

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: New Ipswich, 14465
X-A000(403)
NH 123 / NH 124 bridge over Souhegan River

DATE OF CONFERENCE: December 2, 2009

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: New Ipswich Town Office

ATTENDED BY:

Project Lead Team

Eric Smith – Southwest Regional Planning Commission
Michael Dugas – NHDOT Highway Design Preliminary Design Chief
(Absent) David Scott – NHDOT Bridge Design In-House Design Chief
Jason Tremblay – NHDOT Bridge Design Senior Project Engineer

Project Advisory Committee

David Leel – New Ipswich Fire Chief
(Absent) Ed Rogers – New Ipswich Resident
Garrett Chamberlain – New Ipswich Police Chief
Gary Somero – Mascenic Regional School District
George Lawrence – New Ipswich Selectman
(Absent) Marie Knowlton – New Ipswich Town Administrator
Peter Goewey – New Ipswich Road Agent
Woody Houston – Warwick Mills
(Absent) Greg Hanselman – New Ipswich Historical Society
Donald Lyford – NHDOT Project Manager
(Absent) Matt Urban – NHDOT Environmental Manager
(Absent) Robert Greenwood – Sharon Resident

Others

Bentti Hoiska – New Ipswich Selectman
Mary Fish – NH Emergency Management
Lee Somero – N&M Bus Company

SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #5

NOTES ON CONFERENCE

Following introductions, Eric reviewed the steps of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process and noted the Committee is currently at the brainstorming ideas step. Meeting minutes from October 14th were reviewed and accepted with one minor change to correct the residency of Robert Greenwood from New Ipswich to Sharon. The revised meeting minutes will be posted to the website.

Eric reminded the Committee that both the problem statement and vision statement were adopted at the October 14th meeting. He also reminded the Committee that the screening criteria now had three choices, “poor”, “fair” or “good”, instead of the five that were originally proposed.

Mike Dugas then briefly discussed the alternatives that were discussed in more detail at the last meeting. All options are designed for a 35 mph speed with two 11-foot travel lanes, two 4-foot shoulders and at least one sidewalk 5 feet wide.

The first proposed bridge option places the new bridge just upstream of the old bridge. This option would require the acquisition of property and houses on the south side of Turnpike Road on both approaches to the bridge. The intersections of Highbridge and River Road would “T” into the proposed alignment. This alignment would avoid constructing a detour bridge but would also expose the top of the stone arch bridge. Due to the property impacts, Committee members thought that this was not feasible.

The second proposed bridge option keeps the proposed bridge in the same area as the existing bridge. The proposed alignment is slightly tweaked from the existing alignment. Curves are introduced into the proposed alignment to smooth out the kink at the east side of the existing bridge. Limited roadwork would be done on Highbridge and River Road. Bentti asked about the time savings between one phase of construction versus two phases. Jason stated that there would be a time savings, perhaps two months, but at this preliminary stage it is difficult to quantify the exact amount.

A third option was shown and discussed at this meeting that wasn’t shown at the last meeting. This option is very similar to the second option but it reduces the encroachment toward the properties on the northeast side by retaining more curvature (but still providing a 35 mph design).

Mike discussed detour options to build both options two and three.

The first detour proposed is a temporary one-lane bridge just upstream of the existing bridge. This pushes traffic closer to the properties on the south side of the bridge. In order to minimize impacts to the properties on the south, it would be necessary to build the new bridge in phases, in order to minimize the space needed between the temporary detour bridge and the work zone for the new bridge. With this option temporary traffic signals would be required to maintain alternating one-way traffic. During the second phase of building the proposed bridge, alternating one-way traffic would be maintained on the completed portion of the new bridge. Traffic patterns and volumes will be analyzed to see how the temporary signals will operate. Lee mentioned that from 7:30 AM to 7:50 AM, school buses are heading east and that the signals should be configured to accommodate for that. It was also mentioned that the new school would open in 2011 before the construction of the new bridge. Concerns were raised about having a signal at the bottom of the steep grade and vehicles either having to stop coming down the hill or start up from a stop to go up the hill in the winter.

The second detour proposed is a temporary two-lane bridge just upstream of the existing bridge. Similar to the first detour, phasing of the proposed new bridge would be

required to minimize impacts, alternating one-way traffic would be maintained on the completed part of the proposed bridge in phase 2, and temporary traffic signals would be required. This was studied and presented at the October 14th PAC meeting and has greater property impacts than the single lane detour.

The third detour would divert traffic to Mill Street and across the Souhegan River at the location of the existing Mill Street bridge, which is currently closed. This would require a temporary bridge over the existing Mill Street bridge and some alignment and profile adjustments to get traffic up and down Ypya Lane. Concerns of having this detour open in the winter with the steep grades were brought up with Committee members thinking that trucks would not be able to use this detour in adverse weather conditions.

Regional detours were discussed with NH 119 and NH 31 / NH 45 being favored as alternative routes between northern Massachusetts and the NH 101 / Peterborough area. There was no consensus reached regarding detour routes for local traffic, however most felt that local drivers would quickly find alternate routes to avoid the construction area. Someone suggested closing the bridge and detouring all traffic but Garrett mentioned that this would impact both emergency services and school buses. The Committee discussed closing the existing bridge and using the Mill Street detour during non-winter months, allowing only emergency vehicles and school buses access to it. Prior to the next PAC meeting the NHDOT will further investigate the detour options, will estimate the time frame for constructing the new bridge and the feasibility of limiting the detour to one construction season, and will refine the proposed alignment along 123/124 to minimize impacts to the properties on the east side of the bridge.

Another advisory committee meeting will be held on January 6, 2010 at 11:15 AM to present and discuss this option before the Public Officials/Public Informational meeting on January 19. The PO/PI meeting will be held at the high school along with the budget hearing. The venue for the January 19 meeting will be confirmed with Marie Knowlton.

Following the meeting, Mike and Jason toured Ypya Lane with Benti, Peter, Garrett, Gary and Mary to discuss the Mill Street detour alternatives. The Department will study routing the Mill Street detour alternative to the southerly leg of Ypya Lane for discussion at the next PAC meeting.

Submitted by:
Jason A. Tremblay, P.E.

JAT/jat

NOTED BY: D. Lyford, E. Smith, M. Dugas,

cc: D. Lyford

M. Dugas

D. Scott

J. Tremblay

M. Urban

Bill Cass, Director of Project Development

D. Graham - District 4

E. Smith – SWRPC

PAC Members