

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER**

**MANCHESTER PUBLIC HEARING**

MANCHESTER  
14966  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

September 29, 2011 Manchester City Hall, Alderman Chambers, Manchester, NH  
7:00 PM

In accordance with RSA 230:45, RSA 230:14 and the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, this project will address five "red listed" bridges along I-293 (F.E. Everett Turnpike) at Exit 4 (Queen City Avenue Interchange) and improve I-293 safety and traffic operations within the interchange. The five "red listed" bridges include the northbound off ramp bridge over I-293 (#153/061), the northbound on ramp bridge over the south branch of the Piscataquog River (#146/065), the I-293 bridge over the northbound on ramp (#149/063), and the I-293 bridges over the south and north branch of the Piscataquog River (#146/064 & 144/066).

The reconstruction along I-293 will involve a westerly widening along the F. E. Everett Turnpike beginning approximately 600 feet north of the Town of Bedford and City of Manchester town/city line and run northerly approximately 0.9 of a mile to a point along I-293 approximately 500 feet north of the north branch of the Piscataquog River. The work also involves the reconstruction of all the ramps to their intersection with Second Street. No widening along Second Street will be required for the I-293, Exit 4 improvements. The improvements will also include the construction of a retaining wall north of West Hancock Street, soundwalls along the Schiller Street residential neighborhood and Wentworth Street residential neighborhood, and water quality basins along the F. E. Everett Turnpike.

No change to the Limited Access as established under the 1955 layout for Manchester, P-3050, LS1864(1) will be required. The improvements for the project will require the acquisition of a permanent drainage easement, and right of access to the drainage swale within property located on Bass Island. Temporary construction easements and permanent maintenance easements for the construction of a retaining wall along the frontage of the Econo Lodge Property north of West Hancock Street, as well as, limited slope easements along several properties north of Piscataquog River will also be required.

The following decisions are the Department's resolution of issues as a result of testimony presented at the September 29, 2011 Public Hearing and written testimony received during the comment period.

1. Mayor Theodore Gatsas spoke in favor of the project as long as there are not direct costs to the City of Manchester. He further expressed concern for the inadequacy of the existing weave between the southbound off ramp and the southbound on ramp.

Response: The support for the project is acknowledged. The project will address improvements along the F. E. Everett Turnpike and will not require funding from the City of Manchester as no direct impacts to City Streets are anticipated. However, several City utilities are located within the Limited Access Right-of-Way that may require adjustments in accordance with the Department's utility accommodation policy. The final design will attempt to minimize impacts to municipal utilities to the greatest extent possible. The Department will coordinate with the City Public Works Department on the final design and resolution of any impacts.

The weave condition between the southbound off ramp and southbound on ramp will be improved with the addition of a third southbound mainline lane and improving the weave operation between the ramps.

2. Phil Greazzo, State Representative and City Alderman, requested the consolidation of the interchange ramps into one intersection with Second Street to allow for improvements to the Second Street operation and intersections. Alderman Greazzo further explained that it would be more economical to undertake the full interchange reconstruction at this time instead of delaying the interchange improvements until the ultimate Turnpike reconstruction that is envisioned as a future project. David Preece, Executive Director, Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC), indicated the reconfiguration of Exit 4 interchange is identified in the long-range Regional Transportation Plan.

Response: The project's purpose is to address the "red listed" bridges along the F. E. Everett Turnpike (I-293) at the Exit 4 interchange. The existing interchange configuration remains the most cost-effective interchange configuration for the purpose of the project. To expand the scope to include a completely reconstructed interchange layout for improved capacity along F.E. Everett Turnpike and Second Street will result in significant property impacts to residential and commercial properties and have a greater impact into the natural and cultural environment within the project area. The proposed project addresses the rebuilding of five red listed bridges, provides for enhanced traffic safety with improved egress and access to I-293 while minimizing impacts to commercial and residential properties, and the natural environmental resources within the project area. The 2013-2022 State Ten Year State Transportation Improvement Plan does not list any further projects at the I-293 Exit 4 interchange. The proposed improvements do not preclude future improvements for reconfiguring the interchange, nor restrict local improvements along Second Street by others.

3. Ms. Jane Beaulieu, Chair of the Manchester Conservation Commission, inquired as to what the type of soundwall system will be constructed and how resistant the wall system will be for the removal of graffiti. In addition, she questioned the length of the response time anticipated for removal from the soundwalls should graffiti occur. Mr. Michael Mazzaglia and Mrs. Gloria Mazzaglia at 415 Wentworth Street, requested consideration of an Evergreen tray soundwall for aesthetic purposes, similar to the soundwall constructed along I-93 near Candia Road in Manchester. Mr. Mazzaglia further requested the soundwall located along 415 Wentworth Street be shifted toward the Turnpike so as to not impact several mature trees. Patrick Long, NH House Representative and City Alderman, 112 Hollis Street, inquired as to whether the soundwalls would absorb noise or reflect it, thus increasing highway noise along the easterly side of the river.

Response: The soundwalls will be constructed with concrete columns and pressure treated wood panels, as per the Department's standard. Vandalism to the wall systems will be reported to the local Police Department and the Department's maintenance staff will coordinate with the Manchester Public Works Department to repair the wall system as staffing and resources permit.

The use of an Evergreen soundwall is not cost-effective because of the higher square foot construction costs, the higher cost of annual maintenance required for the plantings and irrigation system within the tray system and the long-term annual costs for municipal water to irrigate the plantings. The location of the soundwall along 415 Wentworth Street will be adjusted as possible to minimize impacts to the existing mature vegetation. The Department will coordinate landscaping issues relative to the final soundwall location with the property owner at 415 Wentworth Street.

The soundwalls are not designed to absorb roadway noise. Given the lack of development between I-293 and the Merrimack River, as well as, the large distance between the soundwall and the properties to the east of the Merrimack River, it is not anticipated that any residences or businesses will experience a noticeable increase in noise levels with the installation of the proposed soundwalls.

4. Mr. Michael Mazzaglia, 415 Wentworth Street, expressed concern as to the layout of the existing State Right-of-Way along the northern segment of Wentworth Street as the layout does not reflect property easements secured during the construction of the city sewer interceptor project that permitted the siting of his residential house and existing drive access.

Response: The Department has confirmed that the layout of the existing Limited Access Right of Way (LAROW) along 415 Wentworth Street as shown on the Public Hearing Plan is accurate based upon the Department's records. The Department has no records of executed easements being granted to properties along Wentworth Street that permits non-public use of the State LAROW. The Department has executed utility permits with the City of Manchester for municipal utilities located within the LAROW. in accordance with the Department's utility accommodation policy. Based upon property title research completed by the Department, a private Warranty Deed was granted to 415 Wentworth Street (referred to as Parcels 89, 90, 91 and 92 on the "Boundary Plan of Land of Antioquette J. Pare, Manchester, NH, date April 1, 1977 and prepared by T. F. Moran, R.L.S.") for a ten (10) foot wide ingress and egress easement along the southerly abutting Parcel 88. This easement was jointly granted to 415 Wentworth Street and the City of Manchester.

The Department will coordinate with the property owner to obtain any documentation that may have allowed for private use within the State's LAROW. Should no such recorded documentation or easement be located, the Department will resolve any and all encroachment issues within the State LAROW. with the appropriate property owners.

5. Ms. Jane Beaulieu expressed concerns for the existing delays at the Second Street intersection with Harvell Street and asked that a traffic signal be installed.

Response: The purpose of this project is to address the five "red listed" bridges along the F. E. Everett Turnpike and to maintain the existing interchange configuration with Second Street. The improvements do not preclude future consideration of city street improvements along Second Street by others.

6. Mr. Michael Mazzaglia requested consideration of advance construction warning signs along Second Street to communicate alternative routes for traffic to take while the ramps at Exit 4 are under construction. He further requested advanced construction signage on the major highways approaching the City of Manchester to recommend alternative routes for traffic to avoid the use of I-293.

Response: The project is designed to be able to maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction on the mainline. The Department will develop a comprehensive Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to address the traffic control during construction of the project. This will include advanced warning signs along the interstate and local streets for traffic detour and encouragement to seek alternative routes. The project will deploy Intelligent Transportation Systems including dynamic message boards along the local and state highway system. The Department will coordinate with the City Public Works Department for traffic management of city traffic during the design and construction of the project.

- 7 Gerald and Alice Burke, 23 Beaudoin Street, Bedford, requested the construction of a soundwall along the Beaudoin Street residential neighborhood.

Response: A detailed noise analysis was conducted for this project in accordance with the Department's Policy and Procedural Guidelines for the Assessment and Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise for Type I Highway Projects (the Noise Policy). As a result of this analysis, the Department intends to construct two soundwalls adjacent to the Wentworth Street and the Schiller Street neighborhoods. This analysis also indicated that the Beaudoin Street, Park Drive and Wathen Road neighborhoods, located to the south of the project's limits, would not meet the Department's cost criteria under the Noise Policy. The Department will consider the use of pavement materials that may result in a slight reduction in tire noise within this section of the Turnpike, in the future, when this roadway segment is scheduled for pavement rehabilitation.

- 8 Mr. Norm St. Onge, Manchester, requested adequate drainage be provided along both sides of the soundwall along the Wentworth Street residential neighborhood to ensure no adverse flooding will result. Mr. Michael Mazzaglia requested floodgates be installed at the outlet of the drainage pipes to the Merrimack River under the Turnpike to reduce backwater flooding of the Wentworth Street residential neighborhood. Executive Councilor Daniel St. Hilaire requested the improvements minimize flooding to this flood prone area along Wentworth Street.

Response: A detailed flood analysis was completed for the project. In the location of the Wentworth Street neighborhood, the flood conditions are influenced by two flood zones: 1) outlet of the city's drainage system along Second Street and Harvell Street adjacent to the southbound off ramp (the drainage area includes South Main Street and Woodbury Street to the west of Second Street) and 2) the flood conditions of the Merrimack River. As part of the analysis, it has been determined that the single eighteen (18) inch diameter culvert under the Turnpike is now inadequate to drain the flood waters from the Harvell Street system, mainly due to land use expansion since the original construction of the Turnpike in 1955. This results in higher backwater conditions during peak storm events within the lower topography adjacent to the northerly end of the Wentworth Street neighborhood. When this effect coincides with the Merrimack River peak flood stage, extreme flood conditions can occur. To remedy this situation, the Department will replace the culvert under the Turnpike with a larger diameter culvert to allow the peak storm flows along Second Street and Harvell Street system to enter into the Merrimack River before the river's peak flood stage occurs. In addition, the outlet of the new culvert under the Turnpike will be fitted with a backwater baffle to hold back flood waters from the Merrimack River from entering into the Wentworth Street flood storage area.

The improvements will provide relief for storm events up to and exceeding a 50-year storm frequency for the South Main Street and Woodbury Street drainage area, however, flooding caused by higher storm events such as the 100-year frequency storm event will continue to be a risk for this residential neighborhood due to the low topography of this area combined with the Merrimack River's flood duration and intensity. This flood zone will continue to require monitoring during flooding events by the local residents and the City of Manchester.

The final design of the drainage system along both sides of the soundwall will be designed to not adversely impact the residential properties. The drainage improvements noted above will have a beneficial effect to reduce the frequency of flooding within the Wentworth Street neighborhood.

- 9 David Preece, Executive Director of SNHPC, requested the opportunity to explore with the Department a bicycle and pedestrian access connection to Main Street and the western banks of the Merrimack River.

Response: The improvements along the Turnpike will not alter any existing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to Main Street and western banks of the Merrimack River. The Department will coordinate with SNHPC and city representatives in their efforts to explore reasonable and cost-effective approaches to enhance safe bicycle and pedestrian access within the City of Manchester.

Submitted By:

Date: 10/22/12



Christopher D. Clement, Sr.  
Commissioner  
N.H. Department of Transportation