

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting

DATE OF CONFERENCES: November 12, 2020

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building

ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT

Margarete Baldwin

Sheila Charles

Kathy Corliss

Abraham DeMaio

Meli Dube

Melody Esterberg

Jill Edelmann

Wendy Johnson

Rebecca Martin

Tobey Reynolds

Leah Savage

Jack Watton

Trent Zanes

NHDHR

Laura Black

David Trubey

FHWA

Jamie Sikora

GM2

Jennifer Riordan

BETA

Tony Puntin

PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

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November 12, 2020 - Due to the Covid 19 Event, this meeting was a scheduled Zoom Meeting

Epping 29608, X-A004(196)

Participants: Jennifer Riordan, GM2; Tony Puntin, BETA; Wendy Johnson, Rebecca Martin, NHDOT

Initial consultation on NH RT 125 traffic management improvements from Brickyard Plaza to NH 87, including discussion of findings of IAC's Archaeological Phase IA work, and determination of any additional historic resource reviews.

Action items resulting from this meeting are noted in **bold**.

Wendy Johnson introduced the project and the team members. The project involves capacity improvements along NH Route 125. BETA Group is completing the design, with Tony Puntin as the lead engineer. GM2 Associates is providing environmental support.

Jenn Riordan (GM2) presented the project. This is an initial meeting to introduce the project, review the preliminary results of the Phase IA archaeological study, and obtain feedback on proposed future archaeological and historic resource studies. The project is located along 2.9 miles of NH Route 125, from 300 feet south of the Epping/Brentwood town line to just north of NH Route 87. It includes NH Route 101 Exit 7 and crosses the Lamprey and Piscassic Rivers and NH Route 27. The overall goal of the project is to improve mobility and capacity along the project corridor. Need and objectives include capacity improvements (additional lanes,

widening), operational improvements (signal upgrades), complete streets and context sensitive solutions (sidewalks, bike lanes), and access management (driveway re-alignment and/or consolidation). Jenn Riordan then did a “drive-through” of the project in Google Maps street view. The project is currently early in the design phase. A public advisory committee meeting was held in July 2020 and a public officials meeting was held in September 2020. The alternatives investigation is ongoing. Public informational meetings are tentatively scheduled for Winter 2020 and Spring 2021. A public hearing is scheduled for late 2021. The project advertisement date is October 2024. Construction is scheduled for 2025. Some agency outreach has occurred. The Epping Historical Society was contacted but a response has not been received yet. GM2 will follow up.

Jenn Riordan explained that the project would most likely include specific areas of improvements, rather than a single plan/treatment for the entire project length. She presented several of the initial project design concepts, including:

- Park and Ride Driveway Relocation – This alternative is located near the southern end of the project and would involve re-aligning the driveway entrance to the Park and Ride so it is opposite the Brickyard Square driveway (this intersection is currently signalized while the Park and Ride driveway is not). This would involve crossing a large wetland.
- Roadway Widening (5 Lanes) and Sidewalk Construction – This segment is located north of NH Route 101, between Fresh River Road and NH Route 27. This alternative would widen the roadway to a constant 5-lane cross section. Currently this section narrows to three lanes, creating bottlenecks. This may also involve adding a sidewalk along the entire length.
- Roadway Widening (3 Lanes) – This segment is located north of NH Route 27, between Elm Street and Coffin Road. This alternative would involve widening to add a center turn lane.
- NH Route 87 Roundabout – This is located at the northern end of the project and would involve adding a roundabout at the intersection. Work may involve impacts beyond the existing roadway fill. There are potentially historic houses to the southeast.

Jenn Riordan indicated a Request for Project Review (RPR) was submitted last year. The response indicated that continued consultation is needed. IAC has already completed their Phase IA field work. Lisa Mausolf is on the team to do historic resource inventories. The RPR response indicated that clarification of previously surveyed properties will be required and coordination of survey efforts with an overlapping project is necessary.

Jenn Riordan provided a summary of the cultural resource work completed so far. There are no known archaeological sites along the project corridor. The Phase IA field work was completed by IAC in September 2020. Archaeologically sensitive areas were identified north of the Lamprey River (long stretches outside of the roadway fill) and in isolated areas south of the Lamprey River. IAC is scheduled to do a Phase IB survey in 2021 once potential impact areas have been identified.

Jenn Riordan indicated there are around 30 buildings in the project corridor that are at least 50 years old. The following structures are also present:

- Piscassic River bridge – Built in 1928, rebuilt in 2010. No impacts anticipated (pavement work only). Included in Historic Bridge Inventory (recommended as Not Eligible)
- Other bridges are less than 50 years old
- Three culverts from 1950’s (or older) based on design plans from the 1950s, one of unknown age
- Railroad abutments located 50 feet west of Lamprey River bridge

Jenn Riordan indicated that two previously completed Project Area Forms overlap with this project:

- Granite Bridges Project (located along NH Route 101) – Area Form was completed in 2019. Three properties included in the Area Form overlap with this project.
 - Railroad – Further study was recommended
 - 479 Route 125 – No further study recommended

- Martin-Cole-Peterson Farm (FRM0009) – Not Eligible, although DOE indicated that impacts to the burial ground or brickyard on the property would require additional study, however they are not located near Route 125.
- NH Route 101/Route 51 Project – Area Form was completed in 1991.
 - Several individual properties overlap with this project. They were determined Not Eligible.
 - Two have been demolished, three appear to still be present.

Tony Puntin (BETA) shared that the ROW is quite wide through the project area and no significant Right-of-Way acquisition is anticipated. Stormwater treatment and BMP locations will need to be evaluated. Jenn Riordan shared that the older properties are scattered through the project area.

Laura Black provided several comments on the potentially historic resources:

- With older inventory forms, it is important to verify and document address changes. The 1991 inventory has different addresses listed for the properties, which can cause confusion.
- Based on review of the photos in the RPR, there appears to be various potentially eligible properties along the project corridor. Inventory forms may need to be completed depending on the proposed impacts. It is recommended to get Lisa Mausolf involved to determine what surveys are necessary (Project Area Form vs. Individual forms).
- The DOE green sheet recommendations for the overlapping projects should be reviewed and considered.
- The passage culverts located in the northern portion of the project should be included in the inventory recommendations. They may have a connection to historic infrastructure projects. She commented that since they all have masonry headwalls there might be a story here to tell about what was happening at the time they were built. She also recommended looking into what the underpasses were intended for, animals or humans?
- Inventory of the railroad may also need to be completed.

David Trubey provided comments on the archaeological resources:

- The preliminary results from IAC's Phase IA look good.
- Will the Phase IB survey be completed this year or next? Jenn responded that it is scheduled for next year, once more information on potential impacts is available.

Jill recommended setting up a meeting with Lisa Mausolf to discuss an approach for completing the historic resource inventories. Jenn Riordan will make arrangements for a meeting.

There was discussion relative to the "culvert" crossings that appear to be constructed for passage as opposed to hydraulic conveyance. Tony Puntin indicated that he has a copy of 1950 construction plans that show these crossings. Tony Puntin commented that the plans that were signed by John Morton. He will distribute to the design team for their information.

Ossipee 41251, X-A004(573)

Participants: Margarete Baldwin, Kathleen Corliss, Rebecca Martin, Abraham DeMaio, Tobey Reynolds, NHDOT

Consultation on proposed reconstruction and drainage upgrades on NH RT 16, north of Polly's Crossing Road to approximately 1000' south of the NH 16/NH 16B/Pine River Road Intersection, and discussion of impacts and effects.

Tobey Reynolds provided some background on the project, including that it was added into the Ten Year Plan in the early 1990s and that there has been a lot of public involvement over time, but that the project has undergone

significant changes. T. Reynolds used Google Earth to ‘drive’ through the project area to help folks see the context of the area. He pointed out notable land marks and properties that would be discussed later in the meeting.

T. Reynolds shared that a public hearing is not anticipated for the project, but a public informational meeting is planned for the spring of 2021 with advertising intended in fall 2021. T. Reynolds also explained that this project was originally part of the Ossipee 10431 project that is under construction now, but was removed due to budget issues. T. Reynolds described that there is a 1930s concrete slab under the pavement that is 20 feet wide.

T. Reynolds described the alternatives considered and that the preferred alternative is to remove a concrete slab that is under the pavement and formalize the roadway shoulders and pave the roadway. T. Reynolds described the properties that are within the project limits that were surveyed in 2001 and determined not to be eligible and also described that the Hudson Ambrose House has been determined to be eligible, but that the house has since been demolished. T. Reynolds then explained that a Project Area Form was completed in August 2020 that recommended future study for certain properties if the project proposes impacts to the properties.

T. Reynolds showed photos of the house at 1060 Route 16 and explained that no impacts are proposed to that property, but that there are currently two access points to Jude Boulevard, which the project might consolidate into one. If that happens, a new driveway would be constructed for the property, but other impacts would be minimal, including ditch grading. Late in the meeting Laura Black commented that an updated survey would be recommended for this property if Jude Boulevard would be changed. She recommended reviewing historic maps and older aerials to see what Jude Boulevard was all about and to help determine if the driveways are part of the historic setting.

T. Reynolds showed photos of the Bertwell Cemetery and explained that the project can avoid impacts to the cemetery, but would cut back the slope a couple of feet for new drainage. The project impacts are proposed to end 5 to 6 feet from the cemetery. Later in the meeting, David Trubey commented that since there would not be impacts to the cemetery, additional investigation would not be needed prior to construction. However, archeological monitoring would be required during construction for impacts within 25 feet of the cemetery.

T. Reynolds showed photos of the 2 Thissell Road property and explained that the project proposes impacts to a stone wall perpendicular to NH Route 16 on the property. Later in the meeting, L. Black commented that she would recommend an inventory form due to the proposed impacts to the landscape feature (stone wall). L. Black explained that the project might not have an adverse effect to the property, but it would be best to know its status.

T. Reynolds showed an aerial image of the property at 1120 Route 16 (Wendell-Frances Thompson House) and explained that the project proposes slope grading and ditch improvements within the NHDOT ROW. Later in the meeting, L. Black recommended that photos of the building be taken and submitted to DHR. She explained that the Determination of Eligibility Committee could not agree or disagree that an inventory form should be completed because they had no photos to review.

T. Reynolds showed photos of the property at 1155 Route 16 (Milliken House) and explained that the project proposes ditch grading inside the NHDOT ROW and driveway match slopes beyond the ROW. The house is very close to the roadway. In this area the project also proposes to convert a passing lane into a center turn lane, but the pavement width would remain the same. The 2001 study had recommended that this house was not eligible. ***The Determination of Eligibility Committee response to the Project Area Form referenced the Milliken House and the Ebenezer Hodsdon House as not needing additional survey ‘The remaining two properties previously inventoried do not appear to have changed in any way that would indicate survey update is necessary at this time.’

T. Reynolds showed photos of the 1168 Route 16 property (Eldridge House). He explained that the house sits fairly close to the road. The project proposes to improve the ditch line in front of the house, which include slope work. The project proposes to cut back the slope slightly, but would tie in at the ROW line. The house is only 1

or 2 feet from the ROW. The slope proposed is 4:1, which is traversable and mow-able. Later in the meeting, L. Black commented that an individual inventory would be recommended for the property.

T. Reynolds next showed pictures of 1230 Route 16 (Ebenezer Hodsdon House) and explained that the project proposes minor ditch grading with potential for minor grading beyond the NHDOT ROW. The 2001 study had recommended that this house was not eligible. ***The Determination of Eligibility Committee response to the Project Area Form referenced the Milliken House and the Ebenezer Hodsdon House as not needing additional survey 'The remaining two properties previously inventoried do not appear to have changed in any way that would indicate survey update is necessary at this time.'

T. Reynolds then described that the stone walls where project impacts were possible had been reviewed by Bureau of Environment staff. Three of the stone walls had rated highly enough to consider if reconstruction is feasible. T. Reynolds described the proposed impacts to the walls. Later in the meeting, Jill Edelman commented that the project would continue to follow the NHDOT Stone Wall Policy.

T. Reynolds showed photos of the foundation at Station 218 + 75 East and described the location around 50 feet from the centerline up on an embankment. T. Reynolds commented that at a 3:1 slope, the project could impact the foundation, but that if the slope was steepened to 2:1, the impacts to the foundation could be avoided. D. Trubey explained that the foundation does not look very old, but avoidance would be preferred. Sheila Charles commented that this project is in an additional segment that was not part of the former archeological reviews of the Route 16 corridor. She shared that the 1958 and 1928 maps do not seem to show anything in this location, but the older maps have buildings in the vicinity, although it is just difficult to tell if they are the same foundation. ***After the meeting, T. Reynolds committed in an email to avoid the foundation.

J. Edelman shared that the results of the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) Committee meeting have not yet been shared with NHDOT. L. Black commented that she would look for it and share it with DOT. L. Black commented that generally surveys over 10 years old should be reviewed to determine, on a case by case assessment, of what has changed and what needs updating. L. Black commented that the DOE Committee agreed with the Project Area Form that the project area is not a historic district and that the Ichabod Hodsdon House would not be eligible. L. Black shared that even though the Hudson Ambrose House (1250 Route 16) had been demolished, the property is still technically eligible until an updated survey is completed. L. Black recommended an updated survey.

Wilton 42747, X-004(968)

Participants: Meli Dube, Melodie Esterberg, Leah Savage, Jack Watton, Trent Zanes, NHDOT

Consultation for clarification on potential impacts, Town input, and recommended cultural resource needs to move forward.

Leah Savage, NHDOT Bureau of Highway Design, introduced the project and described the location, purpose, and need. The project is located at the crossing of the Milford-Bennington Railroad and NH Route 31 at the intersection of Burns Hill Road in the Town of Wilton. NH Route 31 makes a 90-degree curve from the south to the east at the crossing, and Burns Hill Road intersects NH Route 31 in the northwest corner of the curve with the railroad crossing at a skew from the northwest to the southeast across the roadway. The railroad, which is owned by the State of New Hampshire, is historically known as the Hillsborough Branch Railroad and is active with six trains running per day. There are several physical constraints surrounding the project area, including proximity to the Wilton Falls building in the southeast quadrant, intersection of Burns Hill Road in the northwest quadrant, the Wilton Police Department in the northeast quadrant, and the Parker property in the southwest quadrant which borders NH Route 31 with a steep slope and stone wall. Additionally, NH Route 31 crosses over the Souhegan River to the east and Stony Brook to the south.

The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade railroad components and address roadway safety issues at the crossing. The safety concerns are mostly associated with site issues at the crossing, particularly when traveling south on NH Route 31 as oncoming trains are blocked by the Wilton Falls Building until they are in the roadway. The need for the proposed work is demonstrated by crashes associated with these site issues. Additionally, NH Route 31 is a trucking route and large trucks have difficulty making the sharp turn traveling on NH Route 31 north and frequently off-track and drive over the sidewalk between the roadway and the Wilton Falls Building, which creates an unsafe condition for pedestrians as they may not be able to see the oncoming traffic.

The Department is currently considering four design alternatives, all with similar footprints and impacts and with identical railroad upgrades proposed but differing roadway realignment designs. The railroad work will include reconstructing the track within the paved roadway area, and updating the equipment cabinet and signals. Alternative 1 is considered “in-kind” and would leave the pavement area as is but would “clean up” the intersection by slightly modifying the center islands and changes Burns Hill Road from a “yield” condition to a “stop” condition. Alternative 2 removes the islands and creates a T-intersection and changes the through traffic flow from NH Route 31 South to Burns Hill Road and places a “stop” condition on NH Route 31 North. This alternative is not considered viable because it creates extra-wide paved shoulders which could lead to unsafe passing and turning movements by vehicular traffic and creates a site issue as the placement of the stop sign would not allow drivers to see traffic turning from Route 31 South. Alternative 3 removes the islands and creates a T-intersection but maintains NH Route 31 as the primary through road and changes Burns Hill Road from a “yield” condition to a “stop” condition, this alternative shifts traffic further to the north away from the Wilton Falls Building so that trucks stay within the paved surface and do not off-track onto the sidewalk. Alternative 4 removes the islands and creates a T-intersection and changes the through traffic flow from NH Route 31 North to Burns Hill Road and places a “stop” condition on NH Route 31 South. This alternative is not considered viable because it will create confusion for drivers expecting NH Route 31 South to be the through traffic road. The Department currently considers Alternative 3 as the most feasible alternative as it most fully meets the purpose and need for the project and does not introduce any new site or safety issues. Additional impacts associated with Alternative 3 could include shifting the sidewalk located to the east of the crossing further to the east, driveway tie-in at the Wilton Falls Building, repairing the sidewalk adjacent to the Wilton Falls Building and removing the sidewalk adjacent to the Parker Property, which is no longer connected to another pedestrian facility and has become superfluous.

L. Savage stated that the above alternatives were recently discussed with the town during a virtual Public Informational Meeting and that the town officials responded favorably to Alternatives 1 and 3. Meli Dube, NHDOT Bureau of Environment, discussed the existing historical resources in the project area which include the Wilton Falls Building constructed in 1850, the Kennedy Property constructed in 1880 and the Parker Property constructed in 1880. Aside from the driveway tie in at the Wilton Falls building, there is no anticipated work outside of the existing State right-of-way. The railroad is also potentially historic.

M. Dube requested clarification from DHR on responses to the Request for Project Review, particularly pertaining to the need for individual inventories, a project area form to determine the potential for a historic district in the area and an inventory or other research on the railroad. Laura Black, NHDHR, requested some additional information be provided before making a decision to complete the formal inventories. This information includes: details on impacts to the Wilton Falls Building due to construction work on the sidewalk including consideration for things like disturbance during construction, potential for water damage, etc.; details on impacts to the stone wall associated with the Parker Property. Impacts to this property are likely to be considered historic impacts to the property regardless of its location in the State right-of-way. Additional background information on the railroad as it has not been previously investigated by DHR; and research regarding potential limits of a historic district in the Town of Wilton. L. Black confirmed that here are no

concerns for impacts to the Kennedy Property. L. Black also brought up looking into the existing concrete splitter islands and if there is a known historical traffic pattern at this intersection.

Jill Edelmann, NHDOT Bureau of Environment, shared that the Department did a preliminary inventory on the railroad and believes that it is a potentially eligible line. J. Edelmann anticipates that there is a historic district in the Town of Wilton, additional cartographic and on site investigations will help determine if there is a possibility that it's limits overlap the project area. A stone wall inventory will also be completed. Finally, details regarding the potential impacts to the Wilton Falls Building and the Parker Property will be investigated by the design team. M. Dube reiterated that the anticipated impacts for all four alternatives are relatively similar and as such it was confirmed by all attendees that the Department will unofficially pursue the design for Alternative 3. Collection of the above information will aid in decision making for pursuit of inventories and the significance of the potential effect on historic resources due to the proposed work.

David Trubey, NHDHR, asked if below ground resources were investigated. Sheila Charles, NHDOT Bureau of Environment, and M. Dube confirmed that they were and that there are no known archaeological resources within the project area that could be impacted.