Maine Turnpike Authority

2360 CONGRESS STREET
PORTLAND, MAINE 04102

March 17, 2010

Mr. Jay Clement, Senior Project Manager
Maine Project Office
New England District
US Army Corps of Engineers
675 Western Avenue #3
Manchester, Maine 04351

Dear Mr. Clement:

In accordance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Highway Methodology, integrating the 404(b)(1) Guidelines, we are submitting herewith the Phase 1 Report of the Maine Turnpike Authority's (MTA's) Southern Toll Plaza Study for review and approval. The submission of this report was unanimously approved by the MTA Board of Directors on February 23, 2010.

The Phase 1 Report is the result of an extensive technical evaluation and public participation process. A general overview of this process is provided below:

The York Toll Plaza

The Maine Turnpike's York Toll Plaza is a vitally important piece of Maine's transportation infrastructure. As the recognized gateway to a state in which tourism is the #1 industry, the York Toll Plaza handles 16 million vehicles per year. It collects more than $34 million per year in toll revenue to maintain the highway and its 176 bridges. More than 50% of the revenue collected at the York Toll Plaza comes from out-of-state motorists. It collects nearly 39% of all the revenue collected on the Maine Turnpike.

The York Toll Plaza was constructed in 1969 with an expected structural lifespan of 25 years. It is now in its 41st year of operation—16 years beyond its expected lifespan. The plaza's age and deteriorated condition have caused it to become increasingly unsafe for motorists and employees,

inefficient to operate, in need of constant and costly repairs, and thus, of significant concern to the Turnpike Authority.

The Study

In September of 2004, the MTA directed its General Engineering Consultant (GEC) to conduct a comprehensive study of the York Toll Plaza to evaluate its condition and to propose strategies to address its deficiencies. In conducting this study, the GEC utilized the design guidelines for toll plazas in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to ensure that the future plaza is designed to operate safely, efficiently, cost-effectively and with minimal environmental and community impact.

Tolling Strategies

In the early stages of the study, the GEC evaluated a variety of tolling strategies and their potential to improve efficiency and service on the Maine Turnpike, including one-way tolling, split plaza tolling, open road tolling and all-electronic tolling. Based on this evaluation and on the MTA's own considerable experience in operating a toll system, the MTA determined that any future mainline toll replacement project should be designed to incorporate open road tolling.

Under an open road tolling system, E-ZPass customers would be able to pay their tolls by simply passing beneath a sensor at normal highway speeds. Non-E-ZPass users would briefly exit the mainline of the highway to pay cash tolls at a traditional booth. Open road tolling would improve safety over the existing condition by separating non-stop E-ZPass traffic from the cash paying traffic that is required to stop. It would also improve traffic flow by allowing more vehicles to proceed through the plaza without slowing or stopping.

The MTA considered all-electronic tolling, but determined that such a system would pose significant financial risks due to its reliance on interstate and international billing and enforcement protocols and compacts that do not exists today and are uncertain to be established effectively in the future. This reality makes all-electronic tolling extremely risky for the MTA, which collects more than half of its annual revenue from out-of-state and out-of-country vehicles. The MTA was concerned about other issues as well, including the necessity under an all-electronic tolling system to charge both in-state and out-of-state customers with administrative fees, that could exceed the cost of the toll itself, to pay the cost of processing and mailing bills to millions of video toll customers each year. An analysis of the feasibility of all-electronic tolling at Maine Turnpike's southern toll plaza is provided in Appendix E of the Phase 1 Report.

Site Selection

By the winter of 2007-2008, the Southern Toll Plaza study had advanced to the site selection and screening phase. Using the USACE highway methodology and the FHWA engineering and safety guidelines, the GEC evaluated all segments of the Turnpike from Kittery to Wells. Sixteen sites were identified as meeting the basic criteria and guidelines and four emerged as the best candidates from an engineering, safety, environmental and community impact analysis. The existing site of the York Toll Plaza was not identified as one of the sixteen viable sites because its location next to an interchange, on a curve, at the bottom of a hill and other deficiencies caused it to fail basic engineering and safety guidelines.

Existing Site Evaluation

In June of 2008, responding to local concerns about the potential impacts of moving the plaza, the York Board of Selectmen requested that the MTA take another look at the existing site to determine "what it would take" to overcome the site's deficiencies and build a safe and efficient facility there. The MTA complied with the Town's request and directed the GEC to consider the full range of possibilities at the existing site.

Over a 15 month period, using advanced engineering to design a smaller toll plaza, the GEC developed and evaluated nine different options at the existing site. Two of the nine options were recommended for further consideration. Both options still failed to meet basic engineering and safety guidelines, but they were the best available solutions at the existing location. The GEC also recommended that the study of alternate locations be resumed using the smaller toll plaza footprint developed while evaluating options at the existing site. The MTA accepted the recommendations and directed the GEC to resume the study of alternative locations and insisted that no option be advanced that required the displacement of homes.

Phase 1 Recommendations

In November of 2009, the GEC recommended four options for further consideration: (1) at the existing location, Mile Marker 7.3, (2) at alternative location Mile Marker 8.7, (3) at alternative location Mile Marker 9.1 and (4) a "no build" option.

Existing Location, Mile Marker 7.3: This option does not meet the basic engineering and safety guidelines. It would not displace any homes. It would require about 8.1 acres of additional property, would impact approximately 28 acres of wetlands and would cost an estimated $56 million.

Alternative Option, Mile Marker 8.7: This option meets engineering and safety guidelines. It would not displace any homes. It would require about 7.0 acres of additional property, would impact approximately 1.7 acres of wetlands and would costs and estimated $34 million.

Alternative Option, Mile Marker 9.1: This option meets engineering and safety guidelines. It would not displace any homes. It would require about 7.3 acres of additional property, would impact approximately 3.8 acres of wetlands and would cost an estimated $35 million.

On February 23, 2010, the MTA voted unanimously to accept the findings and recommendations of the GEC contained in the Phase 1 report and to submit the report to the USACE for review.

Public Participation

Phase 1 of the Southern Toll Plaza study has been accompanied by an extensive public participation process, which has included three general public meetings in the Town of York and one public meeting for potential abutters in the Town of York. A public meeting with the Legislature's Transportation Committee in Augusta, three public meetings of the MTA and the York Board of Selectmen in Portland, a number of meetings and facility tours in the Town of York with legislators, local officials, interest groups, and individuals. In addition, there has been

considerable written correspondence in response to questions posed by local officials, interest groups and individuals.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the enclosed Phase 1 Report. If you have questions or require additional information regarding any of the material provided, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Conrad W. Welzel
Government Relations Manager