

June 20, 2008

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** WALPOLE-CHARLESTOWN 14747  
Reconstruct NH-12 from Main Street in North Walpole north approximately 3 miles to NH 12A in Charlestown

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** June 11, 2008

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Charlestown Silsby Library

**ATTENDED BY:** **Project Lead Team**

Nate Miller, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC  
Donald Lyford – NHDOT Project Manager (PAC Member)  
Michael Dugas – NHDOT Chief of Preliminary Design  
John Evans – NHDOT Bureau of Environment (PAC member)  
C.R. Willeke – NHDOT Preliminary Design Engineer

**Project Advisory Committee**

Fred Poisson, Charlestown Citizen Representative & Abutter  
William Sullivan, Charlestown Economic Development Authority  
Aare Ilves, Charlestown Citizen Representative  
Debra Livingston, Fall Mountain Regional School District  
Jon LeClair, Charlestown Selectboard  
Richard Holmes, Charlestown Conservation Commission  
Bruce Putnam, Charlestown Business Rep & Highway Advisory Board  
(Absent) Robert Beaudry, Charlestown Business Representative  
Albert St. Pierre, Charlestown Citizen Representative  
David Edkins, Charlestown Planning and Zoning Administrator  
Eric Lutz, UVLSRPC Commissioner (Charlestown)  
Keith Weed, Charlestown Highway Superintendent  
Ed Smith, Charlestown Police Chief  
Sharon Francis, Connecticut River Joint Commissions  
J.B. Mack, SWRPC (formerly Tim Garceau)  
(Absent) Christine Walker, UVLSRPC  
(Absent) Patrick Kiniry, North Walpole Village Commissioners  
(Absent) Jim Terrell, Walpole Selectboard Designee  
(Absent) Jeff Miller, Walpole Planning Board  
(Absent) Marcia Galloway, Walpole Conservation Commission  
(Absent) Donald Lennon, Walpole Business Representative  
(Absent) Ken Alton, TransCanada Corporation  
(Future member) Mike Lawyer, New England Central Railroad  
(Absent) Douglas Ring, Charlestown Planning Board

**General Public, Abutters, and Press**

Tish Hutchins

Darlene Boniface, Abutter (parcel #21)

Michael Augustinowicz, Abutter (parcel #25)

Vince Augustinowicz, Abutter (parcel #25)

Eugene Augustinowicz (parcel #25)

**SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting #5 Minutes****NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

On June 11th, 2008 approximately 24 people gathered at the Silsby Library in Charlestown for a meeting facilitated by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC). The intent of the meeting was to develop screening criteria for the NH 12 corridor based on the previously developed vision statement. The screening criteria will be used to help evaluate future alternatives for corridor improvement. After the screening criteria were developed, conceptual alternatives were discussed.

**Introduction**

Donald Lyford, project manager for the NHDOT, welcomed everyone and asked the participants to introduce themselves. After audience introductions, Nate Miller from Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Update to Public Involvement Plan**

Nate mentioned that the design team has updated the public involvement plan and that copies are available at tonight's meeting. The updates are housekeeping in general and include changes in membership and revised schedule dates.

**Project Schedule**

Nate showed a project flow chart indicating we are currently at the "screening criteria" step in the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. The current schedule is to evaluate alternatives this summer in preparation of a public informational meeting in September. After the public informational meeting, the PAC will reach consensus on a preferred alternative in the fall and plan for a public hearing in the spring of 2009.

## **Vision Statement Concurrence**

Nate read out loud to the committee the previous vision statement that was developed at the last meeting and asked if there was still concurrence with the statement:

### **Vision Statement**

*“The Route 12 corridor will be safe, efficient, attractive, and environmentally sensitive, while adequately serving the needs of the motoring public, bicyclists, pedestrians and commercial traffic including rail service. Route 12 will be a wider road with adequate shoulders, appropriate guardrails, and safe passage for bicyclists and pedestrians, while providing better access and parking to enjoy the river. This project will realistically maximize the limited space available for the various modes of transportation, while preserving and enhancing the scenic qualities of the area for travelers and residents.”*

Everyone still agreed with the language in the vision statement.

## **Screening Criteria**

Nate Miller presented a draft set of screening criteria developed by UVLSRPC and the NHDOT project lead team. The screening criteria will be used to evaluate the merits of each alternative. The following are the six major categories within the screening criteria: Access, Aesthetics, Environment, Implementation, Mobility, and Safety. Each alternative developed will be screened against a set of criteria listed for each of the six major categories. Nate asked for comments and suggestions to improve the criteria.

Sharon Francis representing the Connecticut River Joint Commissions suggested that the Aesthetics Section include criteria to evaluate alternatives relative to the existing road's status as a National Scenic Byway. The following additional criterion was added to the Aesthetics Section: “Would the alternative complement the road’s status as a National Scenic Byway?”

Aare Ilves, Charlestown Citizen Representative, suggested including consideration of the time frame (to design, permit, and build) under the Implementation Section. Bruce Putnam, Charlestown Business Representative suggested that the longer the time frame to build the project the higher the costs would be due to inflation. The following additional criterion was added to the Implementation Section: “How feasible is the time frame for this alternative?”

Albert St. Pierre, Charlestown Citizen Representative, commented that the screening criteria list looked good and that similar to the Problem Statement and Vision Statement refinements can be made in the future as the project progresses. The other PAC members agreed and Nate turned the meeting over to C.R. Willeke to discuss conceptual alternatives.

## **Conceptual Alternatives**

C.R. Willeke presented an alternative that protected the railroad from impacts and widened NH-12 westerly toward the Connecticut River. This alternative was chosen as a starting point to help identify areas where a “12-4” typical roadway section would and would not fit between the railroad and the river. C.R. described the elements of the typical section presented and indicated that this design resulted in significant fills into the Connecticut River and long retaining walls

between the railroad and highway. Areas in the southern half of the project are especially affected by this alternative. Other areas in the northern half of the project are able to accommodate a 12-4 typical section with minimal impacts. C.R. stressed that this conceptual alternative is intended to generate discussion on possible other alternatives and to demonstrate the issues involved with widening the highway to a modern standard. Elements of the typical section used can be modified to reduce impacts such as steepening slopes and reducing lane widths. Sharon Francis asked if the standard ditch widths could be narrowed to reduce the width of the improvements? C.R. indicated that they could be.

Sharon Francis noted the scour area at the south end of the project and the significant erosion event that occurred in 1996. She indicated that the river is deep in this area and that the fill slopes would extend even further under the surface of the water. She noted that the techniques used at recent riverbank restoration project at the #4 Fort in Charlestown might be applicable to this project. C.R. indicated that the DOT's geologists working on this project are aware of the 1996 event and are currently preparing recommendations for possible slope treatments along the corridor. Aare Ilves asked if retaining walls along the river were a possibility? C.R. indicated that they would likely be possible but would be costly and would also depend on the geotechnical assessment. Sharon suggested contacting Ken Alton, Trans Canada Corporation for information about river depths.

Nate Miller asked the PAC members to suggest other alternatives.

Aare Ilves suggested developing an alternative that holds the river as a control and widens NH-12 to the east. Other PAC members agreed. It was mentioned that there is room in the existing railroad bed for two sets of tracks along the entire 3-mile corridor. Moving the railroad line to the eastern half of the railroad bed could provide more room for the suggested river as a control alternative. Aare also suggested providing periodic wider pull off areas for scenic and recreational purposes. J.B. Mack, South West Regional Planning Commission, mentioned that wider sections also help with incident management.

Eric Lutz, UVLSPRC Commissioner (Charlestown), suggested an alternative that elevates one lane above the other in segments where the lateral constraints are narrow. He mentioned roads that he has traveled in Austria where they have utilized this technique.

Albert St. Pierre, Charlestown Citizen Representative, suggested relocating the road to the east side of the railroad tracks to avoid environmental and slope stability issues with the Connecticut River. Albert indicated that the view of the river would be improved with this alternative and that the ledge that would need to be removed under this scenario would have a resale value and could possibly be used to help stabilize slopes along the project corridor.

Sharon Francis mentioned that alternatives studied should provide safe termini for bike shoulders. There was general support for 4-ft shoulders as adequate for bikes.

To reduce potential impacts to residents at the northern end of the project area it was suggested an alternative would be to upgrade the existing road on the northern end and then bridge over the railroad to build a new section to the east for the southern end. It was felt the new bridge would

cause impacts to the residents in that central area so it did not reduce overall residential impacts. As a result this alternative was not suggested to be evaluated.

It was decided that the design team would investigate the following 4 alternatives:

- 1) Railroad as a control (refine existing alternative that avoids impacts to the railroad),
- 2) River as a control (avoid impacts to the river and allow impacts to the railroad),
- 3) Elevated Viaduct, (squeeze road between the railroad and the river), and
- 4) Road Relocation (relocate NH 12 to the east side of the railroad utilizing the existing NH 12A bridge over NH 12)

Once these alternatives are evaluated and presented to the PAC, favorable elements of each alternative could be combined together into other alternatives.

The next meeting was scheduled for:

Wednesday,  
August 13th, 2008  
Starting @ **6:30** pm  
Silsby Library / Municipal Building  
Charlestown NH

Submitted by,

C.R. Willeke, PE  
Preliminary Design Engineer

Attachment: 6/11/08 Screening Criteria

cc: D. Lyford  
M. Dugas  
J. Evans  
W. Cass  
D. Graham – District #4  
Nate Miller – UVLSRPC  
J.B. Mack – SWRPC  
PAC Members

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