

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN

October 20, 2009

CONFERENCE REPORT

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

DATE OF CONFERENCE: October 14, 2009

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Charlestown Silsby Library / Municipal Building

ATTENDED BY: Project Lead Team

Nate Miller, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC
Michael Dugas, NHDOT Chief of Preliminary Design
C.R. Willeke, NHDOT Preliminary Design Engineer

Project Advisory Committee

Donald Lyford, NHDOT Project Manager
Jon Evans, NHDOT Bureau of Environment
Fred Poisson, Charlestown Citizen Representative & Abutter
William Sullivan, Charlestown Economic Development Authority
Aare Ilves, Charlestown Citizen Representative
Absent Jane Stansbery, Fall Mountain School District (for Debra Livingston)
Absent 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
Absent Eric Lutz, UVLSRPC Commissioner (Charlestown)
Absent Keith Weed, Charlestown Highway Superintendent
Absent Ed Smith, Charlestown Police Chief
Sharon Francis, Connecticut River Joint Commissions
Absent J.B. Mack, SWRPC (formerly Tim Garceau)
Absent Christine Walker, UVLSRPC
Patrick Kiniry, North Walpole Village Commissioners
Jim Terrell, Walpole Selectboard Designee
Absent Jeff Miller, Walpole Planning Board
Absent Marcia Galloway, Walpole Conservation Commission
Absent Donald Lennon, Walpole Business Representative and Business Abutter
Absent Ken Alton, TransCanada Corporation
Absent Rick Boucher Sr., New England Central Railroad – St. Albans VT
Absent Douglas Ring, Charlestown Planning Board

Citizens & Officials

Jim McClammer, State Representative District #5
Barbara O'Brian, North Walpole Village Commissioner
Ed Hasselmann, North Walpole Fire Chief
Charlie Lennon, North Walpole business abutter (Len-Tex, Parcel #4)
Charlie St. Pierre, Charlestown Conservation Commission

M. Augustinowicz, Charlestown abutter (Parcel #25)
Eugene and Mary Augustinowicz, Charlestown abutters (Parcel #25)
Dominic Saladyga, Charlestown abutter (Parcel #15)
Darlene Boniface, Charlestown resident (Parcel #21)
Alta Wilcox, Charlestown resident (Parcel #22)
Jan Lambert, Claremont Compass Newspaper and UVLSPRC Commissioner
Jordan Davis, Claremont Villager Newspaper

SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting #11 Minutes

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

On October 14th, 2009 approximately 30 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:

- Present preliminary design Component: #322A, and
- Screen the remaining alternatives (#5, #322, #322A, and #323) using the screening criteria developed by the PAC

Introduction

Donald Lyford, project manager for the NHDOT, welcomed everyone and asked the participants to introduce themselves. After audience introductions and a review of the agenda, Don turned the meeting over to Nate Miller to lead the screening process.

Alternative Screening

Nate Miller reminded the PAC that Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, and 4C were previously screened at the September 30th meeting. Nate asked if there were any questions about the screening process or screening criteria then began the screening of alternatives. The screening criteria were projected onto the wall for the PAC to view and discuss. Jon Evans recorded the results electronically as the PAC answered the screening criteria questions.

Screening of Alternative #5 – On Line Option with Geotechnical Measures

C.R. Willeke gave a brief overview of option #5. The intent of this option is to reconstruct the road near its existing alignment and use retaining walls to limit impacts to each side of the highway including the railroad and the river. He highlighted the relatively high cost associated with option #5 (\$23 to \$25 Million) and the constructability issues with building complex retaining walls near the travel way and active railroad line. Sharon Francis made a motion to determine Alternative #5 "unreasonable" prior to screening. The PAC members agreed and Alternative #5 was determined to be an unreasonable option.

Screening of the Hybrid Alternatives: #322 & #323

C.R. described the hybrid alternatives in relation to the 3 major sections of the project:

- The southern segment,
- The middle segment, and
- The northern segment

The naming convention for the hybrid alternatives relates to the options used in each segment. The first number "3" is for the southern segment which utilizes an alignment similar to previous option #3 that proposes to relocate the railroad tracks easterly to make room for the roadway improvements. The second number "2" is for the middle segment and utilizes an alignment similar to previous option #2 that impacts the Meany's Cove area to make room for the roadway improvements. The third number is for the northern segment and can be either a "2" (from option #2, impact the river) or a "3" (from option #3, move the tracks) depending on the option being proposed. Both proposed hybrid alternatives (#322 and #323) are the same in the southern and middle segments.

In the northern segment, C.R. discussed the two options being proposed. Option #322 impacts the Connecticut River in the northern segment to make room for the highway improvements. Option #323 shifts the railroad easterly in the northern segment and impacts the large wetland area from approximately station 8102+50 to 8108+00. Option #323 allows for a wider (12-4) typical section under the NH 12A bridge because there is room available to shift the railroad tracks without interfering with the easterly NH 12A bridge pier. Option #322 is constrained by the NH 12A westerly bridge pier and is limited in available width for improvements.

The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of both hybrid options during the screening process. Sharon Francis asked how much fill would be placed in the northern segment of the Connecticut River with Option #322? C.R. indicated that the cubic yardage of impact is unknown at this point in time and would depend on the type of slope treatment used. He indicated that the length of impact is approximately 1800 linear feet along the waters edge. Jan Lambert asked how long the impact is for the large wetland on the east side of NH 12 for option #323? C.R. indicated approximately 600 linear feet. Darlene Boniface indicated that a fence should be used on top of the proposed retaining wall near the Augustinowicz parcel for option #323. After the screening was complete, the PAC determined that both hybrid options #322 and #323 were reasonable.

Screening of Component #322A and new Component #323A

C.R. presented plans for Component #322A, which is designed to avoid going under the NH 12A overpass bridge with the new alignment. This proposed component utilizes the very northern segment of option #4 that realigns NH 12 and connects to NH 12A west of the overpass bridge. However, rather than continuing NH 12 onto the overpass bridge, the alignment would stay west of the bridge and create an elevated 3-way intersection with NH 12A. C.R. highlighted the extent of fill slopes in the fields next to NH 12 and the approximate 1.5% grades needed to elevate NH 12 up to the elevation of NH 12A. C.R. indicated that the sight distance is sufficient for the NH 12A approach and that a left turn lane is proposed for the NH 12 southbound approach to NH 12A.

Jim McClammer asked about the acreage of farmland impact for component #322A? Bruce Putnam stated that the size of the east field is approximately 12 acres. The footprint of Component #322A is approximately half of the east field size (approximately 6 acres). Jan Lambert indicated that the potential exists to use the

remnant section of NH 12 created by Component #322A as a place to park and have improved access to the Connecticut River for recreational purposes. She also indicated that the wetlands on either side of existing NH 12 could be enhanced through the removal of any unused sections of roadway. She noted that an amphibian crossing could also be provided beneath proposed NH 12 to enhance connectivity between the subject wetlands and the Connecticut River.

Jan Lambert asked if Component #322A could be used with option #323? Don Lyford indicated yes and Nate Miller asked the PAC to screen a new component #323A. Component #323A would be the same as Component #322A (NH 12 / NH 12A intersection reconfiguration); however, #323A would avoid impacts to the river in the northern segment. After the screening was completed, the PAC determined both Component #322A and new component #323A were reasonable.

Comprehensive Screening Results

All of the proposed alternatives have been screened and determined Reasonable or Unreasonable by the PAC members. The following is a list of the results:

- Alternative #1 – Do Nothing (Unreasonable)
- Alternative #2 – Railroad as Control (Unreasonable)
- Alternative #3 – River as Control (Reasonable)
- Alternative #4A – Other Side of the Tracks (Unreasonable)
- Alternative #4B - Hillside Option (Unreasonable)
- Alternative #4C - Hillside Opt with a reconnection to Church St. (Unreasonable)
- Alternative #5 – On Line with Geotechnical Measures (Unreasonable)
- Alternative #322 – Hybrid with Railroad Relocation in the South (Reasonable)
- Alternative #323 – Hybrid with RR Relocation in South and North (Reasonable)
- Component #322A – NH 12 / NH 12A Intersection Reconfiguration (Reasonable)
- Component #323A – NH 12 / NH 12A Intersection Reconfiguration (Reasonable)

The individual screening sheets for each alternative will be posted on the project's web site at: <http://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/walpole14747/index.htm>

List of Reasonable Alternatives and Components

The following is a short list of only the Reasonable Alternatives and Reasonable Components as determined by the PAC:

- Alternative #3 – River as Control – Relocate Railroad (Reasonable)
- Alternative #322 – Hybrid with Railroad Relocation in the South (Reasonable)
- Alternative #323 – Hybrid with RR Relocation in South and North (Reasonable)
- Component #322A – NH 12 / NH 12A Intersection Reconfiguration (Reasonable)
- Component #323A – NH 12 / NH 12A Intersection Reconfiguration (Reasonable)

Preferred Alternative

Nate Miller asked the group if a consensus could be reached on a "preferred alternative" based on the short list of "reasonable alternatives"? After some group discussion, the PAC determined that Alternative #323 – Hybrid Alternative with Railroad Relocation in the Northern and Southern Segments" is the PAC's preferred alternative.

Next Step

Don indicated that the next step in the process would be to schedule a public informational meeting to review the project's efforts to date and to seek input from the general public. The date for a public informational meeting will likely be in early December and will be coordinated with Dave Edkins and the Fall Mountain School District. The location is yet to be determined but the NHDOT will attempt to utilize Fall Mountain High School similar to the last public informational meeting in April of 2009.

Don Lyford, Nate Miller, Jon Evans, and C.R. Willeke thanked the committee for their hard work and dedication in determining the preferred alternative. Don Lyford mentioned that there would be opportunity for interested people to continue their involvement with the project thru the public hearing, as well as the final design process. Nate Miller encouraged PAC members to speak with local residents about the project and the preferred alternative. He also encouraged PAC members to attend the upcoming Public Informational Meeting in December.

Submitted by,

C.R. Willeke, P.E.
Preliminary Design Engineer
NH Department of Transportation

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

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