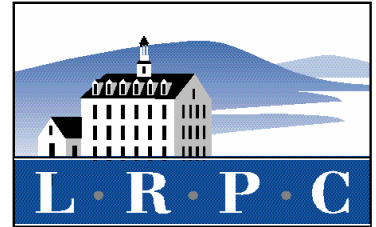


# LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

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## TAC ADVISORY MEETING

Wednesday, February 7, 2006

**Humiston Building, Meredith, NH**

2:00 - 4:00 PM

### AGENDA

2:00 Call to Order and Introductions

Public Comment

2:10 Regional Updates

2:15 Transportation Improvement Program  
(TIP) - Process Update

Bill Watson, NHDOT

Regional Process—Past and Future

4:00 Adjourn



“As long as the Interstate is the highway supporting our society, economy, and national security, it will forever need to be the beneficiary of our attention and investment. The ribbon cuttings will never end!”

Dan McNichol, *The Roads That Built America: The Incredible Story of the U.S. Interstate System*, 2003

## Interstate Myths

### **President Eisenhower conceived the Interstate System.**

The Interstate System was first described in a Bureau of Public Roads report to Congress, *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, in 1939. It was authorized for designation by the *Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944*, with the initial designations in 1947 and completed in 1955 under the 40,000-mile limitation imposed by the 1944 *Act*. President Eisenhower didn't conceive the Interstate System, but his support led to enactment of the *Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956*, which established the program for funding and building it.

### **President Eisenhower supported the Interstate System because he wanted a way of evacuating cities if the United States was attacked by an atomic bomb.**

President Eisenhower's support was based largely on civilian needs—support for economic development, improved highway safety, and congestion relief, as well as reduction of motor vehicle-related lawsuits. He understood the military value of the Interstate System, as well as its use in evacuations, but they were only part of the reason for his support.

### **Defense was the primary reason for the Interstate System.**

The primary justifications for the Interstate System were civilian in nature. In the midst of the Cold War, the Department of Defense supported the Interstate System and Congress added the words “and Defense” to its official name in 1956 (“National System of Interstate and Defense Highways”). However, the program was so popular for its civilian benefits that the legislation would have passed even if defense had not been a factor.

### **The Interstate System was launched by the Interstate Defense Highway Act of 1956.**

No such legislation passed in 1956 or any other year. Nevertheless, this title appears widely throughout the media instead of the correct title: the *Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956*.

### **One in five miles of the Interstate System is straight so airplanes can land in emergencies.**

This myth is widespread on the Internet and in reference sources, but has no basis in law, regulation, design manual—or fact. Airplanes occasionally land on Interstates when no alternative is available in an emergency, not because the Interstates are designed for that purpose.

### **Interstates are intended to serve only traffic going from State to State.**

The Interstate System serves interstate, regional, and intra-State traffic, and was always expected to do so. In fact, many routes, including beltways and spurs, are located entirely in one State and serve primarily intra-State traffic.

### **Beltways are designed to carry Interstate traffic around cities.**

Beltways do help traffic avoid cities, but also are intended to serve metropolitan traffic moving from main highway to main highway.

### **Congress should have put the money into transit instead of the Interstate System.**

This was not an option in 1955 and 1956 when the congressional debate took place. At the time, transit was provided mainly by private companies. No one in the industry, in State and local governments, or in Congress imagined that the Federal Government would support these companies financially. In fact, the only thing the American Transit Association asked Congress to do was exempt buses from the gas tax. Congress did so.

**Source:** US Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration