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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:** November 09, 2009

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Winchester Town Office

**ATTENDED BY:**

**Project Lead Team**

J. B. Mack – Southwest Regional Planning Commission  
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  
(Absent) 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  
Herb 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**

See Sign-In Sheet

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## **SUBJECT: Public Officials/Public Information Meeting**

### **NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

On November 9, 2009 approximately 35 people gathered at the Winchester Town Office for a meeting facilitated by the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC). The intent was for the NHDOT to present the design alternatives and receive feedback.

### **DESCRIPTION**

J. B. Mack of the SWRPC welcomed everyone, introduced the committee members, and recognized the Project Advisory Committee. J. B. also briefly discussed the Context Sensitive Solution process. He then read highlighted sections of the Problem Statement, Vision Statement and screening criteria. (These statements are posted to the project website at <http://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/winchester12906/documents/>)

M. Dugas then recapped existing conditions. The bridge is a 181' long, three-span bridge that is 24' wide and in poor condition. NH Route 10 carries 6800 vehicles per day at a speed of 50 mph. Also, the road has variable width shoulders and poor sight distance from Westport Village Road. Along the northerly approach to the bridge the snow does not melt well due to heavy shading, and there is poor drainage in this section.

M. Dugas then mentioned that all alternatives feature 12' travel lanes, 10' shoulders, and a three-span bridge with piers moved out of the river. Also, there are plans to acquire a 100' controlled access right-of-way to the north to accommodate a wider road and larger ditches and to limit the number of driveways along the road. Traffic control during construction will either be on a detour bridge, if the bridge is built where the existing bridge is located, or will be on the existing bridge, if the new bridge is built on a new alignment.

M. Dugas then discussed the 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 is not acceptable to NHDOT.
- Alternative 2: Utilizes the existing horizontal alignment but raises the vertical alignment at the bridge by 3' and cuts approximately 8' at the rail/trail crossing, to the south of the intersection. M. Dugas mentioned that the grade differential would pose traffic control challenges during construction.
- 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.

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

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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.

- 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'.

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 road work.

- 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.
- 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.
- Alternative 8: 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'.
- Alternative 9: 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. (This alternative requires only about 3000' of road work.) M. Dugas does not believe this alternative will require superelevation (banking). Proposed bridge is 10' higher than the existing bridge.

M. Dugas then discussed that Alternative 1, the least expensive option, is \$4.9M and Alternative 4, the most expensive option, is \$7.0 million. Also, the anticipated public hearing will be held in Summer 2010 and construction will begin in Spring 2012 and be complete in Fall 2013.

M. Dugas turned the presentation over to D. Lyford who asked the audience for questions.

## QUESTIONS

Someone asked if property acquisition was very expensive. M. Dugas mentioned that it is and that those costs should influence the screenings.

It was asked if the line of sight from the south side was considered, since it is difficult to see vehicles in the low spot. M. Dugas explained that sight distance, which is currently acceptable for a 35 mph design speed, will be improved to be acceptable for a 55 mph design speed.

Someone questioned if there was any one plan that was favored. M. Dugas responded that we prefer the right fix for the least possible cost. The individual who asked the question added that people in the project limits prefer not to lose their houses.

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The person who lives at the junction of Westport Village Road has only seen one accident in four years and asked why not lower the speed limit. M. Dugas replied that lowering the speed limit becomes an enforcement issue.

A question was asked about the proposed bridge configuration. M. Dugas reiterated that a three-span bridge is anticipated.

The final speed limit for the proposed NH Route 10 was requested. M. Dugas said that it will be safe for 55 mph although it will still be posted at 50 mph.

It was asked what is involved in ROW acquisition for a by pass bridge. M. Dugas replied that the detour is designed for 40 mph so less ROW is required and the ROW needs would be temporary.

Someone asked if alternating one way phasing was proposed with any of the options. D. Scott answered that traffic volumes would be too large for alternating one-way traffic. M. Dugas added that there is an additional cost incurred due to phasing.

It was asked if the cost of the temporary bridge was included in the estimates. M. Dugas said it is included in the estimate. The individual who asked the question followed by suggesting that it wouldn't be more expensive than property acquisitions.

Someone asked about the length of the temporary bridge. D. Scott answered that the dimensions of the temporary bridge as well as what loading is required for the temporary bridge will be specified in the plans and that it will span the river. The contractor designs the temporary bridge and he will determine what type of bridge will be used.

The owner of Parcel 10 mentioned that his house was not shown on the plans and that on some of the alternatives the slope lines would be very close to it. The outline of the house will be sketched on the alternatives.

The owner of the property on the northwest quadrant of the bridge commented on the shade on the north side of the bridge and how it contributes to icing, but also mentioned that the berm in front of her property provides noise abatement. M. Dugas noted that the downstream alternative keeps work away from her property but moves the work towards her neighbor's property.

Someone asked what the next step in the process is. Comments from the PO/PI will be brought back to PAC members, the alternatives will be screened as reasonable or unreasonable and a preferred alternative(s) will be selected. This alternative(s) will be brought to a Public Hearing, most likely in Summer 2010.

One property owner who was impacted with several of the alternatives expressed concern over them. M. Dugas mentioned that the screening criteria consider property impacts as making an alternative reasonable or unreasonable.

Someone asked if the NHDOT has met with local officials. J. B. Mack stated that PAC members include Winchester and Swanzey selectmen. J. B. added that PAC meetings are opened to the public and the website includes all the alternatives. D. Lyford also said we would be happy to take e-mail addresses of people to get the information to them.

Someone asked if he could assume that options 1, 2, 3 and 9 would be the reasonable options. M. Dugas said a reasonable person might assume that but that the PAC members will determine what is reasonable or unreasonable.

Someone asked who will choose the reasonable alternative. The PAC will discuss tonight's feedback and then apply the screening criteria to all the alternatives to get to the preferred alternative. If alternative 1, 2, 3 or 9 is selected then the Public Hearing will

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take place. If one of the other alternatives is chosen, another Public Informational meeting will be held.

Someone asked if the results of the next PAC meeting could be e-mailed to him or her. Meeting minutes are posted to the website. A Winchester selectman mentioned that he would post the names of Winchester PAC members on the Winchester website. Sara Carbonneau will do the same for the Town of Swanzey.

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