

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: Lancaster, NH – Guildhall, VT 16155
Rehabilitation of the US Route 2 (Rogers’ Rangers) Bridge over the
Connecticut River

DATE OF CONFERENCE: November 8, 2012

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Lancaster Town Hall Auditorium, 25 Main Street
Lancaster, NH

ATTENDED BY:

Bob Landry	NHDOT – Project Manager
Joe Adams	NHDOT – Project Engineer
Christine Perron	NHDOT – Bureau of Environment
Shelia Charles	NHDOT – Bureau of Environment
Brian Schutt	NHDOT – District 1
Matthew Low	Hoyle, Tanner and Associates
Ed Weingartner	Hoyle, Tanner and Associates
Bill Remick	NH State Representative
Kaitlin O’Shea	VTrans
Scott Newman	VTrans
Ben Gaetjens-Oleson	Town of Lancaster
Tim Cahill	Selectboard, Town of Guildhall
Peggy Cahill	Land Owner
Shane Beattie	Land Owner
Conan Eaton	Auburn State Farm, Land Owner
Lucas Eaton	Auburn State Farm, Land Owner
Kenneth Hodgdon	Land Owner
Pammy Hodgdon	Land Owner
Troy Burns	Bridge Street Land Owner

SUBJECT: Public Informational Meeting to receive project input, issues and concerns.

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Bob Landry began the meeting with NHDOT and Hoyle, Tanner staff introductions. Bob continued the meeting by describing this project is in the very early stage of design and this meeting was being held to solicit Town and State Officials and public input, concerns and issues that should be considered as potential bridge rehabilitation/replacement alternatives are developed and evaluated. He then turned the meeting over to Joe Adams to begin the presentation.

Joe began the presentation by describing the project and providing existing bridge background information. Joe then turned the meeting over to Ed Weingartner to present the findings of the in-depth inspection performed in September 2011. Ed described the condition of the bridge deck and floor system and truss members and the level of deterioration. Ed described impact damage to truss vertical and

bracing members and noted that the bridge was struck twice during the inspection and a third vehicle nearly did not make it through because of the vertical clearance. Ed also noted that a structural analysis was performed and there was a need to make repairs in order for the “E-1” posting to remain in effect.

Ed turned the meeting back over to Joe to discuss why bridge rehabilitation and replacement alternatives will be investigated. Joe also described the following as possible traffic control alternatives:

- Close bridge for repair (detour length is approximately 13 miles).
- Temporary bridge located upstream.
- New bridge located upstream.

He then noted the following anticipated construction durations for each of the possible traffic control alternatives:

- Close bridge: 1 to 2 seasons.
- Temporary Bridge: 3 seasons, 2 seasons until open for traffic.
- New Bridge: 2 seasons.

Joe continued the presentation indicating the initial bridge rehabilitation evaluation suggests the following work is required:

- Replace bridge deck.
- Repair or replace floor system.
- Repair or replace bottom chord.
- Repair or replace diagonal and vertical members as required.
- Replace truss bracing to improve vertical clearance.

Joe concluded the presentation by indicating the following will be considered in the alternatives evaluation:

- Initial construction and life cycle cost.
- Public safety.
- Environmental impacts.
- Property impacts.
- Public input.

Christine Perron described the environmental review to date. It is known that the bridge itself is a historic structure since it is over 50 years old. Further study is underway to determine if additional historic resources exist in the project area. She explained that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act offer owners of historic properties directly affected by the project or agencies that possess a direct interest in the historical resources, an opportunity to become more involved in an advisory role during project development. They may become what are known as Consulting Parties to the Section 106 process. Christine noted that she had handouts describing the Consulting Party process in more detail. Regarding natural resources, it is anticipated that wetland permits will be needed from the NH Department of Environmental Services and the US Army Corps of Engineers. As the project proceeds, the Department would continue to coordinate with the appropriate agencies, including the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the Connecticut River and its floodplain as well as any species of concern that occur in the project area.

Joe turned the meeting over to Bob, who then opened the floor for public questions and comments.

Public Questions and Comments:

Question: Bill Remick, State Representative, asked how much Vermont Transportation would pay as part of the project?

Response: Bob Landry responded that the division of payment is based upon the state boundary. The state boundary line is the historical 1936 west side bank, but was unsure of the actual percentage (later determined as 80/20), however, Vermont will pay for their roadway and abutment, plus part of the bridge. There is also an agreement to split the costs of the engineering at 80% NH and 20 Vermont.

Comment: The Town is not in favor of a full detour. They think the detour routes could be confusing as the Orne Covered Bridge has a capacity limit and only some vehicles could go that way, but others would have to go another route.

Response: Bob Landry stated that NHDOT does not typically sign detour routes on local roads so the detour routes would be state routes and would have to be suitable for all vehicles.

Question: Concern was raised over the fact that the project is currently programmed for FY2020 construction funding. Will the bridge last that long posted as E-1? It is critical that trucks be able to go over the bridge.

Response: Bob Landry stated that NHDOT Bridge Maintenance would be monitoring the bridge and making repairs as necessary to keep the bridge open to trucks for as long as possible, hopefully until construction. He said that most school buses and fire equipment can even cross a bridge that is posted for 20 tons weight posting, but NHDOT understands the importance of keeping US Route 2 open to trucks

Question: One attendee asked that if the bridge was going to be replaced, what bridge type would it be? Would it be a truss? Girder bridge?

Response: Bob Landry stated that we have not yet developed concepts yet but any truss replacement option would have 16'-6" vertical clearance similar to the interstate bridges.

Question: Bob Landry asked if any pedestrians use the bridge.

Response: Some people said no, one attendee said that there were quite a few. Snowmobiles are more of a concern than pedestrians. It may be beneficial to make it so that two snowmobiles (one in each direction, 10-foot sidewalk) can cross the bridge at once due to the length of the bridge. Snowmobile activities are the major tourism during winter months in this region.

Question: The Town raised concern that hidden deterioration encountered in rehabilitation could unexpectedly extend the construction schedule.

Response: Bob Landry stated that if the rehabilitation option was pursued, a contingency would be built into the schedule to account for the likelihood of encountering changed conditions and additional work that is needed.

Comment: One resident (abutter on the Vermont upstream side) said that due to the condition of the bridge it needs a "wreckingball" and needs to be replaced.

Comment: The old barn near the bridge is a snowmobile museum (this may have been a joke, but the barn does look historic)?

Comment: One resident (abutter on the Vermont downstream side) stated that closing the bridge for any amount of time would destroy his business.

Question: One resident asked how close the bridge was to being downposted?

Response: Bob Landry stated that this is a very hard question to answer, and one that science does

not really allow us to answer at this point. Some bridges deteriorate rapidly, some take a long time. He gave the Memorial Bridge as an example of where NHDOT thought they had more time, and it accelerated so quickly that the bridge had to be closed before they thought it would. However, knowing the importance of this bridge, that is why this project is being worked on now before it is too late.

Question: Will the next meeting have concepts and costs?

Response: Bob Landry replied "yes".

The date of the next meeting will be in January or February and be held in Guildhall, Vermont.

Question: Bob Landry asked if there was a good way to advertise the meeting to the public?

Response: There were no other ideas brought forward, possibly the local radio station 102. (Although after the presentation one resident did ask if future meeting notices and general project information could be posted on the NHDOT website)

Submitted by:

Edward G. Weingartner, P.E.
Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Inc.