

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: Winchester, 12906
DPR-BRF-X-0111 (005)
NH Rte 10 over Ashuelot River
Br. No. 152/181

DATE OF CONFERENCE: January 5, 2010

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Swanzey Town Office

ATTENDED BY:

Project Lead Team

J. B. Mack – Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC)
Donald Lyford – NHDOT Project Manager (PAC Member)
Michael Dugas – NHDOT Highway Design Preliminary Design Chief
David Scott – NHDOT Bridge Design In-House Design Chief
Jason Tremblay – NHDOT Bridge Design Senior Project Engineer
Laurel Kenna – NHDOT Environmental Coordinator (PAC Member)

Project Advisory Committee

(Absent) Bob Gray, Winchester Town Administrator
Bruce Bohannon, Swanzey Emergency Management Director
(Absent) Bruce Tatro, Swanzey Selectman
Carol Keene, Westport Village Resident
(Absent) Cindy Richard, NH Dept of Safety, Bureau of Homeland Security &
Emergency Management
Clyde Keene, Westport Village Resident
(Absent) Dale Gray, Winchester Highway Superintendent
Gus Ruth, Winchester Selectman
Herbert Stephens, Winchester Emergency Management Director
John Gomarlo, Town of Winchester, SWRPC Board of Directors
Lee Dunham, Swanzey Public Works Director
(Absent) Nancy St. Laurent, NH Department of Safety, Bureau of Homeland Security
& Emergency Management
(Absent) Norman Skantze, Swanzey Fire Chief
Richard Busick, Swanzey Police
Sara Carbonneau, Swanzey Planner

Others

Kenneth Gardner – Town of Winchester
F. V. Thompson, Jr. – Westport Village Resident
Doug Graham – NHDOT – District 4 Engineer
Bruce Willard – Winchester Resident
Terry Hebert – Winchester Resident

SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #6

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

On January 5, 2010 approximately 17 people gathered at the Swanzey Town Office for a meeting facilitated by the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC). The intent was for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to screen the design alternatives that were discussed at the PO/PI.

DESCRIPTION

J. B. Mack of the SWRPC welcomed everyone and asked all attendees to introduce themselves.

PAC meeting #5A & B (held in Swanzey and Winchester, respectively) minutes were approved. Swanzey approved the previous minutes from both PAC meeting #3 and #4 at meeting #5A but Winchester had not yet approved PAC meeting #3 and #4 at meeting 5B. J. B. will send out minutes from meeting #3 and #4 to Winchester PAC members for their approval.

At the Public Informational Meeting, held on Nov. 9, 2009, the PAC heard community feedback saying they didn't favor options that took homes.

M. Dugas stated that since Federal funds will be used on this project, the PAC needs to consider alternatives that would avoid impacts to the historic bridge, including a no build alternative, a rehabilitation option that preserves the existing bridge, or if a new bridge is to be built alongside the existing bridge, an option must be considered that leaves the existing bridge in place after construction is complete.

Sara Carbonneau stated the only positive aspect to the no-build alternative was that it cost no money. The PAC was unanimously opposed to the no-build alternative.

M. Dugas explained that the bridge rehab option would not allow for the provision of shoulders on the bridge. The construction would be costly and would require a detour to maintain traffic during construction. He asked if anyone saw any benefit to pursue the rehab. No one spoke in favor.

M. Dugas asked if there was a purpose or desire to save the old bridge if we were to build off line. No one spoke in favor of saving the old bridge. Negative aspects mentioned by community PAC members were the lack of an alternative use for the bridge, the continued presence of the bridge piers in the river, and the potential hazard and safety liability of the deteriorating structure. A question was asked who would own the bridge if it were retained. M. Dugas explained it would still be owned by the State, unless the Town was willing to accept it.

M. Dugas then reviewed the following additional project alternatives.

- Alternative 1: Utilizes the existing horizontal and vertical alignment but does not provide adequate sight distance to the south for the crest curve at the posted speed of 50 mph. Mike explained that this alternative would require a detour and would not address sight distance issues at Westport Village Road. He also explained that the parking area requires more design due to concerns of the Division of Historical Resources (DHR), the cultural resource review agency responsible for Section 106 review. This will be a concern for all alternatives. M. Dugas also mentioned the Department of Environmental Services will be concerned with any proposed tree clearing. Mike led the discussion of screening criteria. JB Mack recorded PAC feedback. Regarding the category titled “Environment – archeologically sensitive areas” M. Dugas assumed that the detour would be on the downstream side. Bruce Willard and Theresa Hebert said “Implementation-impacts to abutting properties” should be rated poor for this alternative because the shoulder widening would reduce the banking that buffers their parcel from Route 10. Sara pointed out that any impacted berms could be reconstructed. Consensus was that Alternative 1 is UNREASONABLE because it does not meet the objectives of the project.
- Alternative 2: Utilizes the existing horizontal alignment but raises the vertical alignment at the bridge by 3’ and cuts approximately 5’ at the rail/trail crossing, to the south of the intersection. M. Dugas mentioned that a detour bridge would be required. The grade differential would pose traffic control challenges during construction. Bruce Willard suggested returning Westport Village Road to where it was prior to 1970 but with a more perpendicular intersection to NH Route 10. Due to the impacts to Shamrock Realty, the screening of the property impact criteria went down, however, criteria related to Westport Village Road, (Access, Mobility and Safety) improved. The PAC was divided on the reasonableness of Alternative 2 and was unable to reach consensus.
- Alternative 3: Utilizes the existing horizontal alignment but raises the vertical alignment at the bridge by 10’ and closely matches the grade at the rail/trail crossing. This option has a little less property impact to Shamrock Realty. The PAC decided that alternative 3 was REASONABLE.

The first three alternatives keep NH Route 10 on the existing alignment, so a detour will be required during construction. M. Dugas next presented an upstream and a downstream detour alignment, both of which are designed for 40 mph.

M. Dugas then discussed other alignments that maintain the existing bridge for traffic during construction.

- Alternative 4: Builds new bridge, and NH Route 10, upstream of the existing bridge. This requires a relatively long scope of roadwork (over 6000 feet of roadwork) and would require impacts to a substantial number of property owners. It raises the grade at the bridge by 8' and lowers the grade at the trail by 5' below the existing grade. The PAC believes this alternative is UNREASONABLE primarily due to the extensive property impacts, which also would raise the cost.
- Alternative 5: Builds new bridge, and NH Route 10, downstream of the existing bridge. This requires a relatively long scope of roadwork and would require the acquisition of four buildings. It raises the grade at the bridge by 5'. The PAC believes this alternative is UNREASONABLE primarily due to the extensive property impacts.

Both Alternatives 4 and 5 try to stay parallel to the existing bridge. The final alternatives are all skewed with regards to the existing bridge to minimize roadwork.

- Alternative 6: Builds new bridge downstream of the existing and places it at a skew to the existing bridge. It raises the grade at the bridge by approximately 10'. Although, this entirely curved alignment alternative keeps NH Route 10 from going through any buildings, the house immediately SW of the bridge would be acquired due to the proximity of the road to the house. There would also be impacts to the first two houses in Swanzey. The PAC believes this alternative is UNREASONABLE primarily due to the extensive property impacts.
- Alternative 7: This alternative is similar to alternative 6, but would closely match the grade at the trail crossing. It builds the new bridge approximately 8' higher than the current bridge. This alternative will also require the acquisition of the house immediately SW of the bridge. There would also be impacts to the first two houses in Swanzey. The PAC believes this alternative is UNREASONABLE primarily due to the extensive property impacts.
- Alternative 8: The proposed bridge is skewed in relation to the existing alignment to minimize property impacts. It requires the acquisition of the house immediately SW of the bridge and lowers the grade at the trail by 4'. This alternative also impacts the first two houses in Swanzey. The PAC believes this alternative is UNREASONABLE primarily due to the extensive property impacts.
- Alternative 9: This alternative is similar to Alternatives 6 and 7 but has reversing curvature so that the proposed roadway ties into the existing roadway in the shortest possible distance. Shamrock Realty is nearly untouched and the first two houses in Swanzey are not impacted. (This alternative requires only about 3000' of roadwork.) The proposed bridge is 10' higher than the existing bridge. The PAC believes this alternative is REASONABLE primarily due to the minimization of property impacts.

After a brief discussion, the PAC selected Alternative 9 as the preferred alternative.

D. Lyford mentioned that our next step is to review the project with the natural and cultural resource agencies. A public hearing will be held in May or June and then final design will commence. We can reconvene with the PAC to review project status prior to the public hearing. Mike also mentioned that it is the NHDOT's desire to establish controlled access right-of-way (CAROW) in the northern half of the project. CAROW was purchased south of the bridge when that segment was last reconstructed in the 1950s. We will have a better sense for the CAROW details when we reconvene the PAC. The process to establish CAROW will require that three Executive Councilors, rather than three appointed citizens, will oversee the Public Hearing.

Submitted by:

David L. Scott, P.E.

DS/ds

NOTED BY: M. Dugas, D. Lyford

cc: D. Lyford

D. Scott

J. Tremblay

L. Kenna

Bill Cass, Director of Project Development

D. Graham - District 4

J.B. Mack – SWRPC

PAC Members