

7.0 SOCIOECONOMICS

7.1 Introduction

Social and economic characteristics of communities are measured through indicators such as population, housing, employment, and wages. Transportation projects may directly impact socioeconomic conditions in communities through property acquisitions that require the relocation of residents or businesses.

This chapter provides a summary of the detailed information in Appendix D: Socioeconomics Written Reevaluation/Technical Report.

7.2 Summary of 2004 FEIS Analysis and Record of Decision Commitments

The 2004 FEIS study area for socioeconomics consisted of the five I-93 project corridor municipalities: Salem, Windham, Derry, Londonderry, and Manchester. The 2004 FEIS presented information on population and housing trends based on U.S. Census data and New Hampshire Office of State Planning reports. The 2004 FEIS presented employment by industry, wages, and unemployment rates using data from the New Hampshire Employment Security, Economic, and Labor Market Information Bureau.

The 2004 FEIS impact analysis identified 21 residential full acquisitions, and 14 business full acquisitions that would require the relocation of residents or businesses. The 2005 Selected Alternative would also require partial property acquisitions totaling 346 acres. These acquisitions would not require the relocation of residents or businesses. The 2004 FEIS concluded that the direct impacts of the 2005 Selected Alternative would not impact local demographics, housing or employment. There would be adequate replacement residential units and commercial sites available in the area. The loss in assessed value associated with the 2005 Selected Alternative property acquisitions would be a very minor portion of the Towns' total assessed value and was expected to be offset over time by new growth and redevelopment.

The people in the households that may potentially be displaced appeared to have the same social and economic characteristics as the rest of the residents in their towns of residency. The race, or ethnicity, of the potentially displaced persons also appeared to be similar to the rest of the residents in their towns. In addition, the 2004 FEIS noted that prior to the acquisition stage, special arrangements would be made to deal with the needs of any disabled or elderly people identified.

7.2.1 Record of Decision Commitments/Mitigation

Properties requiring acquisition are appraised utilizing recognized and accepted appraisal practices and in conformity with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and applicable to New Hampshire State Law. The amount offered for partial acquisitions is the difference between the fair market value of the property before the partial acquisition and its value after the portion needed for the highway has

been acquired. Completed appraisals are carefully reviewed by an independent appraiser to insure that requirements of condemnation law and acceptable appraisal methods are met. The displaced residences will be eligible for relocation benefits, which include:

- Relocation advisory assistance services;
- Payments for moving and relocation costs;
- Replacement housing payments for home owners;
- Residential mortgage interest differential payments and closing costs; and
- Replacement housing payments for tenants

The displaced businesses will be eligible for relocation benefits, which include:

- Fair market value for acquired property;
- Relocation advisory assistance services;
- Payments for actual reasonable moving; and
- Business re-establishment costs.

Should identifying affordable housing for any residents displaced by the 2005 Selected Alternative (owners or renters) within the existing housing stock and assistance programs prove unfeasible, last resort housing will be made available, if necessary, in accordance with Section 206 of the Uniform Act and governing regulations. The right-of-way acquisition process will ensure that the needs of the displaced residents and businesses are adequately addressed fairly and without discrimination.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) will continue to coordinate through the design process with the communities to develop project improvements in keeping with their planning goals for potential redevelopment in impacted interchange areas.

7.3 Methodology

The existing conditions year for the SEIS updated analyses is 2005, the base year of the updated New Hampshire Statewide model (the existing conditions year for the 2004 FEIS was 2000). The socioeconomics update analysis used New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) municipal-level population estimates for 2005 provided to NHDOT in October 2007. These population estimates were also used as inputs in the New Hampshire Statewide model for traffic, air quality, and indirect effects analyses.

For year 2005 employment, data from the New Hampshire Statewide model was used because it accounts for employment at the municipal level. These employment estimates were based on a model update process that utilized New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau employment estimates. The model update process also included extensive coordination with the regional planning commissions to adjust the employment estimates and forecasts based on local knowledge of upcoming developments and conditions at the time of the Statewide model update (see Appendix G: Indirect Effects Reevaluation/Technical Report).

Updated information on housing units by type was obtained from the OEP report *Current Estimates and Trends in New Hampshire's Housing Supply Update: 2006*. Updated average weekly wage and unemployment rate information was based on New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau data for 2005 and 2007.

7.4 Existing Conditions

This section summarizes key trends in population, housing, employment, and wages based on the review of updated data. Detailed tables presenting this information are provided in Appendix D: Socioeconomics Written Reevaluation/Technical Report.

7.4.1 Population

The population data shows that Derry, Londonderry, and Manchester all experienced slower growth rates between 2000 and 2005 than they did between 1990 and 2000. This trend was most dramatic in Derry, which grew by 0.37 percent annually between 2000 and 2005, compared to 1.4 percent between 1990 and 2000. Despite a slower growth rate, the largest absolute population increase between 2000 and 2005 was for Manchester, which added nearly 3,000 people, bringing its population to almost 110,000.

Salem and Windham experienced faster population growth between 2000 and 2005 than they did between 1990 and 2000. Windham is the least populous municipality in the study area, but is also the fastest growing, with an average annual population growth rate of 3.23 percent between 2000 and 2005, up from 1.76 percent between 1990 and 2000. Both Salem and Windham added over 1,800 persons between 2000 and 2005.

7.4.2 Housing

With the exception of Derry, the remaining study area municipalities experienced increased housing unit growth rates between 2000 and 2005 as compared to 1990 to 2000. The housing unit growth rate in Derry slowed slightly from 0.71 percent per year between 1990 and 2000 to 0.68 percent per year between 2000 and 2005. As with population, housing unit growth between 2000 and 2005 was the fastest in Windham (831 units or 3.93 percent per year) and Salem (1,144 units or 2.02 percent per year).

Since 2000, Salem and Windham have experienced an increase in the proportion of multi-family housing units. The proportion of multi-family units increased from 22 percent to 25 percent of all housing units in Salem and from 7 percent to 12 percent in Windham. This trend represents a reversal of the 1990 to 2000 pattern of an increasing proportion of single family units and decreasing proportion of multi-family units in these towns.

Between 2000 and 2005 Derry experienced a less than one percent decrease in the proportion of multi-family units, with a corresponding increase in the proportion of single family units. Londonderry experienced the reverse, with a less than one percent decrease in the proportion of single family units, and a corresponding increase in the proportion of multi-family units. Since 2000, Manchester has not experienced any noteworthy change in housing unit composition.

Consistent with statewide and county trends, none of the study area municipalities experienced substantial change in the proportion of manufactured homes between 2000 and 2005.

7.4.3 Employment

Manchester remains a major employment center, with a total number of jobs in 2005 at over 70,000, greater than the four other study area municipalities combined. Salem has the second largest employment, at 24,714, while Windham has the smallest at 2,531. Notable employment patterns include the concentration of manufacturing jobs in Londonderry (37 percent of employment) and retail in Salem (31 percent of employment). The largest employment category in Windham, Derry, and Manchester is “Other”, which includes agriculture and forestry related employment, non-metallic minerals, self-employed, and unpaid family workers.

Unemployment rates increased in all five study area municipalities between 2000 and 2005; however the unemployment rates have remained lower than 1990 levels. Salem had the highest unemployment rate in 2005 at 5.6 percent, while Londonderry had the lowest at 3.7 percent. Study area unemployment rates were higher than the New Hampshire statewide unemployment rate of 3.6 percent in 2005.

In comparison to 2005, unemployment rates in 2007 have decreased or remained the same. Salem had the highest unemployment rate in 2007 at 5.0 percent, while Londonderry had the lowest at 3.6 percent. Londonderry’s unemployment rate was lower than the New Hampshire statewide unemployment rates, while all other study area unemployment rates were higher than the statewide unemployment rate.

7.4.4 Wages

Considering all types of employment, 2005 average weekly wages were the highest in Manchester (\$834) and the lowest in Derry (\$718). Similarly, 2007 average weekly wages were the highest in Manchester (\$1,369) and the lowest in Derry (\$831). Average weekly wages in Salem, Windham, Derry and Londonderry were below the Rockingham County, Hillsborough County, and New Hampshire averages in 2005 and 2007. Across all of the study area municipalities, the highest paying sectors included manufacturing, wholesale trade, information, finance and insurance, professional and technical services, and management of companies/enterprises. The lowest paying sectors included retail trade, arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services.

7.5 Impacts

As a result of design refinements since the 2004 FEIS, the number of full property acquisitions has changed. The number of residential acquisitions has decreased from the 21 estimated in the 2004 FEIS to 19 based on current right-of-way plans. The number of business relocations has increased from the 14 estimated in the 2004 FEIS to 23 based on current right-of-way plans. These minor changes do not change the conclusion of the 2004 FEIS that the 2005 Selected Alternative would not directly impact local demographics, housing or employment.

Potential indirect effects on local and regional demographics are discussed in Chapter 12: Indirect Effects.

7.6 Mitigation

The mitigation measures for the relocation and compensation of displaced residences and businesses described in the 2004 FEIS and Record of Decision, including compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, remain valid (See Section 7.2.1).

7.7 Conclusions

There have been changes in the socioeconomic setting of the study area since the 2004 FEIS, including additional population and employment growth. Due to design refinements, there have been minor changes in the residential and business acquisitions required for the 2005 Selected Alternative. However, the updated information does not change the conclusion of the 2004 FEIS that the 2005 Selected Alternative would not directly impact local demographics, housing or employment.