

**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: October 14, 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
(Absent) George Lawrence – New Ipswich Selectman
Marie Knowlton – New Ipswich Town Administrator
Peter Goewey – New Ipswich Road Agent
(Absent) Woody Houston – Warwick Mills
(Absent) Greg Hanselman – New Ipswich Historical Society
Donald Lyford – NHDOT Project Manager
Matt Urban – NHDOT Environmental Manager
(Absent) Robert Greenwood – New Ipswich Resident

Others

Bentti Hoiska – New Ipswich Selectman
Millie Henault – New Ipswich (Highbridge) Resident
Benjamin Henault – New Ipswich (Highbridge) Resident
Earl Somero – New Ipswich Moderator

SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee Meeting #4

NOTES ON CONFERENCE

Following introductions, Eric reviewed the steps of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process and informed the Committee that they are currently between discussing alternative screening criteria and brainstorming alternatives. Meeting minutes from September 2nd were reviewed and accepted with one minor change to correct the spelling of Benjamin Henault's last name. It was also noted that Greg Hanselman, who was not present at this meeting, would be replacing Susan Williams as the New Ipswich Historical Society representative on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). Susan would still like to be kept in the loop though. The revised meeting minutes will be posted to the website.

Committee members read through both the problem and vision statements. Committee members adopted both the problem and vision statement without any changes. Both the problem and vision statements will be posted to the website.

Eric discussed the alternative screening criteria. He stated that alternatives are either reasonable or unreasonable based on the problem and vision statements and that this is subjective and not numerical. He mentioned that the alternatives could be rated with color dots or a very poor to very good system. The Committee liked the very poor to very good system but thought that 5 choices were too many. They want to change it to: Poor, Fair, Good and N/A. Eric read through the draft screening criteria. Don suggested under the Natural Resources heading that some of the criteria be taken out since this information would not be known until later in the project. Under the Safety heading, it was decided to remove the criteria "Does the alternative improve safety of merging traffic?" since there is no merging traffic, like that of on an on-ramp. Also it was decided to add "Highbridge and River Road" to the end of the criteria "Does the alternative improve safety of turning movements?" The Committee thought that the criteria are demanding.

Mike Dugas then discussed the alternatives that have been created to date. He gave a brief overview of the area, discussed both the plan and profile views and explained the coloring system of the alternatives.

All options were 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 shown placed 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. The vertical grade would be 3.75% and the new bridge would be approximately 10 feet higher than the existing bridge.

The second proposed bridge option shown kept 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.

Mike discussed detour options that would be necessary to build the second proposed alternative.

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. With this option temporary traffic signals would be required to maintain alternating one-way traffic on the temporary bridge.

The second detour proposed is a temporary two-lane bridge just upstream of the existing 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. Therefore during the second phase of building the proposed bridge, alternating one-way traffic would be maintained on the first phase of the new bridge.

The third detour proposed is sending traffic down Mill Street to cross 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 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.

The Committee thought that discouraging trucks to travel through the site was a good idea and could be addressed with regional detour routes around the project area. Also with a new school being built by September 2011 on the east side of the project and having most people living on the west side of the project, concerns about the scheduling of the two projects was brought up. Since construction of the bridge project will not take place until 2012 at the earliest, this issue was dismissed. However it was agreed that if a detour bridge with one-lane alternating traffic is implemented, the signal should be equipped with Opticom emergency preemption.

The Committee discussed a sidewalk on the bridge. The Town was informed that maintenance of the sidewalk is the Town's responsibility.

For the next meeting, the NHDOT will refine the details for the proposed bridge options that were shown and look at detours around the site on numbered state routes.

The next Project Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2009 at 11:15 AM at the New Ipswich Town Offices. Typically after the alternatives are developed a Public Officials/Public Informational (PO/PI) is scheduled to present to the public the options that the Committee has come up with. There was discussion to have the PO/PI on January 19th in conjunction with the Town's Budget Hearing and to have the DOT present at 7:30. This will be decided at the next PAC meeting.

Submitted by:

Jason A. Tremblay, P.E.

JAT/jat

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

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