BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Portsmouth, A000(832), 13678E, Effect Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCES: June 24, 2010
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Federal Highway Administration, NH Division, large conference room

Participants: John Butler, Jill Edelmann, Joyce McKay, NHDOT; Laura Black, Peter Michaud, Beth Muzzey, Linda Wilson, NHDHR; Jamie Sikora, FHWA; Carol Hooper, Lynne Monroe, Preservation Company. **Consulting Parties:** Roberta Lane, Rebecca Williams, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Ken Herrick, Albacore Park; Jennifer Goodman, NH Preservation Alliance

PREVIOUS MINUTES
Joyce McKay asked if there were any comments on the June 3rd meeting minutes, and if so to please submit those comments to Jill Edelmann. None were verbally received.

PROJECT UPDATES
John Butler spoke briefly on the traffic study, which resembles a stick diagram that was emailed to participants. The traffic counts were explained to the group, noting that the anticipated traffic projections were for the year 2035.

P. Michaud asked if there was a traffic count for the intersection of Northwest and Maplewood, as this intersection could see a large rise in detour traffic. It was also noted that this intersection could affect the traffic patterns at the Jackson House.

Lynne Monroe and Peter Michaud asked for copies of the traffic counts to be emailed to them. J. Butler noted that there is a larger graphic that might show the counts at Northwest and Maplewood, all studies were email to J. McKay.

Ken Herrick, representing Albacore Park disagrees that the no-build option will have no effect on the traffic to Albacore Park. It is stated in the June 3rd minutes that the no-build option assumes that Memorial Bridge will be closed, significantly increasing traffic on the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge and the Route 1 Bypass. K. Herrick informed the group of the easement Albacore Park has with the State for the Connection Road, which will expire in 2012. The access road was established in 2006 when the State asked for temporary use of the Park property, at the time the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge was being worked on. The board members of Albacore Park see the road as inevitable now however they feel it will have a negative impact on the Park. K. Herrick would like the minutes to note that no build would have an adverse effect on Albacore Park.

Beth Muzzey noted that a lot of assumptions concerning traffic patterns could be revisited now that the traffic count numbers are available. Increase or decrease of traffic could be adverse depending on the numbers.

J. Butler introduced two new alternatives:

Transit Alternative for Memorial Bridge – instead of a bike/pedestrian bridge, this alternative uses a no cost to the rider transit system. The alternative is still being reviewed at the fatal flaw level, and he was unsure if it would survive the analysis. This assumes that Memorial Bridge will be removed, and bikes and pedestrians would be serviced with a transit system.

Sarah Mildred Long Hybrid Alternative – combination of different alternatives. Described below.

J. Butler noted that the Public Informational meeting held on 6/23/10 in Portsmouth was well attended and passionate, with strong support for a vehicular connection at Memorial.

SARAH MILDRED LONG ALTERNATIVES

It was noted to the committee members that six alternatives for the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge (SML) are on the table and are as follows:

SML REHAB – Approach spans will be completely replaced, and the 5 truss spans of the lift tower portion of the bridge will be rehabilitated. The design of the new approach spans has not been determined. The piers of the approaches will also need to be replaced. The sub-structure for the lift tower spans would be rehabbed. The navigational channel width will not change.

SML REPLACEMENT – Four total options, on alignment or off alignment, two lanes or four lanes wide. All these options allow a wider navigational lane.

- On alignment, 2 lanes – need to close bridge. Minor widening along bypass
- Off alignment, 2 lanes – upstream of bridge. Allows vehicular and rail traffic on existing bridge while constructing new structure. New alignment creates some impact to surrounding areas.
- On alignment, 4 lanes – need to close bridge. Wider impacts on both sides of bridge.
- Off alignment, 4 lanes – upstream of bridge. Allows vehicular and rail traffic on existing bridge while constructing new structure. New alignment and addition of lanes creates more impact to surrounding areas.

SML HYBRID – a proposed two lane, high lift bridge, built off alignment. Impacts similar to four lane off alignment. This bridge would raise the elevation of bridge as it goes over river channel to about 80’ of clearance at high water, as opposed to the current 10’ of clearance. Because this bridge would be so much higher than the current bridge, it would reduce the number of times the lift span would have to be raised by about 70%. The challenge is maintaining the rail traffic, having to lower the span when rail is needed, currently only about six times a year. When the lift span is lowered for train traffic, vehicular traffic would have to be stopped. This hybrid bridge would be substantially taller than the current bridge, the hybrid towers will be 60-75’ higher than current towers. Comparing lift span heights, the hybrid truss is about 80’ higher than the current truss.

Jennifer Goodman asked if the operations of the rail traffic had been analyzed. J. Butler stated that currently the rail is used by the shipyard very sparingly, about a half a dozen times a year. The hybrid option is less suited to accommodating any potential future increase in railroad usage, as it can only service one mode (road or rail) at a time.

EFFECTS DETERMINATIONS FOR THE SARAH MILDRED LONG BRIDGE

SARAH MILDRED LONG

Rehabilitation Alternative – Adverse
There are negative impacts because loss of approach spans, this option is the least impacting to the SML, however it is still adverse.

Replacement Alternatives – Adverse
All alternatives, including the hybrid alternative, involves removing the SML.

MEMORIAL BRIDGE (3 SPANS)

Rehabilitation Alternative – No adverse effect depending on the design of the approach spans. View from Memorial Bridge would be no adverse under the rehabilitation option, if the design were compatible with the old approaches, using the Secretary of Interior (SOI) Standards.

P. Michaud stated that part of the setting of Memorial Bridge is the view of SML.

Replacement Alternatives – No adverse effect depending on the design of the new structure. Making the assumption that the replacement options will be low level, truss-like structures, the replacements could be no adverse, if designed according to the SOI Standards.

B. Muzzey stated that as a gut reaction, the four lanes could be tougher to keep within the SOI Standards, and that determinations cannot be made without seeing any design plans.

Hybrid Alternative – Adverse.
This alternative includes the introduction of a much larger and higher structure to the area.

MEMORIAL BRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Same impacts as the Memorial bridge 3 spans

US ROUTE 1 BYPASS

Rehabilitation Alternative – Adverse, because bridge is part of district – however it is the least impacting of the options.
This work includes replacement of the approach spans and a modest amount of roadway widening thru Albacore intersection to accommodate appropriate turn lanes. All the work should be within current ROW, and the elevation will remain the same.

Replacement Alternatives – Adverse

Removal of the bridge will be adverse to the Bypass District because the bridge is a contributing element of the district. It should be noted that the four lane options appear to have more adverse effects than the two lane options.

Hybrid Alternative - Adverse
The hybrid alternative presents the greatest amount of change to the Bypass district. It introduces new heights and levels.

Within the Bypass district, the following alternatives were listed from most to least impacting:

- Hybrid Alternative
- 4 lane off alignment replacement alternative
- 2 lane off or 4 lane on alignment replacement alternative (would depend on design)
- 2 lane on alignment replacement alternative
- Rehabilitation alternative

ALBACORE PARK

K. Herrick described again in more detail the Albacore Connector Road that is listed on all alternatives. The Connector Road was originally constructed when SML was being fixed in 2006, and is still in place today because of weight restrictions. Lease of the Connector Road ends in 2012. DOT would like to establish a new road to create better access to the Bypass as a permanent connector from Market Street Extension. In the traffic studies it is shown as a needed connector that would be signalized.

The Albacore Board sees the connector as inevitable, however the board it will have an adverse effect on the Park because of its affect on Albacore's integrity aspects of location, feeling and setting. Albacore is dry berthed because the shape of her exterior hull is her most notable character defining feature. The Board, thus views the Park as a contributing element to Albacore as it is currently designed. The new Connector road creates a visual and physical barrier between Albacore and the adjacent river.

P. Michaud noted that the Connector Road was never mentioned as a taking. Lynne Monroe agreed that although it is on all alternatives, the road was never presented in the alternatives as the new roadway thru Albacore Park. It was asked if the land between the submarine and water, which is owned by the Albacore Park, is significant to the National Historic Landmark (NHL) setting. K. Herrick expressed his opinion that it is.

Jamie Sikora noted that he will look into recreational 4(f) uses, and the applicability to non-profits. A copy of the Albacore NHL should be provided to FHWA to discuss boundaries. [1]

B. Muzzey believed that setting, feeling and association would be adverse effects if a road is permanently added between the vessel and the water, however more information should be gathered on dry berthed vessels.

[1] After the meeting, J. Sikora was since provided a copy of the NHL form and determined that due to the fact the remaining Albacore Park property is outside of the current NHL boundary, and is privately owned, it cannot be considered as a Section 4(f) park or recreational resource.

Currently the Navy owns the submarine, and there is a condition in the donation contract that should any changes to the vessel occur that they deem "would cast discredit upon the Navy," they can remove the submarine. K. Herrick noted that the chances of that happening are very slim due to the huge costs involved with moving the submarine, estimated between 10 and 12 million. However the Board needs to maintain a good relationship with the Navy to fulfill its contractual obligation and to keep the NHL open to the public. The park sees approximately 22,000 visitors a year, and visitation has not seen a difference with the addition of the Connector road. K. Herrick noted that the Connector can carry significant truck traffic.

B. Muzzey asked if other options for a Connector road had been explored. Carol Hooper asked if you could create some sort of elevation change to mitigate the road, J. Butler stated that current topography could not allow for an elevation change.

J. Butler stated that if SML's weight restrictions were lifted, the Connector road would not be needed as a truck detour. Ultimately however, the DOT would acquire land for a connection road to ease traffic, and answer to public demand for better access to the Bypass. Under any of the alternatives the weight limit will be removed, however the demand for the access road will still be there.

Linda Wilson stated that HNTB has not seen this project thru the limbs of 4(f). B. Muzzey agreed, and would like to better explore other options that would not effect the park, as it does not seem that much time has been spent on alternatives, and that the current configuration seems like the easy way out. Rebecca Williams noted that now is a good time to see how the Connector road can be integrated into this project.

K. Herrick noted that NR Bulletin 16 treats the Albacore as a moved structure. However, NR Buletin 20 infers that if sited near the water, the property on which it is dry berthed can be considered to be contributing to its setting. J. Butler stated that NHDOT's understanding was that the NHL was the area immediately around the submarine, and asked if the surrounding land was also part of the NHL. J. Sikora will look into land issues.

There was a discussion of 4(f) and Section 106 with K. Herrick.

Rehabilitation Alternative – The impact is not adverse if there is no Connector Road. It is Adverse with the Connector Road, however rehabilitation is the least impacting.
There would be some widening to the west with the rehabilitation alternative to incorporate a right hand turn lane, however all work would be within the ROW. A retaining wall would be added from the end of the approach span to the new intersection at the Connector Road. The material of the retaining wall is unknown at the moment. The current Connector Road would also be widened. If there is no Connector Road, most likely there would be no need for the retaining wall because there would be no turn lane. The roadway at the Albacore submarine will not be widened.

B. Muzzey stated that current ROW lines often do not follow historic ROW lines as they relate to the period of the Albacore's relocation.

Replacement Alternatives – Adverse
All options include the addition of the Connector Road. The four lane, off alignment alternative creates the largest physical impact. With the two four lane options, road widening at the Albacore submarine would mean that the edge of roadway would be approximately 10' closer, placing the Bypass about 25' from the access sidewalk to the submarine. Due to the design of the vessel, the entrance cannot be changed to the opposite side, away from the Bypass

The two lane, on-alignment alternative was vertically the same as the rehab option.

The two lane, off alignment alternative could also move the Bypass as much as 10' closer roadway.

Off alignments and the hybrid alternatives have the greatest impacts.

Hybrid Alternative – Adverse
Physical impacts would be similar to the four lane options because of the increased traffic needs with the hybrid bridge. This alternative also introduces the added height to the viewscape from the Park.

Within the Albacore Park NHL, the following alternatives were listed from most to least impacting:

- Hybrid Alternative
- 4 lane off alignment replacement alternative
- 2 lane off or 4 lane on alignment replacement alternative (would depend on design)
- 2 lane on alignment replacement alternative
- Rehabilitation alternative

<u>CHRISTIAN SHORE NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT</u>
Includes Jackson House within the neighborhood. (Jackson house sits higher than bypass)

Rehabilitation Alternative – No adverse effect, if design follows SOI Standards.
Assuming the design adheres to the SOI Standards, the approach spans are similar in size and materials, and the Bypass is not widened on the south side, there would be a no adverse effect to the Christian Shore Neighborhood.

J. Sikora noted that the eventual widening of the Bypass is a future project, and not part of this review.

2 Lane, On Alignment Replacement Alternative – No adverse effect, if the design adheres to SOI standards.
There will be no widening on the south side of the Bypass. Design of the alternatives should be compatible to the current SML design.

B. Muzzey asked if these determinations were consistent with what was determined for the Memorial Bridge effects. P. Michaud reviewed the pervious minutes, and confirmed that the same phrase, "If design follows SOI Standards," was used for the Memorial Bridge options.

2 Lane, Off Alignment Replacement Alternative – Same as the On line Alternative; No adverse effect if the design follows SOI Standards.

Laura Black stated that the two lane and the rehabilitation alternatives appear to have the most benefit for the Christian Shore Neighborhood. L. Wilson asked about the effects on the Cutts Mansion and Bersum Gardens. It was generally agreed that there would be no effect on the Cutts Mansion. Bersum Gardens had not been determined eligible.

4 Lane, On and Off Alignment Replacement Alternatives – Adverse effect because of the proximity of the new roadway
Changes include widening of roadway to the west, however some widening may be occurring on the east (Christian Shore Neighborhood side) as much as 10-15' closer than the current design. However, all of the proposed widening will take place within the ROW. Shifting closer to the Christian Shore Neighborhood impacts the rural aspect of the district. There is also the visual impact that comes with larger bridge structures and widened roadway.

J. Butler noted that no building or landscape features would need to be taken, as none are located within in the ROW. B. Muzzey stated that ROW could be inconsequential at this area, as they are not the historic boundaries of the properties.

Hybrid Alternative – Adverse
The hybrid alternative includes all the adverse effects of the 4 lane alternatives, with the added impact of introducing a higher bridge to the neighborhood.

<u>JACKSON HOUSE</u> – Oldest house in NH, built 1664
P. Michaud located the Jackson House for the committee members on the alternative maps. It was pointed out that from the Jackson House one cannot see the SML or the Route 1 Bypass. The current terrain of the area does not allow for the visual impact that many of the other properties have seen. The NHL includes the historic orchard on the neighboring parcel. It is unknown if the hybrid alternative's towers would be visible from the house, however. B. Muzzey also suggested that a noise analysis may want to be conducted at the Jackson House to determine any audible increases.

All Alternatives – No historic properties affected
However a noise analysis should be conducted and the height of the hybrid bridge and the view from the Jackson House will need to be further evaluated. J. Sikora noted that there would be no Section 4(f) with the no historic properties affected finding.

<u>EASTERN RAILROAD</u>

Rehabilitation Alternative – Adverse

Because the rail currently goes under two of the approach spans which would be entirely replaced, the rail line will be adversely impacted with the replacement of the approach spans. It should be noted that this is the least adverse option.

Replacement Alternatives – Adverse
Complete replacement of the rail system on the bridge is an adverse effect

Hybrid Alternative
B. Muzzey stated that she cannot make a determination of the hybrid bridge on the rail line because of the unknown relationship and design the new hybrid bridge will have on the rail line. As the future of rail service is unknown, it is unknown if the fact that the bridge will remain in a raised position, and would have to lower for rail service would have a greater adverse effect than other replacement options since the lift/tower spans would remain..

<u>PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT</u>
National Historic Landmarks

Warner House
Cannot see SML
Moffat-Ladd House
Possible to see SML
Wentworth Gardner House
Cannot see SML
Gov. John Langdon Mansion
Cannot see SML
John Paul Jones House
Cannot see SML

It was noted that the SML can be seen from some areas of the Portsmouth Historic District. It was agreed by the committee that the above properties and the Portsmouth Historic District would not be adversely impacted by the currently proposed alternatives would be a No Adverse Effect, as long as all options follow SOI standards. It will be harder for the 4-lane replacement alternatives to meet the SOI Standards. The hybrid option would also have to be looked at in more detail, most likely assuming it will be an adverse effect due to the height and the roadway widening, creating the most change to the district.

B. Muzzey noted that, as always, any determination made here can be revisited if the committee were to hear from concerned citizens. It should also be noted that both effects meeting thus far have not looked at traffic studies, road conditions and intersection count considerations when determining effects. Further studies should be looked at in the future when the alternatives are reduced and more definitive traffic analyses are complete.

It was discussed that a third affects meeting would not take place until more design has been completed for the project and the number of alternatives are reduced. J. Butler added that these meetings have proven to be helpful, providing a general sense of impacts and effects and rating the effects of each alternative on each historic property. J. Sikora noted that although it appears

the hybrid option has certain traffic and other benefits over other remaining SML options, he felt that from a Section 4(f) Least Harm perspective it may be difficult for FHWA to eventually approve this option. Based on today's meeting it has been shown that the SML rehabilitation option has the least amount of impact from a Section 106 perspective.

Submitted by Jill Edelmann & Joyce McKay, NHDOT

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