'll see the proposed work that we're
28 showing – this realignment through here. The yellow represents the
29 travel way or the width from white line to white line including the
30 center line in the middle. The brown color represents the shoulder,
31 in this case a four foot shoulder throughout. And then we have a
32 grass panel in some locations between the granite curb shoulder and
33 the concrete sidewalk which has a varied width through the project
34 area. In the new area the proposed sidewalk will be eight feet wide
35 and along Wight Street it will be six feet wide. So let me get into
36 some of those details. I'll step back again just for one more minute
37 and mention that below this plan you'll see a profile and that's just
38 where the center line of the road rises and falls as it progresses
39 through the area and connecting into Wight Street. Okay, so you
can see from here, this is the overall view of the entire project. And

1 what I'll do is I'll come in here on Green Street where the recent
2 bridge project was constructed here and proceeding up Green Street
3 to the west we begin to curve the new proposed 110 through this
4 area and match into First Avenue. We'll be holding the west side of
5 First Avenue and this will require acquisitions through this city
6 block and then on the eastern side of First Avenue. These red
7 slashed lines are building that would need to be acquired with this
8 alternative. We'll be providing, again, this is a six-foot grass panel
9 between the shoulder and the eight-foot wide sidewalk on either
10 side of the roadway. The lighter green color that you see would just
11 be... those areas we would need to match in to the existing
12 landscape and so it would just be some minor landscape work. The
13 orange represents drive matches where we would need to adjust the
14 drives to match into the new location of the roadway. And
15 continuing through, I'll zoom out just a little bit so you can see
16 Second Avenue and Mannering Street and then Hillside to the east.
17 And what we're proposing here is to close off Second Avenue so
18 that it just connects to Mannering. This should help keep some of
19 the additional traffic on 110. And one of the benefits of this
20 intersection here with Hillside Avenue, as has been expressed in
21 earlier meetings, is the availability or the easier access to the ice
22 arena and other parts of town for people who are coming in from
23 outside of Berlin. This alternative then proceeds to the north. It
24 would provide another connection into the existing Third Avenue
25 and the work should terminate roughly about Hinchey Street. This
26 area here would be returned to... the pavement would be removed
27 and it would be landscaped. And then connecting onto Fourth
28 Avenue, this is where we're considering the work just to be a
29 rehabilitation of Wight Street and an improvement of the sidewalks
30 that are out there today. On the western side, the existing sidewalks
31 are made of asphalt with asphalt curb and on the eastern side it's a
32 concrete sidewalk with I believe a concrete curb but on the eastern
33 side it's in poor condition today and in some locations the roadway
34 is a little bit narrower than others. We have some places where the
35 road... there's about twelve-foot lanes and only a two-foot
36 shoulder. Other places there are four-foot shoulders. What we're
37 looking to do is to provide some consistency through this area by
38 putting in twelve-foot lanes, four-foot shoulders and in many cases
39 just rehabilitating the sidewalk providing a six-foot wide concrete
40 sidewalk with granite curbing on both sides. This will help us to

1 improve the drainage control in the area and provide more of a
2 continuous appearance and better pedestrian and bicycle facilities in
3 the area. So this just gives us a quick view of the alignment
4 through this area. As you can see Wight Street is essentially where
5 it is today. We're not looking to relocate it, just provide some
6 minor improvements. And some of the lines that you'll see, the
7 stickler line, the thicker blue line, represents areas where we're
8 going to be acquiring a small sliver of right-of-way in some
9 locations to provide a consistent width right-of-way from the center
10 line of the roadway. In some places we know that the existing
11 right-of-way jogs in and out a little bit and that, again, is the intent
12 of having the standard width from the center line. And so we've
13 already started looking at the drainage and what our needs are out
14 here. There will be less what we call "impervious surfaces"
15 because we'll be removing larger areas of pavement and some of
16 the building moves would contribute to that as well. So we feel that
17 it's possible that the existing drainage outlets today could handle
18 the same storm water run-off with this proposed design but we're
19 considering some other outlet locations should it be necessary or
20 just beneficial to provide those and one of the areas we're looking
21 at here is to have potentially a detention pond in this area and run it
22 through a culvert under the railroad, across this property to the
23 Dead River. Another option could include crossing the road in this
24 location opposite of Third Avenue, just behind the ice arena and
25 again, having a detention basin in this area on parcel 179 and 180
26 outleting into the Dead River just behind the ice arena here. And
27 one other note – this red line that you may have noticed through
28 here, if I can get it to show up... This red line, it comes around
29 here and then follows the railroad right-of-way through here, that's
30 the historic district as identified through our Environment Bureau.
31 And we have had talks with the utilities so we're already
32 coordinating what options we may need to explore. Right now the
33 consideration is that many of the utilities could be done while this
34 portion of the project is constructed and they're anticipating little
35 conflict. And I'll just add a reminder that if you come up to speak
36 or ask any questions at the end, if you'd like us to identify your
37 parcel and zoom in on it for discussion purposes, we can do that as
38 well. Thank you, Chris.

1 Christopher Waszczuk:

2 Thank you, Trent. One thing that Trent did not mention and I do
3 want to make it clear that there are a number of residential
4 properties and businesses that are impacted. There are 28 full or
5 total acquisitions that are identified. All those buildings that were
6 cross-hatched that are beneath the roadway, those are all needing to
7 be removed in order for the roadway to be constructed and certainly
8 Victoria will talk about that right-of-way process and what that
9 involves in a few minutes. And I also want to mention that the
10 plans presented here this evening are still very much preliminary
11 plans. In discussions earlier during the right-of-way session, I
12 noted to several people basically this is a 30% design. There's still
13 a lot more engineering work that's required in order to get these
14 plans to a point where we can identify exactly what the right-of-
15 way impacts are to those properties that have not been identified as
16 full acquisitions and then also to develop the plans that are suitable
17 for construction and the contracts to be able to construct the project.
18 The details such as drainage, I know Trent mentioned a little bit
19 about drainage but certainly those are conceptual ideas; they will be
20 developed in more detail during the final design where the utility
21 relocations are going to be, how the final grading is going to be
22 done, what retaining walls and all that are going to be impacted.
23 Those all still need to be developed and finalized. And those
24 typically are done following the public hearing, after a positive
25 decision that is made on the public hearing. And also based on your
26 input this evening, there also may be some modifications that are
27 necessary to the plans that we're presenting here this evening. With
28 regard to the project's schedule, to date five public meetings have
29 been held here in the city of Berlin to discuss the project and gather
30 your input. Additionally there were four other meetings that
31 involved the city staff, federal Highway Bureau, Division of
32 Historic Resources to review and resolve the historic issues that
33 surrounded the project. Tonight's public hearing which involves
34 the design layout and right-of-way hearing and the NEPA public
35 hearing which is scheduled for August 27th mark a significant
36 milestone in the project where the project transitions from the
37 preliminary design phase to a more detailed final design and right-
38 of-way procurement phase. Following both hearings, a verbatim
39 transcript will be prepared and will include all the testimony raised
40 here at this evening's public hearing and on the evening of the 27th
and all the items and written statements which are received during

1 the comment period which will be in effect until September 11th.
2 The Department will study all the issues that are raised and make
3 recommendations on how they should be addressed. These
4 recommendations will be presented to the Hearing Commission at a
5 future public meeting. The Hearing Commission will then make a
6 decision on the need, layout or any other specific issue, concern or
7 project that they feel appropriate. If there is a positive decision by
8 the Commission and federal Highway finding of no significant
9 impact on the project then the final design and right-of-way process
10 for the project will begin. With all the necessary approvals, permits
11 and right-of-way procured, the project is targeted to advertise for
12 bids in early of 2012 with construction envisioned to begin shortly
13 thereafter. Most likely the project will require two construction
14 seasons to complete with construction completion anticipated in the
15 fall of 2013. As the project is located within the City's urban
16 compact, the project falls within the jurisdiction of the City. A
17 municipal agreement has been executed with the department heads
18 being designated as the City's exclusive agents to design the layout,
19 procure the right-of-way and let and oversee the construction
20 contract. Earmarked federal funding has been dedicated to the
21 project with \$5.6 million in federal funds that require 20% City
22 matching funds. The remaining cost of the project will be funded
23 with programmatic federal funding and again, 20% City matching
24 funds. Alternative 4E is estimated to cost a total of \$10.1 million
25 which includes the engineering, the right-of-way and construction
26 costs. The City of Berlin funds are anticipated or estimated to be a
27 little over \$2 million. Since the project involves work outside the
28 right-of-way and involves a number of property acquisitions, I'd
29 like to ask Victoria Chase right now to talk about the right-of-way
30 process. Victoria?

31 Victoria Chase:

32 Thank you, Chris, members of the Commission, Ladies and
33 Gentlemen. Before I go into the right-of-way procedures for the
34 project there are a couple of items I'd like to mention. First, I'd like
35 to point out, as Chairman Ashley did as well, that if anybody wants
36 to put in any additional testimony as a result of the hearing this
37 evening, they can address the material to Chairman Ashley, c/o
38 William Cass and mail it to the address shown on the hearing
39 handout. You said the closing for the commentary is September
11th. Okay. So before that date. And it will become part of the

1 official record. These maps are available on the table in the back of
2 the room as you came in the door. Anything submitted during that
3 time will receive equal consideration to anything presented tonight.
4 We also have with us tonight, I have lots of stuff for you, a booklet
5 titled "Your land and New Hampshire highways," which describes
6 the right-of-way procedures in brief form and also a relocation
7 booklet, "Public Projects and Your Property." Both of these are
8 available on the table and they'll be helpful for the property owners
9 that are impacted by the project. Chris touched on what will
10 happen but if after reviewing the information received at the
11 hearing tonight and during the comment period, Chairman Ashley
12 and their Commission find necessity for the layout, several things
13 will happen. With the approval to proceed with the design of the
14 project, appraisals will be prepared for each of the properties
15 affected by the proposed construction that Trent and Chris have
16 described tonight. The appraisals will determine the fair market
17 value of the property rights needed for the new construction. Each
18 appraisal is reviewed separately to see that all are accurate and have
19 taken into account all applicable approaches to value. Once the
20 review is complete, the Department's appraisals are given to the
21 Commission to begin discussions with the property owners
22 regarding the acquisition. The value in the appraisal will be the
23 offer of compensation used by the Commission. The Commission
24 will contact each property owner and discuss each acquisition
25 separately. We encourage owners at that time to ask any questions
26 and bring up concerns that they feel should be considered. If the
27 property owner is satisfied with the offer, deeds are prepared and
28 ownership is transferred to the State. If the owner is not satisfied
29 with the figures that the Commission offers, they can appeal to the
30 New Hampshire Board of Tax and Land Appeals and argue for
31 additional compensation there. It's important you understand that
32 can be done with or without an attorney. It's also important you
33 understand either party can appeal the Board's decision to the
34 Superior Court if they're not satisfied. Any time after this hearing
35 or before design approval all information in support of the hearing
36 is available at the Department's headquarters in Concord for your
37 inspection and copying. That's all I have, Chris. Thank you.

38 Christopher Waszczuk: Thank you, Victoria. As part of the Departmental projects
39 involving construction, the Department must consider and

1 document the environmental impacts anticipated as a result of the
2 project. At this time I'd like to have Marc Laurin from the
3 Environmental Bureau provide a summary of the environmental
4 assessment completed for the project. Marc?

5 Marc Laurin:

6 Thank you, Chris. Good evening, Commissioners, ladies and
7 gentlemen. The National Environmental Policy Act, also known as
8 NEPA, which was signed into law on January 1st, 1970, establishes
9 a national environmental policy and goals for the protection,
10 maintenance and enforcement of the environment and it provides a
11 process for implementing these goals within the federal agencies.
12 When federal funding is used federal agencies, in this case the
13 Federal Highway Administration needs to provide documentation
14 assessing the impacts of and the alternatives to the federal action
15 and evaluate their effects on natural and manmade environments.
16 Pursuant to the Act, the New Hampshire Department of
17 Transportation has evaluated the potential impacts the project will
18 have on social, economic and environmental issues. Coordination
19 has been established and input has been received from federal and
20 state agencies including US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and
21 Wildlife Service, New Hampshire Wetlands Bureau, New
22 Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, New Hampshire
23 Natural Heritage Inventory Bureau and New Hampshire Division of
24 Historical Resources. In addition, input has been received from the
25 City and the regional officials and the general public. The
26 information gathered was evaluated and documented in the Draft
27 Environmental Assessment, Section 4(f) Evaluation. This
28 document has been made available to federal and state agencies, to
29 the city and regional officials and is available to the general public.
30 Prior to approval of the final Environmental Assessment Section 4F
31 Evaluation document, the Federal Highway Administration will
32 take into consideration all comments received on this document,
33 during the hearing, the NEPA continuation hearing, and in the
34 comment period following the hearing. The following major issues
35 and resources were included and evaluated in the document.
36 Evaluation of the air quality of the area showed that the project will
37 not cause a violation to the National Ambient Air Quality Act.
38 Noise levels are such that noise abatement measures are not
39 required. The evaluation of the right-of-way issues, such as
acquisition of property, displacements, land use impacts to

1 businesses, neighborhoods, community service and recreation
2 opportunities have shown that the project will provide for an
3 increase in cohesiveness of the neighborhood, reduction of through
4 truck traffic through a neighborhood, and increase in safety to
5 pedestrians and bicyclists. The transportation pattern of the
6 passenger and through truck traffic will improve through the city.
7 No disproportional impacts to minorities, elderly or disadvantaged
8 group would result from the project in compliance with the 1994
9 Presidential Executive Order on Environmental Justice. The
10 presence of hazardous materials and petroleum related
11 contamination within the project limits were identified and will be
12 further quantified prior to construction. The project is located
13 within the Berlin Heights addition historic district. The New
14 Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and the Federal
15 Highway in consultation with the DOT have determined that the
16 district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic
17 Places. The project has been determined to have an adverse effect
18 on this district and mitigation will be required. After the hearing
19 and prior to the issuance of the final environmental document, a
20 memorandum of agreement will be signed that will establish the
21 mitigation requirements as agreed to by the New Hampshire
22 Division of Historical Resources and the Federal Highway
23 Administration and this will be with the coordination with the DOT
24 and the City of Berlin. The potential presence of archeological
25 resources in sensitive archeological areas was assessed and further
26 documentation will occur prior to construction. Wetland impacts
27 associated with the potential management of storm water were
28 evaluated and if deemed necessary, impacts to the Dead River
29 would most likely be minor and probably temporary in nature.
30 Temporary increases in noise and dust will occur during
31 construction. A more detailed review of the document, as Chris
32 mentioned, will be provided at the continuation hearing to be held
33 on August 27th at the Berlin City Hall. The comments received
34 from these public hearings and during the comment period are an
35 integral component of the NEPA process and the Federal approval
36 of the proposed project. I have a copy of the Draft Environmental
37 Assessment available for your review tonight. The document can
38 also be accessed at the DOT and the City websites. The DOT
39 website is www.nhdot.com. The City's is www.berlinnh.gov and a
40 copy has also been sent to the public library. You can see me after

1 the hearing if you'd like a copy of the document. I could provide
2 you with that or a CD if you're into the electronic version. This
3 concludes my presentation. Thank you.

4 Christopher Waszczuk: Thank you, Marc. And all are welcome to attend the NEPA public
5 hearing in two weeks. And this concludes the Department's
6 presentation. I'd like to thank everyone that has joined us here this
7 evening for their attentiveness and patience. I know we had a lot of
8 information that we presented fairly quickly. So certainly we look
9 forward to your comments. And at this time I'd also like to thank
10 the City staff, particularly Pamela Laflamme who is the City
11 Planner and Pat MacQueen, the City Manager for all their time and
12 effort that they put into the project and helping formulate the
13 concept that we've presented this evening. At this point I'd like to
14 formally request that Madam Chair and Layout Commission find
15 occasion for the necessity for the layout of the project as presented
16 this evening. Thank you for your consideration and your attention.

17 Chairperson Ashley: Thank you, Chris. Before I open the hearing for comments,
18 concerns or questions I would like to know if we have any elected
19 officials with us this evening that would like to be heard. Yes, sir.

20 David Bertrand: Thank you. My name is David Bertrand and I'm the mayor of the
21 City of Berlin. I welcome the Commissioners here. Thank you for
22 undertaking this task. Thank you for the New Hampshire
23 Department of Transportation staff and Berlin city staff for all the
24 work that's gone into this. I think we're getting to the point now
25 where I think those of us that have been proponents of this
26 alternative are starting to see that hopefully this is going to come to
27 fruition and there's no question that we're at the stage right now
28 where those individuals who are going to be impacted, those
29 property owners are either... they're going to speak tonight and
30 they're going to express their anxiety or I know there are some
31 property owners here that are very much in favor of this proposal.
32 And my plea here is to ask the Commission to not lose sight of the
33 big picture here of everything that's been going on with this. This
34 proposed project has been being discussed and studied and
35 meetings have been held since the seventies. Okay? And this is
36 something that, you know, now the city has... since the seventies
37 the city has gone through a transformation. We're no longer a pulp
38 and paper making city. That has virtually gone by the wayside. We

1 still have a paper mill in Gorham and we hope it's going to be there
2 for a long time but things are changing in the city and this is an
3 aspect of it that we think can only help to make our city more
4 attractive and more beneficial for people that are trying to get to and
5 get through our city. As Chris mentioned early on, the goals of this
6 project is to increase the safety and the efficiency of getting traffic
7 into and through the city of Berlin. There's no question that
8 Alternative 4E will increase the safety by getting the major 110
9 traffic out of the neighborhoods that it currently traverses through.
10 And it will also help for the efficiency of those businesses and
11 individuals who are trying to access the city of Berlin. So I think
12 that in the big picture, this is what the city of Berlin is in need of.
13 There are some people that have expressed the opinion to me that
14 it's not as critical anymore because we no longer have a pulp mill in
15 the city of Berlin and there's no more... there's been a reduction in
16 truck traffic. I just want to remind everybody that we have
17 currently before us two proposals for bio-mass plants within the city
18 limits and it's my opinion that at least one of those will come to
19 fruition and with that we're going to see an increase in truck traffic
20 once again in the city because one or both of the bio-mass plants are
21 going to need to have numerous trucks coming in to bring the wood
22 to those plants on a daily basis. So I think that's an important fact
23 to consider. So, I think again... I would just implore the
24 Commission and everybody here to keep in mind the big picture
25 that this is something for the long range goals of Berlin. It's going
26 to be a benefit and again, it's been talked about since the seventies
27 and I think we're this close, I definitely want to see it move
28 forward. Thank you.

29 Chairperson Ashley:

Thank you, Mayor. Do we have any other elected officials? I
30 didn't miss a hand, did I? Do we have any city officials that would
31 like to be heard at this time? Yes? As you're all sitting there
32 getting ready I would remind you that when you come to the
33 microphone, please pronounce your name clearly. We are on tape.

34 Patrick MacQueen:

My name is Patrick MacQueen. I'm the City Manager. I certainly
35 would echo everything that Mayor Bertrand said and indicate that
36 this has certainly been going on since I've been here, for about six
37 years. There have been a number of public hearings. It hasn't
38 always been that this has been the chosen route but in my mind it's

1 the only route that makes any sense whatsoever. The alternatives
2 that have been looked at would bring truck traffic where it's always
3 been, right through the middle of what is a perfectly good
4 neighborhood, doing the same thing it's always done through a
5 perfectly good neighborhood. Ruin the neighborhood. You can't
6 put truck traffic through a neighborhood and expect it to remain a
7 viable neighborhood. This alternative, which takes the traffic not
8 perfectly, but at least extends it alongside the neighborhood rather
9 than through the neighborhood makes so much more sense from
10 every aspect – from a safety aspect, from a traffic aspect, from a
11 historical aspect, from a cultural aspect. It just makes by far the
12 most sense. And the staff has supported it. The Planning Board has
13 supported it. And the City Council has supported it. And I
14 certainly support it. Thank you.

15 Chairperson Ashley:

Thank you. I'll now open the meeting to anyone desiring to be
16 heard and again I would ask you please raise your hand. I will
17 recognize you as soon as I see it. I'll take them in the order that I
18 see your hands. Come to the microphone and give your name and
19 address. Make your statement and we'll move on to the next one.
20 And speak clearly. Having said that, do I see a hand? Immediately,
21 yes, sir. You were the first one. That makes you number two, sir.

22 Paul Cusson:

23 Good evening and thank you for being here once again. My name
24 is Paul Cusson. I live at 155 Summer Street in Berlin here. I'm not
25 a property owner along the 4E route but I do support whole
26 heartedly the 4E route. It's been discussed, as Mayor Bertrand was
27 saying, for the last thirty-four years. I remember as a little kid my
28 uncle was talking about that. He was in construction. It's coming
29 to fruition and it's pretty exciting. Our city is embarked upon I
30 guess an economic diversification plan here and part of it is
31 tourism. Jericho Lake State Park is now a state park and we're
32 developing that as an off-road trail system possibly with a
33 campground right on Route 110. Access from Route 16 up to
34 Route 110. Using 4E is nice and clean. It's going to be easy.
35 Notre Dame Arena is right on the route. And other things will be
36 easy to find. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't go with 4E
37 whatsoever. It's just the right way to do it. I've got two concerns.
38 One of them is where the new route will be turning onto Hillside
Avenue. There will be a railroad crossing there. I happen to drive a

1 school bus on a part-time basis and I'm hoping that there's going to
2 be some kind of safety factored in to allow us to make the turn
3 where a school bus is forty feet long, get off the main road facing
4 the track and still have enough room to stop without having our tail
5 end out on the highway. That's just going from south to north,
6 turning right onto Hillside. Like I said, the busses are about forty
7 feet long and to be able to make that turn waiting for a train, it'd be
8 nice if we either had a special lane for that or enough of a length to
9 turn and stop and be out of the traffic. The other concern I have is
10 actually more of a question. It's the curve where Green Street will
11 meet First Avenue... there's six properties here that are still going
12 to be here, they're not going to be acquired through eminent
13 domain. They're going to be re-fronting the street. I'm wondering
14 what the elevation, the final elevation of the road is going to be
15 there just to get a feel for whether or not these buildings are going
16 to be below grade or if they're going to be above the final grade.

17 Christopher Waszczuk: Two questions. Trent, the first question is school busses. Will they
18 have enough room to stack on Hillside before turning? And the
19 second question is the elevation difference.

20 Trent Zanes: Yes. They will have room to sit before the tracks, at least one bus.
21 And far as the elevation goes in that area on First Avenue, it's going
22 to be pretty much the same as it today, that in front of the houses
23 it's going to drop down a little bit as the curve starts to come up to
24 First Avenue but when the curve reaches First Avenue it's going to
25 be the same elevation that it's at today.

26 Paul Cusson: Thank you very much. And I also want to thank all of you for the
27 amount of work and actually the time you spent listening to our
28 concerns and our requests and actually coming up with the same
29 conclusion that we have for years. Thank you very much.

30 Chairperson Ashley: Did you get Paul's last name? Would you spell it? Is it Toussaint?
31 No?

32 Paul Cusson: Wow. That's a good one. Cusson.

33 Chairperson Ashley: Now you know how much French I'm good in. So you have it
34 correctly? Great. And I've already acknowledge this next speaker.
35 Yes, sir.

1 Wayne Andrews: Good evening. My name is Wayne Andrews. I live at 133 Ash
2 Street in Nashua, New Hampshire. I own investment property on
3 First Ave. We purchased the property about twenty-four years ago
4 so I've probably been paying taxes here in Berlin more than a lot of
5 these people have. But the property that I have, that we have, is at
6 715-717 First Ave which I think it's #18 on the block up there.
7 And my concern is the building is a 3-unit, 3 bedrooms each unit
8 and it's a family oriented building. I've invested a lot of money in
9 that building and it's mainly for young people and young children.
10 My concern is the traffic with the trucks going by there twenty-four
11 hours a day, especially if they build this other Bio-Tech mill or
12 whatever, you know, with the trucks delivering twenty-four hours a
13 day. What kind of impact is it for the safety of the children? When
14 we purchased that building it was on a dead-end street, First Ave.,
15 and Roderick Street was a dead-end. And the kids play in the street
16 quite often. And my concern again, is you know, the safety of the
17 people living there. How will I rent the building out? And would
18 any of you want to buy the building after that road is through? That
19 was my 401-K. So, that's my concern, you know. The project
20 itself I think is a good project. You know, it definitely needs an
21 updating. The way it's going through now, as I think one of the city
22 persons here said, that it's impacting the street areas where it's
23 going through now and it's a safety hazard in those areas. Well, in
24 my opinion, it's a safety hazard to my building in this area. My
25 concern is that. So if it's a big safety hazard, acquire my building
26 along with the others. Thank you.

27 Chairperson Ashley: Thank you. Do I have another hand? Someone wishes to speak?

28 Lionel Caron: My name is Lionel Caron and I live at 855 Second Avenue. Right
29 dab smack in the middle of the road. Where the road is going, my
30 wife was born in that house 79 years ago. We hate like the dickens
31 to see it go but we also realize that progress has to be made
32 somewhere and by doing that you've got to... some people have to
33 make sacrifices here and there so things can keep on rolling. Every
34 time that we've had a meeting I've gotten up and gave my support
35 to this Route 110 on 4E because that is the most logical one to take.
36 It's the safest one. It cost a couple bucks more but it will be a hell
37 of a lot better off on the long run. My wife doesn't like to see it go,
38 to tell you the truth. I don't either. But like we say, we've got to do

1 it. My wife's family was nine kids raised in that house. So they've
2 really got some ties, you might say in that building. Well, I guess
3 that's it. I'm for the project and everybody I talk to is 99% for it.
4 One thing I've got to say, too, I got a phone call yesterday from
5 Florida, from Betty Langlais. She owns the property right next to
6 me. Her father owned it and he died a couple years ago and she has
7 inherited it. She used to work out of Bedford and now she's moved
8 to Florida. She called me up yesterday, she wanted to know what's
9 going on and she told me that she definitely goes along with the fact
10 that 4E is the route to take. I've got some paperwork in my
11 briefcase now and tomorrow when she calls me up I'm going to get
12 her address and I'm going to mail her the papers and have her sign
13 and send to the Department of Transportation so you get her
14 positive vote on there. So that's another one that's in favor of it.
15 Thank you.

16 Chairperson Ashley: Thank you.

17 Richard Huot: My name is Richard Huot. I live at 671 Blais Street. That's H-u-o-
18 t. B-l-a-i-s. I own a property at 145 Green Street. I was born and
19 brought up on Green Street. I know the area very well. I've lived
20 here all my life. I agree whole heartedly with Alternative 4E. I was
21 chair of the committee, the Planning Board Committee in the 1990s
22 and, you know, we recognized at that time that safety was an issue
23 not only for vehicular traffic but mostly for pedestrian traffic and
24 especially those of our children who are walking to school. At the
25 time Bartlett School was on the one side and then junior high and
26 Hillside Elementary were on the other side. And to walk around all
27 of these corners, tight corners where trucks were, the truck tires
28 were coming up actually onto the sidewalk. It was an accident
29 waiting to happen. We were very, very fortunate that we had very
30 few of those accidents. And although this is a clear route through
31 town to get out to Jericho, people have to remember that it's not a
32 throughway. It's not going to be a 45 mile an hour street. This is
33 going to be a street in the city of Berlin with parking on both sides
34 and twenty-five mile an hour traffic. So this is not going to be a
35 throughway. It's going to be a much easier, safer way to get
36 through town. With the development of Jericho Road and the new
37 state park, the Jericho Mountain State Park, I believe that the traffic
38 going off to the west side of the city from Route 16 is going to

1 increase dramatically in the next few years and I think this will
2 greatly enhance it. So I'm very, very happy with this choice and
3 I'm very happy that you're all here tonight to listen to us. Thank
4 you.

5 Chairperson Ashley: Yes.

6 Trent Zanes: Just to clarify the design, I don't believe there's parking, there's
7 provisions for parking along both sides of this route. I just wanted
8 to make that clear. We are proposing 12-foot wide travel lanes and
9 four-foot shoulders but there are no provisions along this route for
10 additional parking along the side of the road. So I just wanted to
11 make that clear so nobody misunderstands that.

12 Chairperson Ashley: Thank you. Are there any hands that I can't see beyond...? Yes.
13 Here we go. Come forward. Thank you.

14 Marcel Arseneau: My name is Marcel Arseneau. That's A-r-s-e-n-e-a-u.

15 Chairperson Ashley: That one I can spell.

16 Marcel Arseneau: Okay. I reside in Milan now. I've been there for six years. I'm a
17 co-owner of two buildings on Green Street - actually the first two
18 buildings next to the underpass. The first one that's being removed
19 and the little one that sits on the hill that on the plans is not being
20 removed. I'm in favor of the project. I know how it is to live on a
21 truck route. I lived on First Avenue all my life, right on the truck
22 route until they changed it. The only thing I would like to see,
23 because there might be a problem as far as for driveway and you
24 said there was going to be no parking - I would also like to see the
25 other building removed since it's sort of going to be like on an
26 island and I don't think it would be very sellable. I'm a co-owner.
27 Actually there's three owners involved in those two buildings. It's
28 two buildings and well actually it's two sheds and a garage. And
29 that actually would be the only one facing the route itself in that
30 area there until you go basically around the corner. And that's all I
31 have to say. Thank you.

32 Chairperson Ashley: Thank you.

33 Trent Zanes: We'll take it under advisement. Thank you.

34 Chairperson Ashley: Yes, sir?

1 Ronald Young:

2 Hi. My name is Ronald Young and I live at 738 First Avenue. I've
3 only had my house two and a half years. My parents, my mom was
4 from Berlin, my father was from Dummer. Because of job issues
5 and raising a family they moved down when I was born to the
6 Manchester area. So I was born and raised in the southern part of
7 the State. Spent a lot of time up here vacationing and all of this and
8 then my parents moved back after us kids were all grown and gone.
9 And I ended up transferring my job up here because of health issues
10 with my mother and stuff and decided to come up this way until
11 things smoothed out. Well then I decided to buy a house and settle
12 here. You know, so after some unexpected family issues and stuff I
13 ended up acquiring the property on First Ave. My goal when I
14 bought that house was my retirement home. Three days after
15 closing I started ripping out walls, ripping out carpets, I'm going to
16 paint, I'm going to remodel and I've been working at it. You know,
17 and I wanted to fix this house up. It was an older couple that owned
18 it. He had died; she had been there. She was 93. The house
19 needed a lot of work, you know. And my concern was when I
20 bought it, I knew nothing about this proposal. And then after I
21 bought the house and started re-doing it, everybody is talking about
22 these meetings and the truck route and I started looking into it and I
23 got a hold of a map of 4E one day and I thought I was going to drop
24 dead! And I said this truck route's going right through my living
25 room! But I, growing up in Manchester as a young child, saw that
26 city as nothing but textile mills up and down the river and that is
27 what that city was built on, you know. And I saw that city, one by
28 one, lose its textile mills. And I saw all the industry going overseas
29 and I kept saying to myself, when I grow up, where am I going to
30 work? What am I going to do? You know and I go down and visit
31 Manchester now and the houses that were worth \$59,000 back then
32 are worth \$359,000 today. You know, and I've seen the city grow
33 and there are jobs and there is industry and the airport. And I've
34 seen a lot of things come into play. And I'm getting closer to 50
35 years old and in 50 years I haven't seen a whole lot of
36 improvements around here. And now that the mill is gone, you
37 know, it's even one more little push of the knife, you know? It's
38 like how much further is it going to go? Is the city going to fold? I
39 don't think so. But I think we need to open our minds a little bit to
40 the fact that the city can grow if we allow it to. You know, I
happen to have almost seven years with Wal-Mart and I know how

1 a lot of people hate change. And you know, I got to live through
2 that when we built a new super center. A lot of people were all for
3 it and a lot of people were against it. You know, and we're
4 struggling right now because Shaw's closed down and we're trying
5 to be the only grocery store in town. It's not easy but it's part of
6 growth. I don't want to lose my house but I'm willing to for the
7 safety of the Route 4E. In retrospect, looking at Route 2, that's not
8 even an alternative. I spoke at a previous meeting. I used to be a
9 truck driver. I know what it's like to try to stop a truck on a dime.
10 You get a ball rolling out in the street, there's going to be a child
11 behind it. Or your dog gets loose from his leash. Or your
12 grandmother decides to cross the street. Her eyesight is failing.
13 She thinks she's got enough time to make it. You know, anything
14 can happen. Yeah, it's going to cost a little more money. It's going
15 to inconvenience a lot of people. No matter what route they do or
16 where they put it, somebody is going to be inconvenienced. But I
17 personally... I love to go to Lancaster. I love the little town of
18 Lancaster and when I leave town I go down 16 and over Route 2
19 because every time I go anywhere near Wight Street now I want to
20 literally bomb it. It is disgusting. It is a rough road. Going on
21 Second Ave is tearing up my car. You know, and I've seen the
22 truck driver and right now I'm located between the truck route and
23 the railroad tracks. That is not fun because if my windows are open
24 in the summertime, not only do I hear the trucks all night long but I
25 hear the train at 4 a.m. So, you know, you're going to get it no
26 matter what. Inconvenience is something we need to all kind of
27 look at. It's not going to be a perfect world for everybody. And we
28 all have different circumstances, you know. For me, I don't really
29 want to relocate but I'm willing to. I guess basically what I'm
30 saying is we just need to be able to move forward, stay open-
31 minded and look at the big picture. And I would like to see Berlin
32 grow. I would like to see some industry and things happening out
33 on 110. And in all these years all I've seen is all the factories and
34 stuff out on 110 closing down because nobody could get to them,
35 nobody wanted to buy the property and nobody wanted to put a
36 business out there. You know, and there needs to be that direct
37 route over into Vermont. We can take Route 16 down into 2 and go
38 into Maine. Can we easily go over into Vermont from here? No.
39 No. Because getting through the city of Berlin and all these streets
40 with a tractor trailer is just impossible. And in the winter with the

1 snow bank, it's a nightmare. The snow banks are higher than the
2 cars. You can't see. Trucks are having to back up on city streets.
3 They don't know what's behind them. It is a safety factor. And
4 even though it's going to mean me moving and the inconvenience
5 and finding another house and all of this, life goes on. Thank you.

6 Chairperson Ashley: Thank you. Do I see anymore hands? Any other hands? Thank
7 you. Come forward, please.

8 Barry Kelley: Hello. My name is Barry Kelley. Long French name – can you
9 spell that one?

10 Chairperson Ashley: And Barry would be B-a-r-r-y?

11 Barry Kelley: Right. K-e-l-l-e-y.

12 Chairperson Ashley: E-y.

13 Barry Kelley: And my family has been paying taxes in Berlin consistently since
14 1888. And I was born and brought up in Berlin and spent my entire
15 life about four blocks up from on Hillside Avenue from the project.
16 I also own a saw mill here and we have fifteen trucks that use the
17 area - tractor trailers, low-beds as well as local delivery trucks. So
18 we've been over those neighborhoods all my life. And we
19 appreciate the State helping us out. We've needed this
20 improvement to 110 for years and years. Anyone who comes
21 through Berlin knows how difficult it is to get up 110. With the
22 growth of the ATV park this will be a great boon to that area as
23 well which goes along with the State's investment in that park. The
24 unfortunate thing about democracy is that when choices are made
25 there's always the greatest good for the greatest number and there
26 are a few people who feel they're not getting a fair shake. I feel bad
27 for those people who are impacted but in general, for the whole
28 city, this is the best alignment and the best choice. Marcel
29 Arseneau mentioned that he'd be all by himself on that corner but
30 one good thing is he'll get open space around the building and he
31 won't have any more traffic than he has now and it may be a much
32 nicer lawn and green space around the house. So with some of the
33 problems there may be some good things, too. I just want to
34 convey my support of 4E and say it's a very good investment for
35 the State and it helps the whole city improve itself and move
36 forward. Thank you.

1 Chairman Ashley:

2 Thank you. Any other hands I've missed anywhere? Anyone still
3 wish to speak? Then I will remind you if you want to write some
4 comments to take one of the papers at the back and follow the
5 instructions where it should be mailed to my attention, this
6 Commission. Wherefore, being no indication of anyone remaining
7 who desires to be heard I want to thank you all so much for coming
8 tonight and being heard. So I would declare that this hearing is
9 adjourned. Thank you all.

1 STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

2 MERRIMACK, SS.

3

4 I, Lee A. Currier, do hereby certify that I transcribed from a digital recording the
5 foregoing pages and that the same is a true, full and correct transcript of all of the testimony at
6 the hearing, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

7

8 I further certify that I am neither attorney nor counsel for, nor related to or employed by
9 any of the parties to the action in which this hearing was taken and further that I am not a
10 relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed in this case, nor am I financially
11 interested in this action.

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Lee A. Currier

Lee A. Currier/ Notary Public