BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCES: November 10, 2016
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Sheila Charles
Jill Edelmann
Melodie Esterberg
Sam Fifield
Tom Jameson
Bob Juliano
Rebecca Martin
Patrick Pike
Joshua Prescott
Lucas Siik
John Sargent

NHDHR
Laura Black

FHWA
Jamie Sikora

CMA
Jason Gallant

Historic Documentation Company
Richard Casella

HTA
Sean James

Laconia Heritage Commission
Dorothy Duffy
Mary Jane Hoey
Jane Whitehead

Smart Associates
Jennifer Riordan

PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:
(minutes on subsequent pages)

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Nashua 40429, X-A004(400) 2
Plymouth 28901, C-A003(848) 3
East Kingston 26942, X-A003(411) 4

Laconia 16144, X-A001(150)
Participants: Jennifer Riordan, Smart Associates; Jason Gallant, CMA engineers; Dorothy Duffy, Mary Jane Hoey, Jane Whitehead, Laconia Heritage Commission; John Sargent, NHDOT

Continued consultation on the Laconia project. The goal of the meeting will be to discuss alternatives that have been evaluated, agree on the effect determination, and discuss possible mitigation efforts.

John Sargent gave an overview of the project which involves the rehabilitation of the US Route 3 bridge over the NH Railroad in Laconia. The bridge was put on the Red List in 2009 and is 40th on the list. The superstructure is rated poor and the substructure is rated fair. The project will replace the superstructure and repair the existing substructure. The existing bridge was built in 1933 and was built on a portion of the 1848 bridge abutments. Post-construction conditions will mimic existing conditions, aside from the replacement of the historic concrete rail with T-3 or T-4 rail, and the rehabilitated bridge will be the same width, length, and height. The bridge deck will be replaced and the existing abutments will be repaired and patched. Temporary easements may be needed for construction but otherwise the project will occur within NHDOT's right-of-way. No excavation is proposed.

Environmental issues include invasive species, potential contamination, and a wetland swale located adjacent to the railroad. Endicott Rock Park is a Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) resource.

Endicott Rock is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The bridge is not individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but it contributes to a district (Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad Historic District) that is eligible for the National Register.

John mentioned that some stones had been added near the top of the western bridge abutment. Dorothy Duffy asked if the stones had come of the Weirs Hotel and mentioned that, if so, the Weirs Group may want to them. NHDOT is not sure where the stones came from, but they are a relatively recent addition.

NHDOT is planning to remove the concrete rail on the bridge due to line-of-sight and safety issues. The rail will be replaced with T3 or T4 metal rail. The proposed rail has been designed to provide visual continuity between the bridge rail and the adjacent rail along US Route 3.

Construction schedule was discussed. The bridge will be closed during construction and accelerated construction methods will be used to minimize the closure period. A 30-day closure between March 31st and May 28th is currently proposed.

Mary Jane Hoey asked if the proposed bridge will look similar to the existing bridge. John replied that it would. Dorothy stated that she did not have a strong opinion on the project, but was just there to represent the Laconia Heritage Commission.

Mary Whitehead mentioned that the existing bridge deck has a slight curve that is characteristic of 1930's bridges. She asked if this would be maintained. John said that the slight curve is likely from the wooden frame that was used in the existing bridge and the proposed bridge won't have this type of a curve due to construction materials.
There was some discussion of utilities and coordination efforts with the owner of Thurston's Marina.

Laura Black said that the removal of the concrete rail would result in an Adverse Effect to historic resources. Jamie Sikora thought this would just be a visual change due to removing the concrete rail. Laura disagreed and explained that since a character-defining feature of the bridge is being removed, it would be an Adverse Effect. Jason said that the rail could be replaced in-kind but this wouldn't address safety and line-of-sight issues. It would also be difficult to entirely replicate the concrete rail. Laura said that Standards 9 and 10 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards would apply since part of the NR-eligible railroad is being removed and replaced.

Since there will be an Adverse Effect, mitigation will be required. The next steps will involve looking at mitigation options and presenting them to SHPO. NHDOT will also discuss the project with the Weirs Action Group and the Lake Winnipesaukee Historical Society to solicit feedback on possible mitigation options.

Nashua 40429, X-A004(400)
Participants: Sean James, HTA; Richard Casella, Historic Documentation Company; Tom Jameson, NHDOT

Initial consultation on the City of Nashua's proposed Heritage Rail Trail connection to Mine Falls Park.

S. James made a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed project which will connect the existing Heritage Trail to the Mine Falls Park near Everett Street. The proposed project starts at the Heritage Trail with a set of concrete ramps to make up the elevation difference between the trail and Everett Street. An at-grade shared use path will be constructed along the edge of Everett Street to Ledge Street where a new crossing will be installed with signage and rectangular rapid flashing beacons. This will connect to an existing sidewalk adjacent to a City-owned park where a new pedestrian bridge will be installed across the canal to provide access to Mine Falls Park. Three bridge types are being studied for the crossing; a steel stringer bridge, glulam timber (similar to the Whipple Street entrance bridge) and a prefabricated steel truss (similar to the North 7th Street entrance). A kayak launch at the Mine Falls end of the bridge is also being studied. The launch was included in the TAP application but would be non-participating and has a low likelihood of being constructed.

R. Casella completed the RPR for the project which was previously submitted to the NHDOT and NHDHR and provided an overview of his findings. R. Casella completed previous research in this area as part of the Broad Street Parkway. The proposed project is located in the National Register-eligible French Village Historic District at the south end with the rail corridor (now Heritage Trail) being a contributing element. The area was studied in the past but not finalized due to the need for additional work to justify some areas that were initially excluded. The National Register-listed Nashua Manufacturing District overlaps the proposed project at the north end.

There was discussion on the proposed project including the following:

- L. Black noted that the Secretary of the Interiors' Standards should be reviewed to ensure that the proposed bridge is compatible with the two districts. This was further clarified that it should be differentiated from the existing structures but be compatible with the area.
- It was clarified that the proposed trail along Everett St. will be a striped lane on bituminous pavement, with no grade separation or curbing.
- E. Feighner stated that any area of ground disturbance would require a Phase 1A review.
- T. Jameson requested that any project staging area be reviewed ahead of time.
- More detail on the extent of retaining wall removal along the Nashua Canal was requested. S. James clarified that the top stone or two would be removed in the 10 foot width of the proposed bridge to eliminate the need for approach ramps to the bridge which would be required if it had to span over the wall.

Plymouth 28901, C-A003(848)
Participants: Rebecca Martin, Melodie Esterberg, Lucas Siik, Josh Prescott, NHDOT

Continued consultation to discuss the proposed design for the realignment of Foster Street and determine the effect evaluation. Joshua Prescott provided a brief overview of the project design developments. The crossing is proposed to be replaced with new rail and bituminous pavement roadway surfaces. J. Prescott explained that along with rehabilitating the crossing, the project proposes to reconfigure Foster Street to make the crossing more perpendicular. The new Foster Street configuration lines up better for traffic turning from US Route 3 and also is closer to being aligned with the NH Route 25 onramp across US Route 3.

J. Prescott explained that the current design will impact some railroad resources in the railroad corridor, which has been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic places. J.

Prescott shared photos of the railroad resources and described the resources that will be impacted. J. Prescott described that the railroad signal post will need to be removed to construct the project. He explained that both of the crossbucks at the crossing will be removed and replaced with new equipment. He explained that these crossbucks are modern equipment. J. Prescott described that the flanger will need to be relocated to a position appropriate for safety at the crossing.

The group discussed the concrete well with a metal cover that is located adjacent to the signal post (3 feet diameter and 3 feet in depth). The group does not know what the function of the feature was, but believes that it was associated with the crossing and the signal. J. Prescott mentioned that it may have been a well for the signal equipment.

Laura Black commented that the Peg Mill historic sign is actually the Plymouth Historical Society's sign, and that coordination should be with the Plymouth Historical Society on the new location of the sign. L. Black mentioned and Jamie Sikora concurred, that since the purpose of the concrete well with metal cover is unknown, the metal cover should be retained and relocated. L. Black commented that cover should be placed in a similar context to the signal post. L. Black commented that relocating these historic elements (signal post and well cover) along the rail line is better than disposing of the elements. The group discussed, and L. Black agreed, that the concrete well does not need to be retained and can be filled/removed as is necessary for the project. The cover will be retained and relocated.

Melodie Esterberg, J. Prescott, and Lucas Siik were amenable to retaining and relocating the historic signal post and well cover. The flanger will be relocated to the appropriate position to continue to serve its current function. L. Black commented that this will result in No Adverse Effect to the eligible rail corridor. L. Black commented that there is no issue with the alteration and removal of the modern Common Man signs and items that will be impacted by the project, coordination will be needed with the owner. The group discussed the proper placement of the signal post and cover. Jill Edelmann asked about the width of the Right of Way in this area and J. Prescott explained that it extends to about the low green fence. L. Black commented that the equipment could be shifted back away from the crossing within the Right of Way or shifted along the rail line (probably preferred as this would retain the feature's relationship with the track).

East Kingston 26942, X-A003(411)
Participants: Bob Juliano, NHDOT

Continued consultation to discuss the updated project impacts and effect finding

Jill Edelmann started the meeting by stating that the Department had spoken with FHWA, specifically David Clarke the FHWA Historic Preservation Officer, regarding NHDHR's statement that the project would result in an adverse effect. David's suggestion was to recap the project impacts will all involved parties to ensure there is no misunderstanding of the undertaking.

Bob Juliano provided a recap of the project, which included replacing the bridge deck, curbs, bridge rail and approach rail. This undertaking resulted in a No Adverse Effect finding on the Boston and Maine Western Division Railroad.

However, upon further inspection of the bridge, it has been determined that the bridge stringers must also be replaced. B. Juliano explained that the piers and abutments will remain, and the stringers will be replaced in the same configurations with similar sizes. The exact size of stringers are no longer produced. The proposed replacement stingers will be weather weathering steel and not painted green like the existing due to the difficulty of painting the bridge. The Downeaster railroad runs 5 times a day. It proves more cost effective and efficient to replace the stringers, as painting and repairing them may require closure of the rail line for periods of time.

Currently, a precast bridge unit is proposed. It would be lifted in place, accelerating the project timetable. This bridge would have the same size and spacing and spans, so visually there would not be a noticeable difference.

Jill Edelmann noted the bridge was not individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, although it contributes to the railroad district
Jamie Sikora indicated that he had shared information during a conference call with David Clarke. Discussion ensued that even if the bridge was eligible in terms of WPA and contributing to the railroad, the crossing would remain and the proposal uses a sympathetic design, therefore the undertaking would not adversely impact the resource.

Laura Black indicated that if there is physical destruction to the whole or part of the cultural resource, it is an adverse effect. She noted that although the design minimizes the adverse effect as needed for safety and other issues, you can't get around that it is an adverse effect.

Discussion continued on the individual features to be replaced. Jamie Sikora noted this is a deck replacement and Laura Black confirmed that decks are not character defining features. Jamie asked about the stringers and Laura affirmed the stringers are considered character defining, as this is a stringer bridge.

Laura Black discussed another bridge that was reviewed by the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) committee; the WPA was important as a significant context under which resources can be individually eligible. In the case of the subject bridge, the DOE committee stated that they did not receive enough information to accurately review its associations with the WPA. But, because the DOE committee recommended it contributing to the railroad historic district, it would be an adverse impact to the district. Laura Black used the analogy of tearing down a barn on an agricultural property. Jill Edelmann suggested in this instance it is more like tearing down the cladding on the barn and leaving the framing and structure of the barn.

Laura Black reiterated that in this case, the DOT is still proposing to replace the bridge. The superstructure – that which constitutes the core identity of a bridge -- will be entirely replaced. Bob Juliano noted that the bridge is not being removed entirely, as the substructure will be kept. The participants agreed they understood what the physical impacts would be.

Laura Black reiterated that the railroad is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C. And that removal of the proposed elements represents removal of character defining features. Thus the proposed undertaking very clearly an adverse effect, although the minimization efforts may be enough to fulfill the Section 106 mitigation.

Jamie Sikora stated it is not individually eligible, therefore there should be no concern with replacing the deck and stringers. However, knowing that the NHDOT, FHWA and NHDHR are at an impasse, Jamie stated that he will continue consultation with FHWA's David Clarke who will consult with ACHP to come to a dispute resolution.

Submitted by: Sheila Charles and Jill Edelmann, Cultural Resources

New Hampshire Department of Transportation
Cultural Resources Agency Coordination Meeting

Date _____

Please initial next to your name. Guests: Please use reverse side to sign in.

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