STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF RAIL AND TRANSIT

FIELD REVIEW REPORT

DATE OF FIELD REVIEW: June 30, 2017

LOCATION OF REVIEW: Abandoned Pan-Am rail corridor - Concord to Boscawen (see map)

PARTICIPANTS:
Left to Right:

1. John Hanson, New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC)
2. Jennifer Kretovic, Concord City Councilor
3. Tim Blagden, Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail (CLSRT)
4. George Heaton, Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT)
SUBJECT: Pan-Am Abandonment, Concord, NH

PURPOSE: To conduct a field walk with interested stakeholders to review corridor conditions and FMRGT’s vision for a future rail trail that will connect the northern rail trail to Concord and further the concept of the Granite State Rail Trail.

NOTES ON FIELD REVIEW: On Friday June 30, 2017, Craig Tufts, Planner from the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC), led a group of interested stakeholders on a field walk of the approximately 6.5 mile section of the Pan Am owned rail corridor from Commercial Street in Concord north to the Boscawen Park & Ride.

Start Location – Commercial Street, Concord NH

After assembling at the CNHRPC office parking area, the group walked to the beginning of the abandoned section of rail corridor that begins adjacent to the unpaved roadway running between Commercial Street and Horseshoe Pond Lane. The portion of track to the south of this location has not been abandoned but may have that potential considering the future redevelopment made possible through the Storrs Street extension and I-93 widening projects. If a new rail siding is built in the southern end of the rail yard it may make it possible for Pan Am to continue rail services without the use of this spur. The addition of this spur as a future rail trail would allow for a continuous trail all the way to downtown Concord.
Horseshoe Pond

Shortly after the field review started, field review participants passed over a short bridge making their way to the so called Horseshoe Island that is surrounded by Horseshoe Pond. A buried fiber optic cable warning marker is visible on the west side of the corridor. A fiber optic cable appears to be buried for the length of the abandoned rail section. Towards the end of the fields, Mile Marker 47 is visible on the east side of the tracks along with a sign indicating “End of Concord Industrial Track”. There is a city sewer line running north/south on the east side of the track. The city had recently mowed the area above the sewer line and vehicle tracks were observed worn into the grass indicating regular access by service vehicles. Some members of the group opted to walk on the mowed trail above the sewer line while others walked along the tracks. It appeared either the rail bed or the trail over the sewer could be used for a future trail in this area.

Smokestack Center

This corridor runs relatively close to the Smokestack Center. A non-motorized connection to this historic...
location that now contains various businesses including a yoga studio, senior center, day spa, and a bar/eatery might offer trail users a destination and/or place for a break. A connection to the trail would need to overcome the approximately 50 feet of elevation difference from the trail to the business area.

Some culverts in this area appeared blocked or otherwise damaged as evidenced by ponding water on the west side of the tracks. These culverts would require repair during rail trail construction. Beaver activity was also observed on the west side of the tracks in this area possibly contributing to the ponding and culvert problems. Moving north, the rail corridor extends through NHDOC owned land. Currently, the fields are not being used. However, they have been used in the past to grow food for inmates and it is anticipated that the fields will be used for that purpose again. An agreement would likely need to be negotiated to allow the public through this area before a rail trail is built. While inmates anticipated to work in the fields would be minimum security, a perceived risk could be present to the public.
The rail corridor runs along the western bank of the Merrimack River. An island with sandbar is visible through the trees along the bank prior to reaching the crossing of 2nd St. Participants commented on the scenic nature of the area and the remote feeling even though the corridor is not far from US 3 or 2nd St at this point. The West Concord River Oxbow Pond is located on the west side of the corridor and the Morono Park Trail (owned and maintained by the City of Concord) is located to west of the pond. The Morono trail terminates at the NHDOC property line. Participants suggested that perhaps this trail could link to the future rail trail eliminating the dead end.

2nd Street Crossing

After approximately 3 miles, the corridor crosses 2nd Street. A turn-around/ parking area is located adjacent to the crossing and could be a popular place to pick up the future trail. 2nd Street connects to Sewalls Falls Road to the west and the Sewalls Falls State Recreation Area to the east. The Upland Trail beginning adjacent to the turn-around/ parking area runs north to Sewalls Falls road on the west side of the rail corridor and the River Trail on the east side of the rail corridor runs from the Sewalls Falls State Recreation Area north along the bank of the Merrimack River to the Sewalls Falls Bridge and boat launch.
Sewalls Falls Road Crossing

Continuing north from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Street crossing, passing mile marker 50, the corridor curves to the northwest eventually crossing Sewalls Falls Road approximately 1 mile from the 2nd Street crossing. The tracks were removed during the Sewalls Falls Bridge replacement project that was recently completed. The boat launch and trailhead parking area is approximately \(1/10\text{th}\) of a mile from the Sewalls Falls Road crossing, another good location for people looking to access the future rail trail. Moving northerly along the corridor, an unnamed trail originating from the Sewalls Fall’s boat launch area and trailhead crosses the corridor, leading towards a residential area to the southwest.

Goodwin Point/ Penacook

Further to the north along the corridor participants crossed a bridge leading to an area called Goodwin Point. Goodwin point appears to be an island connected by two rail bridges and looks to have been a meander of the Merrimack River that was cut off when rail construction came through the area, creating a peninsula.

The majority of Goodwin Point is used as agricultural fields.

Continuing north, the rail corridor runs between Morrill Farm, a dairy farm, and the city of Concord’s wastewater water treatment facility in Penacook, crossing the treatment center access road the corridor is overgrown. The rest of the corridor to this point was relatively free of any substantial over growth. Continuing north along the corridor, a bridge spans the southerly fork or the Contoocook River as it meets the Merrimack River just south of the Concord/ Boscawen town line.
Hannah Dustin Memorial Area

After passing over the railroad bridge, the Hannah Dustin Monument is visible. A railroad bridge spanning the northerly fork of the Contoocook River is located north of the monument, after which is a paved path leading to the I-93 exit 17 park & ride lot, a popular place to park to gain access to the Northern Rail Trail that currently begins one half mile to the north. A kiosk with trail information is located near the path from the Park & Ride. A sign at the kiosk indicated 0.5 miles to the current terminus of the Northern Rail Trail.

Attached: Maps 1 through 5

Submitted by
\s\ Erik H. Paddleford

cc (email):
S:\Rail-Transit\BikePedProgram\Public outreach\2017\Concord Pan Am Walk\Pan_Am_Concord_Review.doc
Bridges: Type (truss, through-plate girder, etc), visual inspection of condition of superstructure and abutments, measure the clear width on deck. Bridge lengths may be on the val maps.

RR embankment: identify sections where railing will be required for safety due to steep side slopes and/or adjacent water bodies. Periodically measure the width of level bed (recalling that a 10’ path with 2’ shoulders = 14’, whereas many rail beds are only 9’ wide on top)

Condition of large culverts.

Any slope failures.
Legend

- Property Boundaries (2015)
- Ownership (2012)
  - Boston & Maine Corp
  - City Of Concord
  - State/nh

1 inch = 500 feet

Bridges: Type (truss, through-plate girder, etc), visual inspection of condition of superstructure and abutments, measure the clear width on deck. Bridge lengths may be on the val maps.

RR embankment: identify sections where railing will be required for safety due to steep side slopes and/or adjacent water bodies. Periodically measure the width of level bed (recalling that a 10’ path with 2’ shoulders = 14’, whereas many rail beds are only 9’ wide on top)

Condition of large culverts.
Any slope failures.
Bridges: Type (truss, through-plate girder, etc), visual inspection of condition of superstructure and abutments, measure the clear width on deck. Bridge lengths may be on the val maps.

RR embankment: identify sections where railing will be required for safety due to steep side slopes and/or adjacent water bodies. Periodically measure the width of level bed (recalling that a 10’ path with 2’ shoulders = 14’, whereas many rail beds are only 9’ wide on top)

Condition of large culverts.
Any slope failures.
Bridges: Type (truss, through-plate girder, etc), visual inspection of condition of superstructure and abutments, measure the clear width on deck. Bridge lengths may be on the val maps.

RR embankment: Identify sections where railing will be required for safety due to steep side slopes and/or adjacent water bodies. Periodically measure the width of level bed (recalling that a 10’ path with 2’ shoulders = 14’, whereas many rail beds are only 9’ wide on top)

Condition of large culverts.

Any slope failures.
Legend

Boscawen Ownership (2015)
- Town of Boscawen
- State Land (bosc)
- Boscawen Property Boundaries (2015)
- Concord Property Boundaries (2015)

Ownership (2012)
- Boston & Maine Corp
- City Of Concord
- State Land (Conc)

1 inch = 500 feet