

3.0: Study Purpose and Need

The Study Purpose and Need Statement was developed in collaboration between MaineDOT, NH DOT, FHWA, Steering and Stakeholder Committee members, Consulting Parties, other interested parties, and the general public.

The following three paragraphs provide definitions of “Study Purpose”, Study Need”, and “Study Goals”.

The Study Purpose was framed around a positive outcome. It was focused on the condition of the transportation system. The purpose statement was broad enough to ensure multi-modal solutions were not dismissed prematurely.

The Study Need established evidence that a transportation problem exists, or would exist if issues are not addressed; was factual and results based; and supported the assertions made in the purpose statement.

Study Goals included other broader elements such as maintaining access to downtowns, maintaining or improving economic growth and stability, and conserving the aesthetic and environmental quality of the river and its setting. Goals sought to balance environmental and transportation values.

The following is the Final Study Purpose and Need Statement for the Maine-New Hampshire Connections Study⁴ as agreed to by all participants:

The Memorial and Sarah Mildred Long Bridges provide two of three crossings of the Piscataqua River. The effective operation of the two bridges, which are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, impacts a multi-modal transportation system that serves multiple land- and water-based transportation modes as well as trade and commerce, tourism, community life and the historic and aesthetic character of Kittery and Portsmouth. The bridges have been determined to be structurally deficient by both New Hampshire and Maine Departments of Transportation. The continued operation of the existing bridges requires increasing annual maintenance costs.

⁴ Study Purpose and Need Statement finalized September 17, 2009

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Maine-New Hampshire Connections Study is to identify and evaluate feasible long-term (2035) transportation strategies that facilitate the safe, secure and effective multi-modal movement of people and goods across and upon the Piscataqua River between Kittery, Maine and Portsmouth, New Hampshire and which support the region's economic, cultural, historic, archeological and natural resources objectives and its community quality of life.

STATEMENT OF NEED: (Statement of Transportation Deficiencies)

The Need for the Study is based on present and future transportation deficiencies, specifically:

- 1. Structural deficiencies exist that threaten accessibility and mobility to the region and require load postings on the Memorial Bridge and the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge,*
- 2. Decreased reliability of the lift spans and increasing maintenance needs of the Memorial and Sarah Mildred Long Bridges are causing unnecessary delays to marine and land transportation, including response times of emergency vehicles,*
- 3. Inadequate or outdated design features of these two bridges potentially adversely affect marine and land transportation safety,*
- 4. Multi-modal (pedestrian, bicycle, rail, maritime traffic, vehicular) opportunity is limited by inadequate or outdated facilities.*

GOALS:

In order to achieve the stated Purpose and Need, the Study would strive to achieve the following goals:

- a. Improve local and regional economic growth and stability, tourism and recreational opportunities.*
- b. Maintain or improve access to Portsmouth and Kittery downtowns and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.*
- c. Improve local connections to regional transportation modes, for example the Portsmouth International Airport at Pease.*
- d. Minimize long-term costs for the regional transportation system.*
- e. Improve bicycle and pedestrian access across the Piscataqua River.*
- f. Reduce operational and maintenance costs (currently \$1.1+ M per year per bridge).*
- g. Avoid or minimize detrimental impacts to the historic significance and integrity of the Kittery-Portsmouth area.*
- h. Conserve the aesthetic setting of the Piscataqua River.*
- i. Conserve the environmental quality of the Piscataqua River.*
- j. Avoid or minimize detrimental impacts to residential neighborhoods in Kittery, Portsmouth and neighboring areas.*
- k. Reduce or maintain emissions of pollutants, including greenhouse gases.*

- l. Comply with applicable federal and state regulations, for example Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act⁵.*
- m. Maintain or improve emergency evacuation efficiency across the Piscataqua River.*
- n. Do not preclude future transportation opportunities, for example, providing for passenger rail service or bus service across the Piscataqua River.*

The needs and goals identified above are labeled alphabetically and numerically for reference to the Alternatives Evaluation Matrix (Figure 8-18) found in Chapter 8 of the Report.

⁵ Compliance with applicable federal and state regulations are not goals, but requirements of the NEPA, Section 106 and Section 4(f) processes. However, the language has not been modified to preserve the final Purpose and Need statement as approved.