



Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT Connecticut River Bridge Project

Project Advisory Committee Meeting #7

**10 Main Street
Hinsdale, NH 03451**

MINUTES

June 5, 2019

Project Advisory Committee: Peter Elwell (Chair), *Town Manager, Town of Brattleboro, VT*; Michael Abbott, *Representative, New Hampshire State Legislature*; John Gomarlo, *Member/Resident, Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) Transportation Advisory Committee/Town of Winchester, NH*; Bob Harcke, *President, Hinsdale Commercial and Industrial Development Corporation*; Kathryn Lynch, *Community Development Coordinator, Town of Hinsdale*; Fred Moriarty, *Board of Trustees Treasurer, Brattleboro Museum and Art Center*; Lew Sorenson, *Member/Resident, Windham Regional Commission (WRC) Transportation Committee/Town of Dummerston, VT*; Ed Smith, *Member/Resident, SWRPC Transportation Advisory Committee/Town of Hinsdale, NH*

Project Advisory Committee Lead Team: Chris Baker, *Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans)*; Don Lyford, *New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)*; J. B. Mack, *SWRPC*; Marion Major, *WRC*; Bill Saffian, *NHDOT*; David Scott, *NHDOT*; Trent Zanes, *NHDOT*

Guests: Anthony King, *NHDOT*; Frank Podlenski, *Town of Hinsdale, NH*; Steve Barrett, *Town of Brattleboro, VT*; Michael Fifield, *Barrows & Fisher Oil Company*.

I. Approval of Minutes from November 27, 2018 Meeting:

Chair Elwell called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and attendees introduced themselves. The minutes of November 27, 2018 were approved unanimously after making a change to Bob Harcke's title for the Hinsdale Commercial and Industrial Development Corporation from "President" to "Vice-President."

II. General Project Updates:

NHDOT presented the following updates to the bridge design:

- NHDOT moved the first span on the Vermont side further west about 18 feet as compared to the previous design. This also resulted in widening the bridge slightly to account for a tighter turning angle where the bridge meets VT Route 142.
- The wing walls that were previously designed for the area where the bridge connects to Vermont have to be changed to U-back style walls. The U-back style walls will allow the former Marlborough College parking lot to expand its parking to make up for parking spaces it will lose as part of the redesign of VT Route 142.

- With respect to the bridge piers, NHDOT created a pointed nose along the entire height of the exposed pier after examining historic flooding and icing events on the Connecticut River. The armoring and pointed nose feature will prevent ice damage to the piers. Upstream and downstream sides will have the pointed nose feature for symmetry however, only upstream side will be reinforced armor. The pier bases (where armored noses were previously designed for river ice events) are no longer widened.
- Currently NHDOT has proposed 2 bumpouts which are centered overlooking the main river channel and eastern smaller channel. There is about 66.5 square feet of space available in each of the overlooks in the current design. NHDOT has requested that the Project Advisory Committee provide a final recommendation on the number, dimensions, and locations of the overlooks.

NHDOT provided the following updates on changes to VT Route 142:

- The former Marlborough College parking lot will be longer but narrower than it is today. It will have the same amount of spaces that are currently present in the parking lot. The property line will shift closer to the bridge. Sue Fillion questioned if this change needs to come before the Town of Brattleboro's Development Review Board. Bill Saffian responded that it will be up to the town but it is premature at this point.
- FHWA has ruled that the sidewalk on the southeast side of VT Route 142 project area must be identified as a separate project since it wasn't part of the original proposal listed in the environmental assessment.
- Drainage piping from an NHDOT engineered wetland and road will be combined into one pipe for discharge into the Connecticut River.
- As a reminder, the project bid advertisement date has changed from September 2019 to May 26, 2020. The project end date will be unaffected by this change and will still be completed in 2023.

III. Bridge Lighting

NHDOT requested commitment from the Project Advisory Committee on the number, design, and the spacing of the lights. Bill Saffian explained that the recommendation from the Towns of Brattleboro and Hinsdale was for solar lights focusing on pedestrian safety. The Project Advisory Committee discussed the design and cost of lighting. NHDOT noted that lighting along sidewalks approaching the bridge are included in the project and are eligible costs under this project budget. The Project Advisory Committee indicated they are interested in lighting extending onto the sidewalks. NHDOT explained that the cost of maintenance would be borne by the Towns.

Bill Saffian reported that the selected light design selected by Hinsdale and Brattleboro is being phased out by manufacturers in preference to an upgraded model which has increased capacity to capture solar. Pole heights range from 15 to 25 feet. Chris Baker suggested that a comparison between solar and wired LED lights may show that LED lights are less expensive including maintenance costs. Peter Elwell requested NHDOT to provide a life cycle analysis comparison of the two lighting options. The Project Advisory Committee agreed that staff from Brattleboro and Hinsdale would be entrusted with selecting the lights before the next PAC meeting with the understanding the committee prefers 15 ft pole, city wrap design.

IV. Bridge Overlooks and Interpretive Signage

The committee discussed the dimensions of the bridge overlooks. Interpretive signs are planned to be integrated into these overlooks. Bill Saffian noted that Hinsdale and Brattleboro previously recommended signs with dimensions of 36x24 inches. They will not attach to the top rail as it would be too high. There was consensus among the Project Advisory Committee to plan for two overlooks, centered on the channels.

However, the Project Advisory Committee tasked staff from Hinsdale and Brattleboro to come to a decision on the size and content of the overlooks. Bill Saffian agreed to develop some renderings to help the Towns get a sense of the overlook design and the amount of space people and signs would take up in the overlook space. Towns will respond to dimension changes between the 6x17 or 9x20 feet.

V. Existing Bridges Subcommittee Update

J. B. Mack and Marion Major reported that they met with the Existing Bridges Subcommittee to provide a summary on existing conditions relating to the Charles Dana and Anna Hunt Marsh bridges and Hinsdale Island. The report included information about the 12210C environmental assessment, census data, and land use data. The inventory is meant to serve as baseline data for the design of the project area. Subcommittee members reported that they thought the key takeaways from the report included:

- The need for collaboration between the States and Towns on long term decisions on maintenance responsibility and ownership of the Charles Dana and Anna Hunt Marsh bridges. NHDOT responded that they are in the process of getting more information on rehabilitation plans and future maintenance plans for the bridges which would help that conversation.
- The island is composed of sediment with the vegetation being one of the important factors keeping it from eroding. The topography of the island all lies in a floodplain except for where the road was built up. Concern for safety and surveillance was raised.
- Eversource will not maintain their utilities infrastructure on non-state roads. If electricity remains on the bridges, responsibility will fall back on the towns to figure out how to fund lighting.
- The existing bridges maintenance project is separate from the new bridge project and any delays will not impact the project schedule for the new bridge.

VI. Next Meeting

No meeting was scheduled at this time. A Doodle poll will go out when the Project Lead Team is ready to present new information to the Project Advisory Committee.

VII. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Major
Planner