



Welcome & Information Center Study

Overview

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) are conducting a study to evaluate traveler services at the Rest Areas/Welcome and Information Centers (RA/WICS) and to identify recommendations to improve these services. Some of these recommendations will include the appropriate number, size and location of RA/WICS in the state. The findings will be used to inform a strategic plan for the state's RA/WICS.

Purpose

The Purpose of the study is to evaluate alternatives and develop recommendations to maintain and improve traveler services at the RA/WICS, understanding public funding constraints and federal restrictions of commercializing facilities on interstates, and identify potential measures to increase revenue generation.

The work will include assessment of traveler uses and needs, identification of deficiencies and opportunities, and the development of improvement options and recommendations to meet future needs of travelers through the year 2035. This study is intended to inventory and evaluate the overall statewide program of public state-owned WIC's facilities in New Hampshire, and rate these facilities based upon level of priorities for public use, with the goal of determining the appropriate number, size and location of facilities to support New Hampshire traveler needs. The study shall evaluate the distances to alternative public and/or private facilities, the facility's egress and access, adequacy of existing vehicle parking (cars, trucks and buses), safety and security measures, traffic demand (peak and capture rates), site circulation, importance to State tourism promotional function, seasonal use, facility general building conditions, facility amenities, structural condition, service to the public, environmental issues, overall quality and image. The study shall consider each facility's potential for revenue generation, restrictions, and assessment of operational costs as to benefits derived from the facility (benefit /cost).

This study will involve conducting user interviews/surveys and focus group interviews of specific rest area user groups. In addition, the study will evaluate future needs of preservation, expansion, and/or new facilities. The study shall take into account the ability for public and/or private partnerships and funding opportunities. This work will include traffic forecasts, review of aerial photographs and environmental site evaluations.

Study Progress

- Project began in January 2015

- Ongoing Data collection program includes:
 - Inventory all 16 facilities
 - Collecting new traffic and parking data
 - Researching visitor count information
 - Conducting Driver surveys
 - Researching budget and expense information
 - Focus group meetings with tourism and legislative representatives
 - Interviewing trucking industry representatives
 - Researching best practices of other states
 - Currently summarizing data and developing demand projections to year 2035
- The study will be completed by June 2016.