

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

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** WALPOLE-CHARLESTOWN 14747  
Reconstruct NH-12 from Main Street in North Walpole north approximately 3 miles to NH 12A in Charlestown

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** February 11, 2009

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Charlestown Silsby Library/Municipal Building

**ATTENDED BY:** **Project Lead Team**

Nate Miller, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC  
Donald Lyford – NHDOT Project Manager (PAC Member)  
Michael Dugas – NHDOT Chief of Preliminary Design  
Jon Evans – NHDOT Bureau of Environment (PAC member)  
C.R. Willeke – NHDOT Preliminary Design Engineer

**Project Advisory Committee**

Fred Poisson, Charlestown Citizen Representative & Abutter  
William Sullivan, Charlestown Economic Development Authority  
Aare Ilves, Charlestown Citizen Representative  
Jane Stansbery, Fall Mountain Regional School District  
(Formerly Debra Livingston)  
Jon LeClair, Charlestown Selectboard  
Richard Holmes, Charlestown Conservation Commission  
Bruce Putnam, Charlestown Business Rep & Highway Advisory Board  
(Absent) Robert Beaudry, Charlestown Business Representative  
Albert St. Pierre, Charlestown Citizen Representative  
David Edkins, Charlestown Planning and Zoning Administrator  
(Absent) Eric Lutz, UVLSPRC Commissioner (Charlestown)  
Keith Weed, Charlestown Highway Superintendent  
(Absent) Ed Smith, Charlestown Police Chief  
Sharon Francis, Connecticut River Joint Commissions  
(Absent) J.B. Mack, SWRPC (formerly Tim Garceau)  
(Absent) Christine Walker, UVLSRPC  
Patrick Kiniry, North Walpole Village Commissioners  
Jim Terrell, Walpole Selectboard Designee  
(Absent) Jeff Miller, Walpole Planning Board  
(Absent) Marcia Galloway, Walpole Conservation Commission  
(Absent) Donald Lennon, Walpole Business Representative  
Charlie Lennon (for Donald Lennon)  
(Absent) Ken Alton, TransCanada Corporation  
James Dahlke, New England Central Railroad  
(Absent) Douglas Ring, Charlestown Planning Board

**Citizens & Officials**

Barbara O'Brien, North Walpole Commissioner  
Cheryl Mayberry, North Walpole Commissioner  
Ed Hasselmann, North Walpole Fire Chief  
M. Augustinowicz, Parcel # (25)  
Pam Parant, Golden Knight Limited (parcel #24)

**SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting #7 Minutes**

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

On February 11, 2009 approximately 25 people gathered at the Silsby Library in Charlestown for a meeting facilitated by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC). The intent of the meeting was to review and discuss a series of five design alternatives for the reconstruction of NH 12 from Main Street in North Walpole to the intersection of NH12/NH 12A in South Charlestown.

**Introduction**

Donald Lyford, project manager for the NHDOT, welcomed everyone and asked the participants to introduce themselves. After audience introductions, Nate Miller from Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Review of Previously Developed Alternatives****“Alternative #2 - Railroad as a Control”**

C.R. Willeke reviewed the “Railroad as a Control” alternative, noting that this option would see the railroad location held as is, with road construction happening to the west (toward the Connecticut River). In general a 39 ft offset from the center of the westerly railroad track to the center of the proposed NH 12 reconstruction keeps the new layout as close to the railroad as possible while still providing for 12 ft travel lanes, 4 ft shoulders, and a standard ditch line next to the tracks. The 39 ft offset required retaining walls between the railroad and the proposed NH 12 northbound ditch line rather than a standard grass slope in various areas where the railroad track elevation rises above the NH 12 elevation.

C.R. Willeke continued, noting that the railroad right-of-way would be impacted by this alternative, but the tracks and normal operation of the railroad would be preserved. Despite keeping the road design as close to the railroad as feasible, the westerly slope impacts into the Connecticut River are substantial in the North Walpole section and in Charlestown just south of the NH 12A overpass. C.R. noted that the NHDOT has received strong feedback from the Natural Resource agencies against this alternative because of its potential impacts to the Connecticut River. The potential impacts to the Connecticut River in this alternative essentially prohibit permitting.

### “Alternative #3 - River as a Control”

C.R. Willeke reviewed the “River as a Control” alternative, noting that this alternative would see all the road construction happening to the east with minimal impacts to the Connecticut River. This alternative would require nearly the entire railroad track in the project area to be relocated. C.R. explained that this alternative would require significant cuts into the hillside because the railroad requires a distance of 14’ between sets of tracks and 18’ for a service road. In some cases, this alternative would require 40’ vertical cuts. Mike Dugas noted that one of the primary benefits of this alternative is that it lends itself to phasing. C.R. Willeke explained that NHDOT’s initial cost estimate for this alternative is 15-20 million dollars.

Question: What is the railroad company’s process for moving the tracks?

Answer: Jim Dahlke from New England Central Railroad indicated that their Jacksonville, Florida office has design engineers that oversee relocation design and construction.

### “Alternative #4 - The Other Side of the Tracks”

C.R. Willeke reviewed the “Other Side of the Tracks” alternative, noting that this alternative would see Route 12 relocated east of the railroad. This alternative does not require the relocation of the existing tracks or existing service road; however as currently laid out it does encroach into the existing railroad right-of-way. The NHDOT purchased 2 parcels in the 1970s as part of a plan to relocate Route 12 as an extension of Route 12A. This alternative takes advantage of these previous parcel acquisitions.

C.R. Willeke highlighted some areas that would require large cuts into the hillside, and explained that the road would be very close to the Len Tex building and the existing Main Street Underpass that goes beneath the railroad. The potential impacts to Lentex and adjacent properties are still being investigated. In North Walpole, Main Street would become the new Route 12, with Church Street becoming a local road. Similar to Alternative #3, the NHDOT’s initial cost estimate for this alternative is 15-20 million dollars.

Question: How would residents on the west side of the NH 12 access the new road?

Answer: Those residents would probably utilize a portion of the existing NH 12. It may be possible to construct an underpass under the railroad to reach the new alignment; however, this would be very costly due to the structure costs and large cuts near the base of the hillside.

Question: What happens to existing NH 12 if it is bypassed?

Answer: Most likely the NHDOT would look to reclassify it as a town road; however, there would have to be a formal agreement in place for the town to accept the road and access for the residents along the west side of NH 12 would need to be worked out.

## New Alternatives

### “Alternative #2B - Railroad as a Control (with additional engineering measures)”

*(Subsequent to the meeting, this alternative has been renamed to Alternative #5 – On line Alternative)*

C.R. Willeke introduced a new alternative developed by geotechnical experts at NHDOT. This alternative investigates what additional engineering measures would be required to keep the roadway on its current alignment with minimal impacts to the river and railroad.

C.R. Willeke continued, noting that the focus of this alternative is in the southern (approximately 1 mile) stretch of the project area, where riverbank instability is most problematic. Under this alternative, a retaining wall would be constructed along the west (river) side of the road. Impacts to the railroad would be minimized, but the railroad would still need to be shifted in one area (immediately north of Lentex) because of riverbank instability and limited lateral space between the railroad and river.

C.R. Willeke explained that, under this alternative, the road would be stabilized using a retaining wall constructed on top of mini piles and laterally supported by a rock anchoring system. During construction additional lateral support would be installed in the roadway to stabilize the lanes during alternating one-way traffic. Bridge rail would need to be used instead of guardrail, and that would result in additional costs. In addition, the aerial utility lines along NH 12 would need to be relocated to make room for the retaining wall construction equipment. The total estimated cost to install this system on this 1-mile stretch of Route 12 would be approximately 13 million dollars (8 million for structural work and 5 million for roadway construction). These costs do not include the northern section of Route 12 in the project area, which would also need some type of wall to avoid fills into the Connecticut River.

Question: Would retaining walls prohibit views of the Connecticut River, as Route 12 is part of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway?

Answer: No, you would have essentially the same view as today because the wall would be constructed below the elevation of the road.

### “Alternative #4B – The Other Side of the Tracks (Farther up the hillside)”

C.R. Willeke noted that at the Project Advisory Committee’s previous meeting, the group came to consensus that an alternative should be evaluated that would place a new road farther up the hillside east of the existing railroad tracks. C.R. Willeke presented a preliminary design of this alternative and provided an overview of his initial findings to the PAC.

C.R. noted that this alternative would see Route 12 use the existing Route 12A overpass, and attempts to limit property impacts at the corner of Old Ferry Road and Route 12A. At the intersection of Route 12 and Route 12A in this alternative, a left turn lane is proposed due to the nearby Fall Mountain School. The existing houses on Old State Road and Old Ferry Road would be accessed from a new driveway off of the proposed road. This alignment also has large cut areas similar to option #4A, but it also has large fill areas and creates more of a balance between

cuts and fills. This alignment also has similar constraints near the Len Tex property as option #4A.

Question: Is the proposed road above grade at the Route 12A intersection?

Answer: The intersection grade is near the existing grades. However just to the south of the intersection the road climbs up the hillside and requires nearly 40'fills in some areas.

C.R. Willeke continued, noting that some areas of this layout require large cuts, and some areas (e.g. near the town line) match well with the existing ground. Areas where large cuts are required could be treated as rock slopes if ledge is found underneath. Drainage for the new road would need to drain under the railroad, and the railroad drainage may have to be upgraded.

At the connection with Main Street in North Walpole, potential property impacts are still being investigated. The Lentex building could be affected under this alternative. C.R. Willeke explained that the intent of this alternative is to utilize Main Street in North Walpole as is, with minor improvements such as overlaying the pavement and repairing drainage. No widening or straightening of Main Street is intended; however, left turns to the north from Russell Street may need to be prohibited.

Question: Would a higher speed limit be placed on Main Street in North Walpole?

Answer: No, Main Street speed limits would be kept as is, or lowered in areas.

Question: The area just south of Russell Street in North Walpole is very narrow. Is this a consideration?

Answer: Yes, the speed limit may need to be lowered to below 30 MPH in this area.

Comment: A retaining wall could be built to narrow the median next to the Down Up Road to create wider lanes.

Question: Could Main Street be lowered to the elevation of Russell Street near the Down Up Road?

Answer: Yes, that is a possibility and will be reviewed.

Question: Would lighting and a pedestrian crossing work on Main Street at Russell Street? How might this intersection be reconfigured?

Answer: Lighting and a pedestrian crossing could work, and will be considered.

Question: How would the intersection at the south end of North Walpole be impacted?

Answer: A signal may be necessary at this intersection; however, the NHDOT needs to look more closely at travel patterns and traffic volumes here before making a final determination.

Question: Will sidewalks be installed on Main Street? There are many school children walking in this area of North Walpole.

Answer: Many areas of Main Street already have sidewalk. The NHDOT will evaluate the existing sidewalk system.

Question: How much would this alternative cost?

Answer: Initial estimates indicate that this alternative would cost between 15 and 20 million dollars.

### **Discussion**

Sharon Francis suggested that the NHDOT review a USDOT publication titled: Scenic Byways – A Design Guide for Roadside Improvements.

Aare Ilves suggested periodic pull offs for trucks and scenic viewing on the hillside alternative.

Nate Miller advised that the five alternatives have been developed to the point where they can be presented to the general public for feedback. The PAC agreed that the next project meeting would be a Public Informational Meeting.

The Public Informational Meeting was scheduled for:

Wednesday, April 29th, 2009  
Starting @ **6:00** pm  
Fall Mountain Regional High School (Library)

Submitted by,

Nate Miller  
UVLSRPC

cc: D. Lyford  
M. Dugas  
J. Evans  
W. Cass  
D. Graham – District #4  
W. Lambert – Traffic Bureau  
Nate Miller – UVLSRPC  
J.B. Mack – SWRPC  
PAC Members