

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

NEW IPSWICH, X-A000(403), 14465

NH ROUTE 123/ NH 124

Commission

PUBLIC HEARING

December 15, 2010 -- Mascenic High School Cafeteria -- 7:00 PM

The following decisions are the Department's resolution of issues as a result of the testimony presented at the December 15, 2010 Public Hearing and written testimony subsequently submitted for the New Ipswich, X-A000(403), 14465, project described as:

Reconstruct the NH Route 123/ NH 124 (Turnpike Road) deficient bridge over the Souhegan River beginning at a point in the existing traveled way of NH 123/ NH 124 approximately three hundred and fifty (350) feet west of the Souhegan River and extending easterly approximately nine hundred (900) feet to a point in the existing traveled way of NH 124. The existing bridge consists of two separate structures: an upper steel and concrete bridge (c. 1957) that will be replaced, and a lower stone bridge ("High bridge", c. 1820) that will be rehabilitated and preserved. The replacement bridge will be self-supporting and will span the lower bridge. The road reconstruction will also include minor improvements to NH 123 (High Bridge Road) and River Road. The reconstructed NH 123/ NH 124 bridge and roadway will provide eleven (11) foot wide travel lanes, four (4) foot wide paved shoulders and a five (5) foot wide sidewalk.

During construction local traffic and through traffic will be diverted around the area via other existing roadways. Bus and emergency vehicles will be detoured to Mill Street and Ypya Drive where a temporary bridge will span the Souhegan River.

1. Jennifer Schwartz, parcel 34, expressed opposition to the project as laid out. She is concerned about impacts to her property and the loss of trees that could happen if improvements to NH 123 need to be completed at the intersection with Ypya Road for the detour to function. She suggests rebuilding the NH 123/ NH 124 bridge one lane at a time.

*Response:* The Department also has concerns with the steep embankment at this property and potential loss of trees on the slope and at the top of the slope if adjustments are made to NH 123 at the Ypya Road intersection. The Department has investigated this further and reduced the Route 123 construction so the embankment and the trees will not be impacted.

Due to the design of the existing bridge it is not possible to rebuild the bridge one lane at a time and still maintain traffic on the existing bridge. A one-lane temporary detour bridge would be needed, which would have additional property impacts, safety concerns due to the detour operation through a winter season with relatively steep roadway grades on NH 124, and additional cost considerations. For these reasons, this alternative was reviewed and rejected by the Project Advisory Committee made up of Town Officials, Southwest Regional Planning Commission, New Ipswich citizens, and Department staff.

2. Michael Herr, Douglas Campbell and Amie Veilleux, Mill Street, are opposed to the use of Mill Street as a detour. They are concerned that all the traffic from NH 123/ NH 124 is going to be detouring down this narrow street that has buildings close to the edge of the roadway.

*Response:* The use of Mill Street as a detour is not intended to accept all the traffic that currently uses NH 123/124. Rather, with signage and enforcement it is intended that through traffic will find alternative routes and the Mill Street detour will be signed as only being available for school buses and emergency vehicles. The Town agrees with this concept and understands enforcement will be an important aspect to keep the use to only the intended vehicles.

September 7, 2011  
Date



\_\_\_\_\_  
David J. Brillhart  
Assistant Commissioner  
N.H. Department of Transportation