

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: Northern Pass

DATE OF CONFERENCE: April 26, 2016

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: 7 Hazen B34 211 Kancamagus Conf Rm

ATTENDED BY: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Alan Hanscom – Highway Maintenance District 3 Engineer
Philip Beaulieu – Highway Maintenance District 1 Engineer
Melodie Esterberg – Chief of Design Services
Matthew Powers – Utility Coordinator, Design Services
Lennart Suther – Utilities Engineer, Design Services
Lou Barker - Railroad Planner, Rail & Transit
Charles Schmidt – NHDOT Bureau of Right-of-Way Administrator

EVERSOURCE ENERGY

Jerry Fortier – NPT Project Manager, Eversource Energy
Stephanie Labbe – PAR Electric
Lance Clute – PAR Electric
Mike Pillsbury – Louis Berger Group
Mark Hodgden – Hodgden Law
Sam Johnson – Burns & McDonnell Engineering

SUBJECT: Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) Application Process and Design Update

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

See attached Agenda

There were no comments or changes to the previous March 22, 2016 meeting minutes.

The public comment period for the Department of Energy permit ended on 4/3/2016. Not many comments to the Draft EIS. The next step is EIS approval. The SEC application process is continuing with the Procedural Schedule issued on 4/22/2016. The schedule of the actual hearing dates has not been set.

The Department provided draft comments to the SEC Application plans. Some comments are repeats of what has been stated in previous meetings. Mr. Beaulieu added clarification to General Comment 2 that all underground utilities such as water, sewer, gas and

etc. are to be shown and to Underground Comment 28 that bridges and culverts shall be shown on the plans and profiles. Mr. Barker clarified that in General Comment 6 that in addition to the track name being included on the plans, the Owner and Operator shall also be included. See the attached NHDOT Comments dated 4/26/2016. Eversource Energy will take comments back to their design engineers and provide feedback at the next meeting. If Eversource has any questions they are to contact Melodie Esterberg.

The permits for geotechnical work in District 1 and District 3 have been submitted with executed permits returned from District 1 and received today (4/26/16) from District 3. A few locations within District 1 are being remarked beginning on Wednesday (4/27/16). Mr. Fortier stated that Eversource is processing their notification to proceed so survey work can start next week (5/2/16). Ms. Esterberg asked whether any geotechnical had started this spring as she had received a complaint about a drill hole left open. After the meeting a review of the photograph of the location determined that the drill hole appears to be from work done last fall. Eversource will have the drill hole refilled and covered with pavement.

In addition to the Department's permits Eversource has submitted their application to the US Forest Service for geotechnical work within the National Forest. Also there are 35 locations within the Department's approved permits that require a NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) Shoreland Permit with 8 additional locations within the permits to be submitted next week. NHDES requires the owner of the property to also sign the permit to ensure the owner is aware of the proposed work. Eversource asked who at the Department would be responsible to sign the permit. The Highway Maintenance District Engineer is the responsible person to sign the Shoreland permit application (copy attached). Some District Engineers have written a letter acknowledging the work within the right-of-way rather than sign the permit application. Eversource is reviewing the locations to determine if they can be adjusted to avoid needing a Shoreland permit. They questioned what the process would be to revise the executed permits if the locations are adjusted. Mr. Hanscom stated that Eversource will need to submit new plans with the revised locations to amend the permit(s).

Eversource informed the Department that they are investigating other alternative routes than US 3 in downtown Plymouth to avoid the municipal and college infrastructure in the area. The other alternatives include a local road or the rail corridor and would like some additional information regarding the rail corridor. Eversource asked about obtaining copies of easements, licenses, permits and other documents that define the railroad right-of-way. Mr. Barker has those documents at the Bureau of Rail and Transit and can provide copies to Eversource. Eversource would like documentation along the segment from north of NH 175 to south of the skate park where the railroad right-of-way is adjacent to the US 3 right-of-way. The next question was what the volume of activities within the rail corridor is. Mr. Barker noted that typically there is a train once a week, round trip, with an increase of excursion trips in the fall. It was noted that in the winter the corridor becomes a major snowmobile trail. The proposed construction schedule would also need to consider the required Federal inspection of the rail facilities. Eversource ask if the Department was aware of any restrictions with the use of the rail corridor. The Department is aware of numerous longitudinal and lateral utilities within the corridor as well as a reduced width. Also the Bureau of Rail and Transit has concerns with the horizontal clearances from the tracks, particularly with the electric facilities under the tracks.

There is a possibility that the original taking may have specified for Railroad use only and other use may require compensation to abutters. This may not be an issue if the proper notification was given to the abutters when the corridor was acquired by the State from the Railroad. There is also the issue of mildly contaminated soil within the top surface of the rail corridor.

Eversource asked what the process would be if they were to use the rail corridor. Mr. Barker replied that a lease request would be reviewed by the Council On Resources and Development (CORD), the Long Range Planning Legislative Committee and, and approval by Governor & Council following internal DOT review. This process takes approximately one year to complete.

Mr. Pillsbury asked if the Department was aware of any other steps, permit, requirements that Eversource needs to complete so there is backtracking of the process? The Department personnel are not aware of anything at this point.

Mr. Barker noted that because the rail corridor is close to the river most work would require a NHDES Shoreland permit.

The existence of HB 626 allowing energy corridors within the Limited Access Right-of-Way (LAROW) was acknowledged. If HB 626 passes the Legislature the Department will have to modify the requirements in the Utility Accommodation Manual to allow longitudinal energy corridors within the LAROW and obtain FHWA approval of the modifications. There is no anticipated change to this project if and when HB 626 passes the Legislature.

Mr. Schmidt questioned how the individual permits will be referenced when the single Use & Occupancy Agreement (U & O) for the entire project will be executed prior to the assigning all the individual permit numbers for the segments within each municipality by the Highway Maintenance District? The thought would be a reference to an Appendix attached to the U & O which will need to be updated.

Mr. Beaulieu asked if the proposed power facility locations would be marked as part of the Dig Safe process in the future and whether Eversource would have any requirements of Department maintenance activities (repair/replacement of drainage facilities, guardrail, etc.) in proximity of the power facilities. The facilities will be marked as part of the Dig Safe process and Eversource anticipates requiring hand digging within one foot of the cable as is done with other facilities.

Eversource is still evaluating the use of concrete encasement of the conduits versus precast concrete cap in the open cut trench to balance the Utility Accommodation Manual (UAM) requirements of 30" below ground elevation or 18" below the structural box and constructability.

The Department asked if the conduit system would have spare conduit for future use by Eversource or other parties. Eversource responded that the electric facilities are not expandable with the current technology therefore there will not be extra conduit for the electric conductor. There will be a spare communication conduit for replacement of the communication fiber cable

which is also used to detect faults in the electric conductor, if necessary. Eversource has no consideration of having available conduit space for use by a third party

With meetings now scheduled for 1:00 pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month, the next meeting is on May 24, 2016.

Submitted by:

Lennart Suther
Utilities Engineer

LDS/lDs

NOTED BY: MAE, MCP

cc: Attendees, Christopher Waszczuk, David Rodrigue, Douglas King, Richard Radwanski,
Brian Schutt