

July 20, 2014

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: Walpole-Charlestown 14747
Reconstruct NH Route 12 from Main Street in North Walpole north,
approximately 3 miles, to NH Route 12A in South Charlestown

DATE OF CONFERENCE: July 17, 2014

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Silsby Library Community Room, Charlestown

ATTENDED BY:

See attached sign in sheet

SUBJECT: Public Advisory Committee Meeting

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

This Public Advisory Committee Meeting was held to provide an update on the project status. D. Lyford, NHDOT Project Manager, provided a brief update of the project. The design has progressed, however progress has been slow due to coordination issues related to the railroad and the recent change in railroad ownership.

Since the last meeting, progress has been made in an effort to move the railroad siding from New Hampshire (NH) to Vermont (VT). This is approximately 90% complete, the majority of the remaining effort relates to funding issues. Moving this siding to VT will reduce noise in Walpole, reduce slope impacts in NH, and allow for a longer siding length in VT.

P. Salo, NHDOT, provided a brief presentation of the project and design elements. The project will reconstruct approximately 2.8 miles of NH Route 12 with the majority of the roadway being shifted easterly, away from the Connecticut River. P. Salo noted that the updated design is approximately 60% complete and is very similar to the design presented at the Public Hearing, and has not changed significantly since the last meeting where the design was approximately 30% complete.

The drainage design, guardrail design, retaining wall designs, and geotechnical work have advanced. As a result of these design advances, the current design now reflects:

- The lowering of a 3100' segment (from Station 3013+00 to 3044+00) of the profile on the southern end of the project. This was lowered in the range of 0' to 3' to allow for flatter side slopes between the roadway and the railroad, as well as adjacent to the river.

Flatter slopes limit the amount of closed drainage required on the project, and allow additional time to infiltrate stormwater into the ground.

- Two existing 5.5' diameter pipe crossings that have been evaluated and will require replacement with box culverts that are 6.5' wide by 5.5' high (Station 3105+50) and 14.5' wide by 9' high (Station 3121+30).
- There will be an upgrade to all existing drainage and guardrail.
- The proposed retaining wall on Parcel 25, Augustinowicz, will be approximately 300' long and 17' tall at the highest point.
- The addition of a northbound pull-off was evaluated, as requested at the last meeting. It is anticipated that this will be possible in the vicinity of the pull-off proposed for the southbound direction (near Station 3090+00); final evaluation of this location is ongoing.
- Stormwater treatment locations were further evaluated. There were two locations previously identified, one north and one south of the Route 12A Overpass Bridge on the west side of Route 12. The proposed location north of the bridge will not be used as a result of geotechnical information that revealed this area is not ideal for infiltration. The area south of the bridge will be used for a 400' long treatment swale. An additional treatment swale near Station 3049+50 is being evaluated and may be included in the project.
- There will be aerial and underground (Sprint fiber Optic) utility relocations.
- The wetland impacts have increased to approximately 2.4 acres.
- The project has officially been broken into two construction contracts:
 - The Railroad Relocation project is scheduled to advertise October 2015 with a current estimated cost of \$11,700,000.
 - The Roadway Reconstruction project is scheduled to advertise October 2017 with a current estimated cost of \$5,800,000.

The following items were discussed after the formal presentation:

1. J. Bruno asked where the siding will be removed.
 - a. The removal will be south of the project limits and extend north to approximately Station 3070.
2. J. McClammer asked if the siding was moving to Bellows Falls.
 - a. Yes, it will be to the south of Bellows Falls.
3. J. McClammer asked how the current cost estimate compared to available funding.
 - a. The current cost estimate for the two construction projects combined is about \$17,500,000; however there is only about \$13,000,000 in the current budget. The Department has been requesting, and receiving, incremental increases to the

budget. An advantage to separating the two contracts, and spreading them out over more years, is that it is easier to acquire smaller amounts of funding over several years.

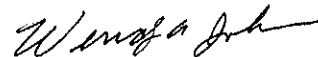
4. S. Francis asked how many feet to the east will the roadway move at the southern end of the project.
 - a. The roadway will move to approximately the existing railroad location, this is a shift of about 40'-45'. This shift area is also the location of the lowered profile (with flatter slopes) to assist with improved water quality.
5. B. Sullivan asked if there was a contingency plan for the design if the siding were not to be moved to Vermont.
 - a. The location in Vermont has already been selected and the location is already owned by the railroad. As a result, it is unlikely that the siding will not be moved to Vermont.
6. A. Ilves asked if there were any outstanding Vermont approvals that were required before moving forward in Vermont. Could Vermont limit the move through Land Development?
 - a. The VT Federal Highway Administration has already agreed to the move. J. Bruno noted that the Vermont Act 250 (a Land Development Act) indicates that the state has no jurisdictional rights over the railroad.
7. J. Bruno asked, if the roadway were back at approximately the current elevation (vertical location) near Station 3120, if there were any known slope stability issues at this location, or if there were any evidence that this area had been previously stabilized (for example, rip rap).
 - a. Yes, the grade will be back to about the existing elevation at this location, and there are no known slope stability issues, or previous repairs. The soils at this location are more stable than those at the southern end of the project, as the soil types are different. This location is a constructed causeway versus a river bank. Any rip rap at this location would have been from the original construction of the causeway. The Police Chief, P. Connors, reinforced that this area is shallow with calm water.
8. A. Ilves asked what the closest distance was between the new road and the river.
 - a. Some of the roadway at the north end of the project is on the existing alignment and is about 30' from the river. The reconstructed roadway does not shift any closer to the river. In areas where there are erosion issues, such as near Len Tex, the roadway is being shifted as much as 40 feet to the east of the existing location.
9. J. McClammer provided a copy of a letter to landowners along the Connecticut River from John Field, a fluvial geomorphologist working with TransCanada, who is evaluating the location and causes of riverbank erosion. He is seeking any historical data or photos

that could help in his study as part of TransCanada's federal relicensing of the Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon Hydroelectric Projects.

- a. The Department will forward any information that may be helpful to Dr. Field.
10. J. McClammer asked if the 400'-long treatment swale was sufficient water quality treatment, and if the EPA had any involvement with this project to date.
 - a. This project has been reviewed at the NHDOT monthly meetings with the Natural Resource Agencies several times. Some of the agencies that comprise the Natural Resource Agency Meetings include the Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, and the NHDES. They have been active at these meetings and have seen the proposed treatment. In addition, some of the stormwater management strategies shown (e.g. flatter slopes to promote infiltration) result from this coordination. N. Miller also noted that the Agencies realize that this is a difficult project and have been working with the Department in utilizing Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) to achieve the best design.
 11. J. McClammer asked if the LCHIP parcel located at the southern end of the project was still going to be impacted now that the siding was moving to Vermont and, if so, when will this acquisition begin.
 - a. This parcel will still be impacted due to the roadway shift; however there may be fewer impacts than were previously shown. The full extent of the impacts is currently under review as part of the development of the Right-of-Way (ROW) plans. It is anticipated that these plans will be developed by October of 2014 when the ROW process will begin on this parcel.
 12. J. McClammer asked, if the ROW process does not start until October 2014, is it likely that the project will still advertise in October 2015.
 - a. When the ROW plans are issued, the initial focus will be on the parcels affected on the east side of the project to accommodate the Railroad contract. Considering an advertising date in October, it is likely the contractor will not begin work until spring or summer of 2016, so the advertising date may be shifted to the next year. However, it is anticipated that construction will still begin in 2016.
 13. S. Francis asked if there will be fishing access near Station 3090. J. McClammer asked if parking would be provided.
 - a. N. Miller noted that the existing access point near Station 3070 will be perpetuated. During Preliminary Design the NH Department of Fish & Game noted interest in providing a modest car top canoe river access at Station 3090. A small gravel parking area with a few picnic tables could be provided. D. Lyford concurred, noting that the gravel parking and river access could be constructed as part of the roadway project provided Fish & Game develop the design and gain any necessary permits. N. Miller noted a letter from the Town to Fish & Game might help move this along.

14. A. Ilves asked if there were treatment for the salt and what happens to the salt in the ditches. How does this compare to the Salem-Manchester I-93 improvements?
- a. The proposed treatment swales are for the treatment of suspended solids, phosphorus, and nitrogen. These are not intended to treat or remove salt. If salt is in the ditches it could potentially infiltrate into the ground. This project is different than I-93, as there is much less pavement widening here and the salt usage is significantly less.
15. A. Ilves asked if the northbound pull-off area were to be installed, how much extra width would be provided.
- a. The total width of the pull-off would be 8 feet wide, the proposed shoulders are 4 feet wide; therefore the additional widening would be 4 feet.
16. S. Waleryszak asked if a decision had been made to officially move the siding to Vermont.
- a. Yes, it will be south of Bellows Falls.
17. When will the next meeting be held?
- a. The Department anticipates receipt of the ROW plans in October 2014. The remaining work effort on the design is the finalization of the slopes and fine tuning the design. The Department can come back in about a year to present the design prior to advertising.

Submitted by:



Wendy A. Johnson, P.E.

WAJ/waj

NOTED BY: PES P. Salo; DAL D. Lyford

cc: D. Lyford
Correspondence File

Field Geology Services
P.O. Box 985
Farmington, ME 04938

July 7, 2014

Dear Landowner:

Field Geology Services is conducting a comprehensive study of the location and causes of riverbank erosion on over 120 miles of the Connecticut River from Newbury, VT and Haverhill, NH to Vernon, VT and Hinsdale, NH as part of TransCanada's federal relicensing of the Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon Hydroelectric Projects. As part of this study, we are interested in gathering photographs, maps, surveys, and documents related to the Connecticut River, regardless of their age.

We are visiting historical societies in towns along the river, but we are hoping that you may have additional resources that can document how the river looked in the past – before the hydropower facilities became operational, shortly after the hydropower facilities began operating, and even just in the past few years. Ultimately, we are hoping to document how the river has changed through time and we are particularly interested in certified land survey maps that include the river's edge. In addition, seemingly unimportant photographs, written musings, or even memories about the river 10, 20, 50 or more years ago may hold important clues about such change when compared to river conditions today.

If you have materials that you believe may be of interest to us and are willing to share them, we would be happy to speak with you and visit you at your convenience. You may contact us by phone at 207-491-9541 or e-mail at jfield@field-geology.com. We may request to electronically scan such information or take notes about them if you are willing, but we would not need to remove them from your premises. Again, we are interested in any material you may have about the river regardless of how seemingly insignificant or old, so please do not feel reticent about contacting us with even a single photograph. Please contact us at your earliest convenience.

In addition, if you are interested in more information on the relicensing process, feel free to visit TransCanada's relicensing website at www.transcanada-relicensing.com. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



John Field, Ph.D., P.G.

Public Advisory Committee Meeting

PROJECT: Walpole-Charlestown 14747

DATE: July 17, 2014

LOCATION: Charlestown, N.H.

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL
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