

August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007

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

**MEETING REPORT**

**PROJECT:** WALPOLE-CHARLESTOWN 14747  
(NH 12, Road improvements from NH12A in Charlestown south approximately 2.7 miles to Main Street in Walpole.)

**DATE OF MEETING:** August 1, 2007

**LOCATION OF MEETING:** Silsby Library/Municipal Building, Charlestown, NH

**ATTENDED BY:** DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Bill Oldenburg, Chief of Preliminary Design  
Don Lyford, Project Manager

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

Nate Miller, UVLSRPC  
David Edkins, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Town of Charlestown  
Keith Weed, Highway Superintendent, Town of Charlestown  
Ed Smith, Chief of Police, Town of Charlestown  
Brenda Ferland, Charlestown Selectboard  
Jon Leclair, Charlestown Selectboard  
Steve Neill, Charlestown Selectboard  
Fred Poisson, Charlestown Planning Board  
Jim Fowler, Charlestown Conservation Commission  
Woody Prouty, Charlestown Conservation Commission  
Charlie St. Pierre, Charlestown Conservation Commission  
Thomas Minickiello, Charlestown Highway Advisory Committee  
Aare Ilves, UVLSRPC Transportation Advisory Committee  
Sharon Francis, Executive Director, Connecticut River Joint Commissions  
Sarah Patriquin, SWRPC

**SUBJECT:** Public Officials Informational Meeting

**NOTES ON MEETING:**

Nate Miller (Transportation Planner, UVLSRPC) opened the meeting by welcoming the public officials to the introductory Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) meeting for the project. Nate explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the project and the CSS process to public officials in both Charlestown and Walpole. Following an introduction of the Department staff, self-introductions of the public officials were made.

Bill Oldenburg of (Chief of Preliminary Design, NHDOT) discussed the project's history from the Department standpoint noting the project originated from a recommendation of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee in the early 1990s, and was subsequently included in the Ten-Year Plan. Bill noted that the original scope of the project was to reconstruct NH Route 12 from its intersection with Route 12A to the Charlestown/Walpole Town Line. However, the safety issues that necessitated the project do not end at the Walpole Town Line. As a result, the project was extended to include the section of NH Route 12 from the Walpole Town Line to Main Street in North Walpole. Bill noted that there are a number of challenging constraints associated with the project that necessitated the CSS Planning Process. The existing road parallels an active rail line, both of which are in close proximity to the Connecticut River. Recently, slope stability issues have surfaced in areas along the Connecticut River bank. The slope stability issues threaten the existing roadway, and have resulted in significant safety hazards. Bill noted that the close proximity between the Connecticut River, Route 12, and the active rail line may necessitate the relocation of the existing roadway, railroad, or both.

Bill Oldenburg provided an outline of the CSS approach. He noted that CSS is a consensus building process, which allows early and continuous input from the community and the project stakeholders to create a project that is an asset to the community and best balances the transportation aspects with the resources in the project area. CSS is defined as "a collaborative interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility." He noted the recent change in philosophy towards a more balance approach between the safety, uniformity, and mobility needs of the traveling public with the historical, community values, and environmental aspects of the potentially affected area. CSS relies on sound engineering and design with effective community outreach and stakeholder involvement. Bill described the public participation process and key steps in the CSS process. The first step involves holding an "Issues and Opportunities" Workshop, followed by a meeting to reach consensus on a problem statement, meeting to reach consensus on a vision statement, meeting to develop and concur on screening criteria, meeting to brainstorm and screen alternatives, and meeting to reach consensus on a Preferred Alternative. Once a preferred alternative has been identified a formal Public Hearing to procure approval for the project layout is held. Bill outlined the schedule for completion of the project. The CSS portion of project design is scheduled to take 12-18 months, with the design being finalized in 2009. Recent changes to the Ten-Year Plan have resulted in the "Roadway Construction" funding for

the project being delayed one year. However, the portion of funding preliminarily dedicated to “Railroad Relocation” has remained on schedule, with that aspect of the project beginning in 2010.

Nate Miller distributed the Draft Public Involvement Plan for the project, and provided an overview of the Plan’s contents. Nate noted that the “Project Lead Team” consists of himself, Bill Oldenburg (NHDOT Chief of Preliminary Design), Don Lyford (NHDOT Project Manager), and Jon Evans (NHDOT Environmental Manager). Nate explained that his role in the process will be to facilitate the dialog between the NHDOT and the Project Advisory Committee, and noted that the Project Advisory Committee will include a wide cross-section of Town Officials, abutters, business owners, and interested community leaders, and is envisioned to serve as a conduit between the Department and the community to provide early and continuous input into the project development process. NHDOT representatives from the Project Lead Team will be available at all Project Advisory Committee to provide technical guidance to the Committee.

Nate Miller explained that the next step in the process will be to form the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). Nate noted that UVLSRPC and NHDOT had formed a draft list of potential representatives to serve on the PAC, and would like input from public officials in both Charlestown and Walpole on that draft list. To aid in making the public aware of the project, NHDOT has developed a website for the project. The website will contain the Public Involvement Plan, minutes, agendas, and other information pertinent to the project, and can be found at [NHDOT.com](http://NHDOT.com) under [Walpole - Charlestown 14747](#). Nate noted that building a successful Project Advisory Committee would require close coordination between NHDOT, UVLSRPC, the Town of Charlestown, and the Town of Walpole. In addition outreach and advertising will take the form of articles in the media and flyers. Bill Oldenburg noted that this type of outreach was not typical of NHDOT in the past, and signifies an important shift in the Department’s attitude toward encouraging public participation.

Nate Miller outlined a schedule for completion of the CSS process. Meetings are slated to occur bi-monthly, beginning in September or October 2007. In total, the CSS process will include 6-8 meetings, leading toward a public hearing in December 2008. Bill Oldenburg noted that the Department is flexible when it comes to meeting times, dates, and locations. Meetings will be scheduled to accommodate local events and standing meeting obligations (e.g. Selectboards, Planning Boards, etc.). Bill noted that evening meetings have worked well in the past.

Questions and Comments:

- It was noted that a representative of the Claremont Chamber of Commerce is included on the draft PAC list. It was suggested that a representative of the Charlestown Rotary Club, Eric Lutz, represent local businesses on the PAC instead of the Claremont Chamber of Commerce.
- It was recommended that ½ of the citizen representation of the PAC be comprised of abutters to the project, if possible.
- It was noted that the TransCanada Corporation owns a large amount of land abutting the project, and should have a representative on the PAC.
- It was recommended that Walpole citizen representatives on the PAC come from the Village of North Walpole, not the Village of Walpole. It was also recommended that outreach to the Town of Walpole should be directed toward the North Walpole Village Trustees.
- It was noted that the media list in the Draft Public Involvement Plan includes the Connecticut Valley Spectator and the Argus Champion. It was the opinion of Charlestown Public Officials that these newspapers are not read by Charlestown residents. The public officials suggested that the Valley News, Keene Sentinel, and Our Town publications be included on the list instead.
- Public officials asked if interim improvements could be made to the corridor (e.g. repairing damaged guard rails, etc.) while the CSS process was ongoing. Bill Oldenburg advised that this may be possible, and that he and Project Manager Don Lyford would look into the possibility and report back.

Submitted by:

Nathan Miller  
UVLSRPC

Attachment (Presentation)

cc: Bill Cass  
Craig Green  
Don Lyford  
Bill Oldenburg