

# BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting  
**DATE OF CONFERENCES:** December 10, 2020  
**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Zoom

## ATTENDED BY:

### NHDOT

Sheila Charles  
Ron Crickard  
Jill Edelmann  
Mike Licciardi  
Don Lyford  
Bill Saffian  
David Scott  
Trent Zanes

### NHDHR/NHDNCR

Laura Black  
David Trubey

### HTA

Josif Bicja  
Ed Weingartner

### VTrans

Kyle Obenauer

### GM2

Tom Levins  
Jenn Riordan

### FHWA

Jamie Sikora

## PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

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December 10, 2020

### **Hinsdale-Brattleboro 12210D, X- A004(821)**

Participants: Ron Crickard, Don Lyford, Trent Zanes, Bill Saffian, David Scott, NHDOT; Josif Bicja, Ed Weingartner, HTA; Kyle Obenauer, VTrans

The 12210D project is an off shoot of the 12210C project, created over 20 years ago to provide a new river crossing across the CT River that would bypass the two truss bridges that currently carry NH 119 over the Connecticut River. The two existing bridges are Hinsdale 042/044 crossing from the NH bank to Hinsdale Island and Hinsdale 041/040 crossing from Hinsdale Island to Brattleboro. The EA for the project was completed in the early 2000's and it was directed that these bridges be retained. This project will rehabilitate the bridges and turn them into pedestrian/bicycle access to the island. The goal is to introduce the rehabilitation efforts to ensure that actions meet the Secretary of Interior standards.

Josif Bicja presented an overview of the existing bridges' information, project status and recommended rehabilitation measures. The Anna Hunt Marsh Bridge (Br. No. 041/040) and Charles Dana Bridge (Br. No. 042/044) were constructed in 1920 and 1927, respectively. Rehabilitation work on both bridge in 1988 included deck and floor system replacement. The bridge decks were replaced again in 2004. Both bridges currently have an overall National Bridge Inspection Standard Condition Rating of 4 (poor). Recommended rehabilitation measures include the following: maintaining the roadway width of 20' +/-, bridge rail replacement, deck repairs, removing the exterior sidewalks, repairing truss members and exterior stringers with advanced sections loss, complete repainting and installation of a new wearing surface. The existing bearings, deck expansion joints and substructures will also be rehabilitated. Recommended bridge operation and maintenance cycles were described.

Laura Black began the discussion and noted the HBI Report indicates the exterior sidewalks on both bridges are modern. The Anna Hunt Marsh Bridge sidewalk date of construction will need to be confirmed and if original to the structure, it should be retained since it is a defining character of the bridge and the goal should be to preserve the sidewalk and not remove it, unless there are reasons that can justify the need for removal. The HBI will need to be updated to reflect the construction date, if required. Both bridges were determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for Criteria A and C.

Jill Edelman indicated the need to confirm the Anna Hunt Marsh Bridge sidewalk year of construction and justification will need to be provided for proposing its removal; however, removal of the Charles Dana Bridge sidewalk is acceptable since it is modern construction. Jamie Sikora concurred the design team will need to provide reasons and rationale to demonstrate a need for removing the sidewalk.

Jill Edelman indicated NHDOT would find a paint color change acceptable if it does not add significant cost to the project; however, she indicated VTrans input will be needed. Kyle Obenauer indicated VTrans will not have an opinion on color and would likely defer to the Towns.

A discussion ensued regarding the Memorandum of Effect, which was executed in 2000, requirement to maintain these bridges. Don Lyford indicated NHDOT is working on an agreement with Hinsdale which would include roadway and bridge maintenance responsibilities to the Town. Jill Edelman indicated the bridges must be maintained and ownership and maintenance responsibilities will need to be clarified for the Section 106 process. Laura Black asked if the Section 106 effect findings should be reopened. Kyle Obenauer concurred future maintenance requirements and responsibilities need to be addressed and resolved. Once this has occurred, he does not feel that Section 106 needs to be reopened. Kyle will check with the VTrans Project Manager on the status of maintenance discussions within VTrans and with Brattleboro. Laura Black acknowledged funding for maintenance of off-line bridges is challenging; however, funding needs to be addressed within the Agencies, Towns or Federal level. She also indicated maintenance plans with recommendations and specific requirements for work to be performed be included in the agreements. Jill Edelman agreed if maintenance has been addressed and agreements are in place, this will cover the Section 106 requirements. Jamie Sikora indicated the preferred option is to rehabilitate these bridges. He does not believe that going backwards would be productive.

Kyle Obenauer asked how lower lateral bracing members would be replaced. Josif Bicja indicated members to be replaced would be in-kind.

Kyle Obenauer asked for clarification on the type of bridge rail to be used and if it has to conform to TL4 loading. Josif Bicja clarified that we are conceptually showing a 4-tube rail system on the bridge and this rail system is very similar to the NHDOT T4 bridge rail. Further coordination is needed with the Towns to get input on the rail type.

David Trubey asked if archaeology investigation efforts are complete. Josif Bicja indicated NEPA is complete. Kyle Obenauer will check with Brennan Gauthier to see if VTrans has any concerns. Sheila Charles indicated she would review the records; however, she does not believe there will be any sensitivity concerns since the work will be limited to the previously disturbed and filled areas.

Kyle Obenauer asked if lighting was proposed as part of the bridge rehabilitation project. Josif Bicja indicated that there have been discussions with the communities, but lighting is not part of this project at this time. Bill Saffian confirmed the lighting is not included. However, Don Lyford indicated NHDOT will include solar lighting at the Towns' request. Kyle would like to have further discussions on lighting on the bridges if the Towns wish to move forward with it.

December 16, 2020

## **Andover 40392, X-A004(384)**

Participants: Tom Levins, Jenn Riordan, GM2; Ron Crickard, Mike Licciardi, NHDOT

Jenn Riordan (GM2) presented the project. This is an initial meeting to introduce the project, review the historic resource inventory completed to date, and obtain feedback on the need for archaeological and additional historic resource studies. The project involves the replacement of the existing bridge that carries US Route 4 over the Blackwater River in Andover. The surrounding area is mostly forested wetland. A cornfield is located to the north. A log yard/timber company is located to the southeast, along Plains Road. The existing bridge is a through-plate girder, single-span structure, constructed in 1933. It has concrete abutments and wingwalls and is on the State's Red List. The project was originally to include rehabilitation of the existing bridge but it was determined that the bridge has deteriorated to a point that repair or rehabilitation is not a feasible option. The project scope now includes bridge replacement.

Work will include replacement of the existing bridge structure, constructing new abutments behind the existing abutments, and roadway approach work (approximately 250 feet on each end of the bridge, although this is still to be determined). The bridge will be closed during construction and traffic will be detoured. Accelerated bridge construction techniques may be used to limit the duration of the bridge closure.

Project design is ongoing. A public informational meeting was held in August 2019. Future meetings could include a Public Hearing, depending on whether work stays within the NHDOT right-of-way (ROW). The advertisement date is currently August 2021. GM2 contacted the Andover Historical Society and did not receive a response. They are planning to contact them again with the updated project information.

Anticipated impacts include excavation to construct the new abutments. Roadway approach work will also occur at each end of the bridge (250 feet on each end is currently assumed). The extent of these impacts has not yet been determined, but will be identified as design continues. The only buildings near the bridge are at 338 Plains Road. This property is owned by Green Crow Corporation, a timber and forest management company. The ages of these buildings are not known although they appear to be more than 50 years old. There appears to be one main building with several sheds/outbuildings.

A Request for Project Review was submitted in 2018. The response indicated that the area is considered archaeologically sensitive and a Phase IA survey may be necessary depending on the extent of ground disturbance. Individual inventory of the existing bridge was recommended. In addition, inventory of the Green Crow property was recommended if the project involves roadway impacts to this parcel.

An Individual Inventory Form for the existing bridge was completed by Historic Documentation Company and the bridge was determined Not Eligible in 2019.

An archaeological survey has not yet been completed since the originally proposed bridge rehabilitation would not have involved any ground disturbance. The currently proposed replacement will likely involve some impacts beyond the existing roadway fill. GM2 would like to discuss the need for a Phase IA/IB archaeological survey, as well as the need for a historic resource inventory of the Green Crow property.

The meeting was then opened up to questions and discussion. There was a discussion related to potential impacts to the Green Crow parcel. Tom Levins (GM2) said that the road profile may need to be raised. Impacts outside the ROW will likely be limited, but are not known at this point. Jill Edelmann (DOT) asked if there would be impacts to the driveway access off of Rt. 4. Tom said that this access is not anticipated to be impacted. Jill said that matching the existing drive or some individual tree removal would not be considered an impact to this property, but clearing an entire area of trees or removing the drive access would be considered an impact. Tom said that the impacts would likely be limited to slope work and reconstructing the drive.

Laura Black (DHR) asked if there are any stonewalls or other features on the Green Crow parcel or in the adjacent ROW. Even if they are in the ROW, they could contribute to the property. Tom stated that he didn't think any stonewalls are present near Rt. 4. He mentioned that some additional survey is required for the project and stonewalls or other features will be located. Laura also mentioned that proposed easements on this property could require Section 106 review and Section 4(f) evaluation. FHWA may need a historic resource inventory completed for the property for the Section 4(f) evaluation.

Dave Trubey (DHR) mentioned that the area is considered archaeologically sensitive since the Blackwater River is a major river, although the presence of poorly drained soils could make it less sensitive. A Phase IA survey should be completed if there will be impacts beyond the existing roadway. The study limits should include impact areas as well as staging areas.

Sheila Charles (DOT) agreed that a Phase IA is required for impacts beyond the existing roadway. She recommended a combined Phase IA/IB to streamline overall effort. GM2 has already contacted Independent Archaeological Consulting (IAC) to do a Phase IA/IB under their Part B contract. Jill recommended confirming the impact areas and doing a Phase IA. The survey may need to wait until spring 2021, unless there is a thaw & snowmelt during the winter. Jill stated that it's possible to issue a Section 106 Effects Memo with the commitment to complete all necessary phases of archaeology. This would allow NEPA to be completed prior to finishing the historic resource inventory.

Schedule for the historic resource inventory of the Green Crow parcel was discussed. Tom said that impacts could be determined a few weeks after receiving Notice to Proceed under Part B.