

# Project Description and *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* Purpose



## Project Description

- Reconstruction and widening of I-93 from MA State line in Salem to I-293 in Manchester, a distance of 19.8 miles.
- Widening from three-lanes in each direction to four-lanes in each direction between Stateline and Exit 1.
- Widening from two-lanes in each direction to four-lanes in each direction between Exit 1 and I-293.
- Reconstruction of five existing interchanges and cross roads, including the replacement of deficient bridges.
- Public transportation and transportation demand management enhancements, including new park-and-ride lots at Exits 2, 3 and 5, improvements to the existing park-and-ride lot at Exit 4, and expanded commuter bus service.

## Purpose and Need for the Project

- The purpose of the I-93 Improvements project is to improve transportation efficiency and reduce safety problems along the corridor. The existing facility currently exhibits a number of transportation deficiencies, including:

- **Severe peak period congestion that interferes with the movement of people and goods.** The I-93 corridor has been congested for many years, and the congestion is projected to get worse with additional population and employment growth in southern New Hampshire. If nothing is done by 2030, nearly the entire corridor is expected to operate at level of service E or F northbound in the PM peak period. Just between 1997 and 2005, Average Daily Traffic volumes between Exit 3 and Exit 4 have increased by 11,000 vehicles per day or 18 percent.

- **Hazardous conditions resulting from congestion and geometric deficiencies** There were 1,612 crashes on the I-93 corridor between 2000 and 2005. The crash rate for the corridor as a whole has increased in recent years from an average of 0.53 annual crashes per million vehicle miles traveled (MVMT) between 2000 and 2005, to 0.69 annual crashes per MVMT in 2006 and 0.82 annual crashes per MVMT in 2007. Geometric deficiencies include less than desirable ramp grades, acceleration and deceleration lanes with less than desirable lengths, and mainline grades greater than the desirable maximum grades at several locations along the corridor.

- **Deteriorating infrastructure conditions.** This facility was constructed in the 1960's and many parts are reaching the end of their useful life. In 2006 there were 18 red-listed bridges in the I-93 project corridor. Another bridge was added to the list in 2009. Twelve of the red-listed bridges were ranked in the top twenty of the state's priorities for replacement. Pavement along many sections of the corridor is showing signs of distress. As traffic continues to grow and the infrastructure continue to age, the existing deficiencies will become more problematic.

I-93 Level of Service

Segment	1997 (2004 FEIS Base Year)	2005 (SEIS Base Year)	2020 No Build <sup>1</sup>	2030 No Build <sup>1</sup>
MA. Line to Exit 1	E	E	F	F
Exit 1 to Exit 2	E	F	F	F
Exit 2 to Exit 3	E	F	F	F
Exit 3 to Exit 4	D	E	E	F
Exit 4 to Exit 4A*	D	E	D	E
Exit 4 A to Exit 5	-	-	F	F
North of Exit 5	D	E	E	F

<sup>1</sup>Based on Scenario 2 population and employment (official state projections).

\*Exit 4A is a separate future project included in the No Build condition. It does not currently exist in the 2005 baseline condition.

## Purpose of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS)

- The purpose of the DSEIS is to provide additional analysis of traffic and air quality issues required by a August 30, 2007 decision of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire in the case - *Conservation Law Foundation vs. Federal Highway Administration and New Hampshire Department of Transportation*.
- The Court directed NHDOT and FHWA to prepare a focused Supplemental EIS "...that specifically considers how the Delphi Panel's population forecasts affect Defendants' analysis of both the effectiveness of the Four Lane Alternative as a traffic congestion reduction measure and the indirect effects of the additional population predicted by those forecasts on secondary road traffic and air quality issues."
- In addition to addressing the Court Order, the DSEIS also contains a comprehensive reevaluation of 2004 FEIS to provide an up-to-date consideration of the environmental effects of the project.

## DSEIS Analysis Scenarios

- Traffic modeling requires assumptions about future population and employment levels. Two separate sets of population and employment levels were analyzed in the DSEIS-- "Scenario 1" and "Scenario 2."
- Scenario 1 analyzes the effects of the future population and employment levels based on the Delphi Panel estimates. The Delphi Panel was conducted in 2000-2001 and was discussed in the 2004 FEIS. Scenario 1 meets the requirements of Court Order which specifically required a study of the traffic and air quality effects of Delphi Panel population and employment growth estimates.
- The Delphi Panel growth estimates are outdated and unrealistically high, especially in light of trends indicating slower growth than previously expected. Scenario 2 analyzes the effects of the future population and employment based on latest official state population and employment projections. Scenario 2 meets objective of SEIS to provide updated project information based on the latest available information.

