BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCE: December 19, 2012
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Christine Perron
Cathy Goodmen
Marc Laurin
Matt Urban
Alex Vogt
Mike Dugas
Ron Grandmaison
John Butler
Trent Zanes
C.R. Willeke
Nasser Yari
Tom Jameson
Ron Kleiner
Nancy Spaulding
Carol Niewola
Michael Pouliot
Chris Carucci
Cassandra Burns
Rick Faul
Levi Byers

Federal Highway Administration
Jamie Sikora

Army Corps of Engineers
Rich Roach

EPA
Mark Kern

NHDES Wetlands Bureau
Gino Infascelli
Lori Sommer

NH Fish & Game
Carol Henderson
Rick Fink
John Wimsatt
Jeff King

NH Natural Heritage Bureau
Melissa Coppola

NHDES Waste Mgmt Div
Rick Berry
Carroll Brown
George Lombardo
Keith Dubois
Mike Wimsatt

US Fish & Wildlife
Brett Hillman

City of Concord
Martha Drukker
Edward Roberge

CLD Engineering
JoAnn Fryer

Normandeau
Jamison Paine

McFarland Johnson
Vicki Chase

Schauer Environmental
Peter Schauer

Steven J. Smith Associates
Bill Stack

Stantec
Leigh Bartlett
Gregg Cohen

Keene Airport
Ed Mattern

VHB
Peter Walker
Dale Abbott

Town Line Trail Dusters
David Murray

(When viewing these minutes online, click on an attendee to send an e-mail)

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NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Finalization of October Meeting Minutes

The October 17, 2012 meeting minutes were finalized.

Hilton Park Docks, no project number

Please contact the NHDES Waste Management Division for minutes.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Concord, BRF-X05099(021), 12004

Rob Faulkner provided a brief summary of the project's history. The project began in 1999 as a NHDOT Preliminary Engineering Project for the replacement of the Sewalls Falls Road Bridge at which time several alignment alternatives were reviewed. Based on input from the community and City of Concord, the project evolved to include the rehabilitation of the existing truss bridge and construction of a single lane bridge upstream of the existing, which was the preferred alternative (Alternative H) at the conclusion of the Preliminary Engineering Phase in 2010. The project has since been turned over to the City of Concord to be completed as a Municipally Managed Bridge Aid Project and is programmed for FY2014 construction.

The results of a detailed inspection and load rating analysis performed by CHA as one of the first steps in the Final Design phase indicated that the existing truss would require extensive rehabilitation in order to carry legal highway loads. In addition, there is a concern as to whether or not Alternative H would meet the long term needs of the City based on potential development and increased traffic demands in the area as well as safety issues associated with the type of structure (non-redundant), roadway alignment, and continuous maintenance needs once the bridge is rehabilitated. As such, the Concord City Council authorized further consideration of two previously evaluated alternatives, construction of a new 2-lane bridge upstream of the existing bridge (Alternative 4) and the on-line replacement of the existing bridge (Alternative 8), to determine which alternative would be best to pursue given the new structural assessment of the rehabilitation Alternative H.

R. Faulkner provided a review of the two alternatives, as summarized below:

Alternative 4 –Off-line Upstream Bridge:

- Profile increase at north abutment of +/- 10';
- Most impacts to LCIP parcel, potential eagle perch trees, wetlands, and ROW;
- Better roadway alignment than Alternative H;
- Second highest construction and maintenance cost.

Alternative 8 – On-line Replacement:

- Profile increase at north abutment +/- 16';
- Least amount of impacts to LCIP parcel, potential eagle perch trees, wetlands, and ROW;
- Ideal roadway alignment;
- Lowest construction and maintenance costs.

All alternatives would include drainage easements at the Fish and Game parcel for a proposed water quality basin as well as the Concord Monitor due to impacts necessary to their existing water quality basin. Relocation of the freshwater Brook Floater Mussels would need to be performed for all alternatives prior to construction.

After further review of the alternatives, the City Engineering Department has prepared a report recommending to City Council that Alternative 4, On-Line Replacement of the existing bridge, be progressed through final design and construction. As such a Public Informational Meeting has been scheduled for January 23, 2013 as part of the Section 106 process, followed by a City Council meeting in early February.

Rich Roach asked what the floodplain and wetland impacts were for Alterative 8. R. Faulkner responded that there were about 13,000 sf of wetland impacts and that he didn't have the floodplain impact areas at hand, but noted that the alternative included being able to push the southern abutment back outside of the currently delineated floodway/floodplain.

R. Roach asked if there would be any downstream impacts. R. Faulkner responded that the alternative would have no downstream effects.

Mark Kern asked if the City had completed the Historic/SHPO process. R. Faulkner responded that the project was presented at the December 6, 2012 Cultural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting and another meeting would be scheduled following the January 23, 2013 public informational and City Council meetings.

R. Roach asked what the land use implications would be by replacing the bridge and whether or not this was accounted for as part of the Bow-Concord Study. He also asked if the proposed watermain across the bridge would support future development. R. Roach further stated that if the existing bridge were rehabilitated and kept in service that it might serve as a restriction to hinder future development and enhance conservation of the area. He noted that NEPA requires the consideration of secondary impacts as part of the alternative evaluation. He expressed concern over excessive development and land clearing along the Merrimack River and asked if there were conservation elements included in the City's Planning and Zoning regulations. Ed Roberge confirmed that Concord's zoning regulations protect open space and shoreland areas within the project area. E. Roberge stated that the area in question for future development is currently zoned as Industrial and is considered under the Bow-Concord Study. He also noted that water service did not currently cross the bridge and the area on the north side was already served. However, a new main across the bridge would allow this area to be looped to improve capacity.

Carol Henderson noted that Fish and Game recommends reducing the impacts to the potential eagle roosting trees as much as possible. R. Faulkner responded that the on-line replacement option resulted in the least impacts. Henderson commented that any impacts to the LCIP land required legislative action. E. Roberge acknowledged this.

Gino Infascelli asked for clarification on the limits of the Bow-Concord planning study and thought that it didn't include the I-93 area in the vicinity of Sewalls Falls Road. J. Sikora noted that the planning study extended to the Exit 17 area.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 1/17/2001, 8/15/2007, 9/15/2010, 11/17/2010.

Farmington, X-A001(152), 16146

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the group to the project and receive initial feedback and input. Jamie Paine, of Normandeau Associates, provided an overview of the project and JoAnn Fryer, of CLD Consulting Engineers, provided detailed descriptions of the alternatives.

The NHDOT proposes to replace the bridge (State Bridge No. 096/140) that carries NH Route 153 over the Cocheco River, just south of downtown Farmington, NH. The road serves as a major route for vehicles entering the City from the south. This structure, a 48-foot two-span concrete girder bridge with a concrete deck, was built in 1924. The area is fairly urban in nature, with a manufacturing facility, former gas station, a large multi-family structure and several other residential structures nearby.

The Cocheco River at this location is a Designated River and fourth-order stream. There is a floodway through the area with 100 and 500 year floodplains located adjacent to portions of the river. Under a 1950's era Army Corps of Engineers project, the section of Cocheco River located immediately upstream from the project was reconstructed to create a flood levee system. The banks along the northern extent of the river were raised and an overflow gate was installed near the bridge. Along the upstream southern bank, an approximate 80 ft long stonewall exists adjacent to the bridge.

The Natural Heritage Bureau review determined that, although there was a NHB record (e.g., rare wildlife, plant, and/or natural community) present in the vicinity, they do not expect that it will be impacted by the proposed project.

CLD has completed preliminary hydraulic analyses, which indicate a required hydraulic opening of 62.5 feet, maintaining the existing low chord elevation of the bridge as 270.0 with at least 1-ft of freeboard over the 100-year storm. Based upon anticipated requirements to provide wildlife access under the bridge, the recommended clear span is 68.5 feet, providing a 10-ft wildlife platform on the west end of the bridge, above the Q2.33 water surface elevation, providing approximately 6-ft of clearance to the bridge beam low chord. No platform is proposed on the east end, as the abutment location has been proposed to align with the existing 6-ft high retaining wall and addition of a platform above the Q2.33 elevation is not feasible without obstructing the lower flows.

Two alignment alternatives are being considered: Bridge on existing alignment using a temporary bridge on the downstream side; and an off-set alignment to the downstream side with phased construction (single lane only during construction). The first alternative has larger temporary impacts, but smaller permanent impacts (both with regards to environmental and property impacts). A new alignment downstream was also investigated to allow for two lanes of traffic on the existing bridge during construction of the new bridge, however, that has been eliminated due to the significant property impacts to construct.

Based on current preliminary plans, the existing alignment alternative with a temporary bridge would have approximately 1,132 sq ft of permanent and 520 sq ft of temporary bank impacts. It would have approximately 385 sq ft of permanent and 550 sq ft of temporary channel impacts. Once it is removed, the existing center pier would account for approximately 112 sq ft of stream restoration.

The off-set alignment alternative would have approximately 1,604 sq ft of permanent and 400 sq ft of temporary bank impacts. It would also have approximately 505 sq ft of permanent and 725 sq ft of temporary channel impacts. The same stream restoration efforts would occur with removal of the existing center pier (approximately 112 sq ft of area).

Jamie Sikora asked if the bridge is historic and stated that the rehabilitation alternative would need to be reviewed and cost estimates documented. J. Paine replied that this meeting is the first resource agency meeting being attended. A file review was completed at NHDHR for their Request for Project Review form, but a meeting has not been held yet.

Rich Roach asked when the FEMA berm was put in and what condition it is in. J. Fryer explained that a levee system was built upstream in the 1950's to control flooding in undeveloped areas. Berm slopes are roughly 2.5:1 and well vegetated. The system is holding up well as during the last few storms there was no known damage.

Carol Henderson asked for more information on impacts in the stream. J. Fryer explained that there will be channel restoration work in the vicinity of the pier removal and permanent placement of stone for scour protection along the abutments.

No one present had concerns with the proposed wildlife passage shelf beneath the bridge. R. Roach concurred that the project would qualify for coverage under the NH Programmatic General Permit.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Laconia Municipal Airport, SBG-09-06-2012

Bill Stack introduced the project, which involves the installation of approximately 15,000 linear feet of perimeter wildlife fence at Laconia Municipal Airport. The fence is based on recommendations in the recently drafted Wildlife Hazard Assessment for Laconia Municipal Airport prepared by USDA Wildlife Services. Approximately 3,300 linear feet of proposed fence would be within wetlands and five stream crossings would be necessary.

B. Stack stated that the preliminary plan design includes the locations of fence posts along the property lines. He noted that the design includes overdriven posts in wetland areas to minimize permanent wetland impacts; concrete footings would be used for upland areas. The USDA Wildlife Services Wildlife Hazard Assessment included a directive for a wildlife fence that consisted of four feet of buried fence material in uplands and two feet of buried fence material in wetlands. The fence will need to cross five streams, and will incorporate drop wire gates over the stream channels. Preliminary phasing of the project and timing of work was discussed. B. Stack noted that in order to try to minimize possible wetland impacts, he has contacted the NHDOT to inquire about the possibility of installing the fence in State right-of-way. (Subsequent to the meeting, a response was received from NHDOT denying the request to place the fence in the controlled access right-of-way.) B. Stack asked for input from the agencies prior to finalizing the design and submitting permit applications.

Rich Roach asked why the fence had to be buried. B. Stack responded that Wildlife Services recommended burial in order to prevent animals from burrowing under the fence to gain access to the airfield.

R. Roach asked if the fence could be moved closer to the runway to reduce wetland impacts. B. Stack responded that there were safety concerns related to maintaining 500 feet from the center line of the runway to clear the protected airspace and avoiding localizer critical area. The project will incorporate feedback from FAA, NHDOT, the environmental agencies, and the airport to keep the new fence on airport property while minimizing wetland impacts. B. Stack noted that master plan had anticipated 4,600 linear feet of new fence, but the project is proposing to install only 3,100 linear feet, which reduces the initial wetland impacts anticipated in the master plan by about 25%.

Christine Perron asked if the square footage of the wetland impact had been calculated. B. Stack stated the fence corridor would be 11 feet wide with temporary wetland impacts of approximately 33,500 square feet, and a 5-foot wide strip of permanent wetland impacts, or approximately 15,500 square feet. These are preliminary calculations.

R. Roach asked if there would be a filled road or foot path around the outside of the fence, and noted that a suspended or cantilevered boardwalk may provide suitable access instead of filling in wetlands. B. Stack answered that a drivable road was not proposed. It was anticipated that, during construction, work would be limited to frozen or dry conditions. There would be some permanent disturbance necessary for a gravel path needed for access and maintenance.

R. Roach questioned if plastic or Kevlar fencing could be used to prevent the deterioration of the posts and fence below grade. He also noted his preference for construction techniques that use low ground pressure equipment or low water/frozen ground conditions. Carol Niewola stated that she does not know of any plastic or Kevlar fence that meets FAA standards. B. Stack stated that this was not considered, but it would be looked into.

C. Perron asked if wetland mitigation would be required for the project. Lori Sommer, Gino Infascelli, and Mark Kern all respond that mitigation would be required and that the use of the NHDES In-Lieu Fee program would be a reasonable approach. Mark Kern stated that he may be interested in seeing temporary impacts included in the mitigation proposal as well but at a lesser ratio.

L. Sommer asked about the prime wetland. B. Stack replied that approximately two-thirds of wetland impacts would be located in prime wetland. Matt Urban commented that impacts would need to be calculated for the prime wetland buffer as well.

G. Infascelli asked if FAA supported the design details as proposed. B. Stack noted that FAA has not yet seen the design. C. Niewola noted that the design seeks to deter wildlife while reducing wetland impact. She stated that the preliminary design plans would be sent to FAA for review and comment.

Carol Henderson asked about trash build up in the stream channels due to the drop gate design.
B. Stack stated that the gate would be at or slightly above the normal water levels.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Dillant Hopkins Airport, SBG-08-10-2012

Leigh Bartlett began the meeting by providing a description of the runway reconstruction project, indicating the existing runway was to be reconstructed in-kind and would not result in the construction of additional impervious surface. He continued by stating that FAA has required that the airport upgrade the runway's safety area to rectify existing safety issues, including the presence of a culvert and stormwater drainage ditch currently located within the designated safety area. Safety area improvements include extending the culvert by approximately 70 feet and filling the existing drainage swale (and reconstructing the swale outside the limits of the runway safety area). L. Bartlett indicated that the project would require a major impact Dredge and Fill Permit from NHDES given the proposed wetland impacts (approximately 25,965 sq. ft.) and the Tier 3 stream on which the culvert is located.

L. Bartlett inquired as to the level of mitigation required as compensation for wetland impacts. Gino Infascelli confirmed that the proposed work would require a major impact wetlands permit and compensatory mitigation. He added that extending the culvert with a pipe similar to the existing pipe was reasonable as no benefits would be recognized from constructing an open or flat-bottom culvert extension.

Lori Sommer added that Stantec should review NHDES Administrative Rules to determine the level of mitigation necessary to satisfy permitting requirements. She recommended that Stantec consult with the Swanzey Conservation Commission to determine if opportunities to provide mitigation locally were available. L. Sommer continued that if no such opportunities were available, mitigation could be provided via the NHDES In-Lieu Fee Program. Mark Kern suggested the mitigation site search should consider "good" sites (those sites exhibiting potential to restore high quality wetland functions and values) and stated that if the site search resulted in only "borderline" or no available sites, the In-Lieu Fee option should be pursued.

Brett Hillman inquired if there would be Shoreland Protection Act impacts resulting from the project. L. Bartlett responded that there are no Designated River or Shoreland Protection Act impacts.

Rich Roach stated that opportunities to provide mitigation locally should be pursued and if no practicable opportunities are available then mitigation could be provided using the In-Lieu Fee. He added that the project would qualify for coverage under the NH Programmatic General Permit.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Moultonborough, non-federal, 15710

Cassandra Burns described the proposed project, which involves safety improvements at the intersection of NH Route 25 and Fox Hollow Road in Moultonborough. NH Route 25 will be widened to add a bypass shoulder along the west side to improve the safety of vehicles turning onto Fox Hollow Road. Minor improvements to the approach profile of Fox Hollow Road at its intersection with NH Route 25 will improve the sight distance of vehicles exiting Fox Hollow Road. Minor drainage work will occur, resulting in minor impacts to an excavated wetland ditch.

Gino Infascelli stated that the impacts would likely qualify for a minimum impact permit. No other concerns were expressed.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Gilford, X-A000(187), 16207

This Highway Safety Improvement project involves reconstruction of the intersection of NH Route 11A, Belknap Mountain Road, and Schoolhouse Hill Road. Trent Zanes provided an overview of the project. Due to the number of accidents at the intersection, the sight distance from Belknap Mountain Road and Schoolhouse Hill Road needs to be improved. The guardrail on the east side of NH Route 11A will be pulled back and the shoulders slightly widened. The existing stone retaining wall on the west side of NH Route 11A will be reconstructed 8 to 10 feet further back into the slope. A geo-grid will be used to stabilize this slope and will reduce the impacts to the slope. A geo-grid will also be constructed on the east side of NH Route 11A along the highway slope adjacent to the Gunstock River. All work will remain within the existing ROW.

Marc Laurin stated that there will not be any direct impacts to the Gunstock River; however since the highway fill slopes along the guardrail south and north of the intersection extend steeply down to the edge of the river in some areas, bank impacts will occur. Matt Urban asked if the river was a 4th order stream. M. Laurin replied that he would check, but did not think it was. (Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that it is not a 4th order stream at this location.) Mark Kern asked if the impacts would be less than 10,000 square feet. M. Laurin stated that impacts would likely be less than 10,000 square feet, but

impacts have not yet been calculated. The Department will quantify the impacts when the jurisdictional areas are plotted and the Preliminary Design has been completed. There were no concerns with the proposed impacts.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Durham-Newmarket, STP-TE-X-5133(009), 13080

Ron Grandmaison discussed this Transportation Enhancement project, which will construct bike shoulders and formalize existing bus stops from the Oyster River Bridge in Durham to Sanborn Avenue in Newmarket. There are four NH Fish and Game conservation parcels along the project area. Discussion focused on the on-going mitigation discussions between DOT and F&G that deal with enhancing wildlife connectivity at Ellison Brook by increasing the NH Route 108 culvert width and providing a dry passage through the culvert. R. Grandmaison stated that there is no project need to replace the existing culvert and the Department would propose to construct a new culvert that is less than 10 feet in width in order to avoid changing the crossing's designation from culvert to bridge. These improvements would not be in total accordance with the stream crossing rules, which would require a span much greater than 10 feet, though it would be an improvement to the existing conditions as it would meet the 50 year flood, but not the bank-to-bank requirement of the rules.

Carol Henderson stated that F&G is in favor of enhancing the Ellison Brook connection as the watershed as been identified as one of the largest freshwater systems on the Seacoast. R. Grandmaison asked if it would be possible to obtain the necessary waivers of the stream crossing rules if the culvert was replaced. If a waiver cannot be approved,, the Department would not be able to replace this culvert as part of the mitigation package. Christine Perron clarified that requests for rule waivers typically are not necessary given that Alternative Designs can be approved under the stream crossing rules if certain conditions are met.

Mark Kern asked about the project's schedule. R. Grandmaison stated that there will be two separate construction contracts. The 13080A project, which contains Ellison Brook, is scheduled for advertising in April 2014, and the B contract would be advertised late in 2014. DOT anticipates submitting a permit application in Spring 2013 depending on resolution of mitigation. Lori Sommer inquired about the overall impacts and mitigation. R. Grandmaison explained that wetland impacts are approximately one acre, which as discussed and agreed to at past meetings would be mitigated by using the funds equivalent to an ARM Fund payment (approximately $140,000) on wildlife passage enhancement measures at other culverts, for turtle crossing signs, and designing turtle nesting exclusion areas (stone slope) along the eastern side of the roadway. The mitigation package has not yet been finalized.

Gino Infascelli questioned whether backwater would prevent the establishment of a dry passage along Ellison Brook. R. Grandmaison replied that hydraulically the existing culvert does not need to be replaced and that the existing channel width of 5 feet would suffice to convey the water most of the time. The dry passage would be accomplished with the construction of a shelf at a higher elevation next to this channel. M. Kern agreed that this would improve the crossing and that the proposal had merit, but overall, as this is a valuable area with a lot of conservation land, more mitigation details need to be provided. He suggested that it may make sense to contribute to the Great Bay project if the timing is appropriate.

Melissa Coppola stated that a new Natural Heritage Bureau review should be requested as the last review was done in 2010.

All agreed with pursuing the alternative design concept for the Ellison Brook crossing. R. Grandmaison agreed to return to a future meeting to present a mitigation package for the overall project.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 12/18/2002, 12/17/2003, 5/18/2005, 2/20/2008, 5/21/2008, 1/20/2010.

Portsmouth, STP-X-5379(025), 13455

This project involves permanently incorporating the Albacore Connector Road into the roadway system in Portsmouth. John Butler provided a brief history of the project to date. The Albacore Connector, which connects the US Route 1 Bypass to Market Street in Portsmouth, was built as an emergency temporary solution to address the closing of the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge in 2006. After the bridge was repaired and re-opened, the Connector was closed, but when the bridge was later down-posted to 20 tons, the Connector was re-opened. Currently, the I-95 bridge provides the only truck access across the Piscataqua River. The Connector provides access to the US Route 1 bypass from the I-95 bridge for trucks exceeding the 20-ton limit.

The Connector was built with a temporary easement between the state and the landowner, the Albacore Park. The Department plans to acquire the land permanently and to make the Connector a permanent city road. The construction necessary to make the road permanent will be minor, with some limited shoulder work and the addition of a sidewalk from Market Street to the park entrance.

Vicki Chase provided an overview of natural resources around the connector. The Connector is surrounded by tidal wetlands, and there are disturbed freshwater wetlands on either side of the Connector near the Bypass. Wetlands and uplands have been repeatedly disturbed in this area during the construction of Market Street, the installation of the Albacore at its current location, and probably at other times. The construction of the Connector involved 750 square feet of fill in freshwater wetlands, for which the Department received emergency authorization from NHDES. The additional work will not have any direct impacts to wetland, but will incur about 2,000 square feet of disturbance within the tidal buffer zone for sidewalk construction and shoulder improvements. The Department will include the 750 square feet of previously impacted wetlands in an application to be submitted to NHDES when impact numbers are finalized.

Although the project was initially state funded, the formalization of the Connector is being funded under the Route 1 Bypass project, so a NEPA document (Categorical Exclusion) is being prepared. There are no rare species occurrences in the vicinity of the project, and a noise study and air quality study are both underway. The Albacore is a National Historic Landmark, but Albacore Park has been determined to be ineligible for the National Register. A determination of effect under Section 106 has not yet been made on the effect of the road construction on the NHL.

Lori Sommer asked if there were drainage structures proposed. John Butler replied that none currently exist, and that drainage sheet flows off the Connector Road. Albacore Park representatives have expressed a concern that drainage from the Connector Road may be affecting the submarine display basin. A drainage catch basin may be constructed in the southwest quadrant of the intersection to address this concern.

Rich Roach commented that the Connector appeared to serve a useful purpose, that the environmental harm had already occurred, and that it seemed to make sense to leave it in place. Rich suggested that the Department could provide some mitigation to improve the degraded wetlands in the vicinity. Carol Henderson suggested that given the large amount of invasive species in the area (Phragmites, honeysuckle, bittersweet), perhaps invasive species control would be appropriate mitigation. Mark Kern suggested that Dave Burdick at UNH could be consulted for potential mitigation ideas. The Albacore Park is also seeking mitigation through the Section 106 process, depending on the outcome of the Determination of Effect.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Manchester, non-federal, 16099

Peter Walker and Dale Abbott of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) presented an overview of a Planning Study addressing transportation needs along approximately three miles of the F.E Everett Turnpike (I-293) in Manchester. The purpose of this Resource Agency Meeting was to introduce the agencies to the project, review key issues, and solicit any substantial concerns or issues from the agencies. The project study area extends from the overpass at West Bridge Street north of Exit 5 (Granite Street), through and including Exit 6 (Goffstown Road), to approximately one mile north of Exit 7 (NH Route 3A). The purpose of the Planning Study is to consider transportation system modifications aimed at addressing capacity and safety related deficiencies along the mainline and at the interchanges (Exits 6 & 7).

P. Walker described the project study area and provided a brief overview of the types of alternatives that will be evaluated within the study corridor. He noted that this is a feasibility level Planning Study and not a NEPA document. Several public information meetings have already been held and focused on developing scoping information, listening to community concerns, and defining the problems within the study area. A Purpose and Need statement will be developed this winter/spring. Development and preliminary evaluation of alternatives will be getting underway within the next couple of weeks, and the overall Planning Study is scheduled to be completed by August 2013. A key feature of the project would involve moving Exit 7 to the north and constructing a new interchange that would connect I-293 to Dunbarton Road to the north of the former Manchester Landfill.

D. Abbott described the environmental work that has taken place to date, including an overview of major resources present within the study area. Resource Agency scoping letters have been sent. Reconnaissance-level field work has been conducted by Nancy Rendall, Senior Wetland Scientist, and included visiting all wetlands, taking basic field notes, and sketching the wetlands. Locations of invasive species were also recorded while conducting the wetland field work. NHDHR site reviews and field inspections have also been completed.

D. Abbott presented two key environmental issues that have been identified. First, there are environmental constraints in the vicinity of the “Coca Cola Curve” on the mainline of I-293. In this area the existing Turnpike is bordered by the Merrimack River to the east and the Amoskeag Millyard Historic District, National Register Listed, to the west. There is very little room in this area to construct additional travel lanes without impacting these resources.

D. Abbott then described the other key environmental issue, which occurs at Exit 7. One of the alternatives is to relocate Exit 7 north of the Manchester Community College, and provide an east/west connection to Front Street and Dunbarton Road. The former landfill is located in this area, and to the north of the landfill there is a large, unfragmented tract of land and wetlands adjacent to the Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve.

Rich Roach expressed concern with the construction of the Front Street/Dunbarton Road connection. Specifically, he was concerned about direct and secondary impacts to the natural resources in the Hackett Hill area. With regards to secondary impacts, he discussed how the City has been looking to build a commercial/industrial park at Hackett Hill. R. Roach also expressed serious reservations about any alternative that would move the highway closer to the Merrimack River at the Coca Cola curve.

Mark Kern provided some background information on the commercial/industrial development that has been planned for Hackett Hill. He also described some of the previous environmental studies that have taken place in the area that discussed current and future preservation measures to the Manchester Cedar Swamp.

R. Roach requested that VHB look at a new alternative for Exit 7 that would involve constructing the connector road through the Manchester Landfill, which would still provide the east/west connection from Front Street to Dunbarton Road. He also stated that if the new connector road was to be built just north of the existing landfill then the mitigation package would likely involve preserving additional land within Hackett Hill.

P. Walker presented an additional request that had been made by the Town of Goffstown and members of the public, which involves extending the east/west connector Road to Goffstown Road. He stated that this would mean crossing Black Brook and the large wetland complex located in this area. Those present from the resource agencies felt this would not be a good alternative and recommended against extending the connection to Goffstown Road.

P. Walker noted that under the current scope of work, VHB is tasked with presenting at two Resource Agency Meetings. He stated that VHB would likely request a second meeting in May or June once the alternative development process has been completed.

No other questions or concerns were raised about the project.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.