

CHA CONSULTING, INC.
11 KING COURT
KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03431
TEL: 603-357-2445 FAX: 603-357-8770
www.chasolutions.com

PROJECT: Route 101 Improvements
Keene 41590

DATE OF CONFERENCE: February 8, 2024

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: City of Keene Public Library, Heberton Hall

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Information Meeting

Attendees:

- David Smith, NHDOT
- Curtis Morrill, NHDOT
- Rob Faulkner, CHA
- Ellen Moshier, CHA
- John Parrelli, CHA
- JB Mack, Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC)
- Public At Large (see sign-in sheet)

Meeting Presentation: Attached

Meeting Overview:

1. David Smith began the meeting with introductions and began the presentation which followed (see attached PowerPoint). He reviewed the project limits and meeting agenda and introduced the NHDOT and CHA project team members present. He continued reviewing the members of the Project Working Group, introducing those members that were present as well. Keene City Councilor Phil Jones introduced himself and noted that he was a member of the Pathways for Keene.

Smith continued the presentation highlighting the public outreach efforts to date and then described the State's Ten-Year Plan Process which details how projects are initiated and the process through which it becomes adopted in the Ten-Year Plan. Smith continued to note that the project is Federally funded and must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). He noted that as part of the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act, that members of the public had an opportunity to become "Consulting Parties" to raise or express concerns about the project's impacts to natural, cultural, or socioeconomic resources. Smith concluded by outlining the meeting's purpose, goals and expectation before turning the presentation over to Ellen Moshier.

2. Moshier began by reviewing the project limits and purpose: The project begins east of Optical Avenue and continues east along NH Route 101 approximately 1 mile to Branch Road. The project crosses the Branch River and is near the Cheshire Rail Trail's stone arch bridge. The purpose of the project is: pavement rehabilitation, drainage improvements, improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, address the NH Route 101 Bridge over the Branch River, and address safety issues at the Swanzey Factory Road (SFR) Intersection. She further noted the need of the project as follows: Route 101 is a major east-west route in southern NH which is vital to commerce, commuting and tourism; It is a gateway to City of Keene; the pavement condition is poor; there is poor drainage with no water quality

**Route 101 Widening
Federal Project X-A004(686)
NHDOT Project Keene 41590**

treatment; the Branch River bridge is on the State's Red List; there are safety concerns at the SFR intersection; and the corridor is challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Moshier continued that the project's goals include improving the drainage and pavement on Route 101, widen the shoulders and address bridge deficiencies at the existing Branch River Crossing. The project will also improve safety at the SFR intersection. She presented the draft "Purpose and Need" statement that had been developed to date and noted that this statement is what drives the project team's alternative development and analysis.

Moshier continued noting that improvements to Route 101, as currently planned, would include providing 12-foot travel lanes and widening the shoulders to 5 feet. There are no significant changes to the Route 101 alignment anticipated as part of this project and all attempts will be made to avoid slope impacts to the Branch River. She then described the bridges within the project area which included the Rte. 101 / Branch River crossing, the Cheshire Rail stone arch bridge and the future Prowse Bridge crossing of Route 101.

Moshier described the existing traffic conditions and accident history on Rte. 101 and briefly provided an overview of the alternatives for SFR. She then reviewed the environmental natural and cultural resources that have been assessed to date, noting that flood plain impacts would be mitigated as necessary. She also noted the historic and cultural resources that exist in the project area which included the stone arch bridge, several structures in the South Keene area as well as some archaeological resources. Moshier then turned the presentation over to John Parrelli to review the alternatives for SFR.

John Parrelli continued the presentation by providing a brief overview of the 5 alternative locations for SFR. He continued and presented the selection criteria used to evaluate each alternative and noted that they were not listed in any particular order but that some criteria such as "safety" would be weighed more heavily than others. Parrelli then presented the required sight intersection sight distance for the intersection to allow drivers to safely navigate the intersection. He noted that the existing sight distance at the intersection was significantly lower than required. Parrelli then presented each of the five alternative locations and reviewed potential intersection control (signal, stop sign or roundabout), relative impacts to natural and cultural resources. Each alternative location was presented with supporting photographs and conceptual plan view.

Parrelli turned the presentation back over to Dave Smith who explained that there were three "workstations" in the meeting hall with various displays and graphics and he encouraged participants to go to the stations and engage with members of the project teams to ask questions, express concerns and learn more about the project.

Breakout sessions and public comments: The following is a summary of comments that were posted on the various display boards.

Route 101 Project Location Board

- Concerns about emergency response time from VA during construction
- Terrible Idea to build near Arch Bridge
- Preserve potential for rail trail bridge (Prowse Bridge)
- Project needs to be coordinated with City Project (Prowse Bridge), Rail Trail, Island Street Bridge

Route 101 Widening
Federal Project X-A004(686)
NHDOT Project Keene 41590

- If the road is widened to accommodate walkers and people on bicycles (which I support), then traffic calming is very important to slow traffic speeds (e.g. Roundabout, street trees)
- Work with City on Prowse Bridge
- Concerns about rearends with signal – Eastbound traffic on Route 101 won't be able to see a traffic signal at Swanzey Factory Road.
- Do not install a signal at Swanzey Factory Road. Instead, make room for drivers can pass turning vehicles on the right.
- 690 Marlboro concerned about the widening impacting property/building.
- 690 Marlboro Street has a water connection at the street to the sprinkler system which is a concern during construction.
- Will Route 101 be closed to one lane of traffic or detoured during construction?
- Lefts turns have a measurable delay turning from Branch Road onto Route 101.
- Speed enforcement is needed.
- Speed concerns heading eastbound at Branch Road and left turns from Branch Road.
- A small roundabout at Branch Road would help and calm traffic.
- More information is needed on the planned multimodal access/complete streets along Route 101. Project should minimize impacts to stone arch bridge. Consideration on Long-term maintenance cost of any new bridges as well as impacts to wetlands and undisturbed habitat

Swanzey Factory Road Alternatives Boards

- Alt 3 – No Thank you!
- Alt 1 or 2 look the best
- No bridges! I like Alt 2 best.
- Alt 2 minimizes impacts to water/floodplain – Traffic light
- Alt 2!
- Preferred Alt 2
- Extend 32 across 12 to optical Ave. Shut down Swanzey Factory Road at 101
- Alt 2 - No bridge + Roundabout = win !!
- Connection for bike/ped from Rt 101 to ped bridge over 101 (Prowse Bridge) on north side of Rt 101
- There are a few “generators” of bike/ped traffic (motel with low income residents, jail, etc.) – Please consider more robust/safe bicycle facilities (buffered or protected bicycle lane)
- Rotary end of Swanzey Factory Road
- Sidewalk - (Second Chance for Success) Live Free Drug Rehab – Minerva Lane to Keene
- Alternative 2 appears most reasonable, especially if a roundabout is added. Would like to avoid another bridge unless it would eliminate the need for a rail trail bridge.
- Not 4A or 4B. Too close to stone arch bridge. (A second person wrote “agreed” with this note.)
- Strongly prefer alternative 2 or 1. Alt 2 is top preference. Avoids need to construct new bridge, option for roundabout, reduces impact on wetlands/floodplain.
- Alt 2 - Less wetland impact
- Alt 2 - Only one bridge to rehab/rebuild - Less cost
- Alt 2 - Roundabout possible - No bridges – Less wetland impact
- Alt 2

What do you want to hear at our next meeting? Board

Route 101 Widening
Federal Project X-A004(686)
NHDOT Project Keene 41590

- How can we coordinate with the trail project (Prowse Bridge, Stone Arch Bridge, etc.)? A second person agreed with this note.
- Project needs to interface with rail trail.
- Results of historical/archaeological/natural resource investigations
- How can you widen the road with the confines of the existing bridge? Would like to see restoration rather than rebuild the current 101 bridge.
- What plantings will be done to restore disturbed ground (pollinator forage)?
- Overall project time to completions? 101 Detours? EMS Access to private homes?
- A discussion/better understating of any and all impacts to private property (especially historic building/structures) for each alternative.
- Complete Streets is needed.
- Is there a plan to cut the tall pines on the south side of 101 to allow more sun light onto the road?
- What happened to the plan to have Optical Ave go through to Rte. 32 in Swanzey; Swanzey Factory Road would be a dead end.

Other Comments

- Several attendees noted that there are a lot of pedestrians and bicyclists that use the corridor and that they come from east near the Cheshire County Correction facility.
- Attendee noted their opinion it was 10 minutes shorter to take a left out of Swanzey Factory Road to go to Optical Ave as opposed to staying on Route 12/Main Street.
- Halfway house located in the area of the correctional facility. Heard the request for sidewalks from two attendees.
- Residents do not have license and need to access destinations in the City prompting walking through project area.
- Three abutters asked about property impacts and when those would be determined. Only thing to note is Radiator Business at Rte. 101 and Graves Road mentioned to just buy his whole property.
- Two abutters were not in favor of bicycle facilities if warranted additional property impacts.
- Suggestion of making SFR a no left turn.
- One attendee noted that several years ago, there was a debris jam between the stone arch bridge and the Route 101 bridge that caused the Branch River to back up and the river "jumped its banks" and diverted flow towards the north, adjacent to the Route 101 embankment.

Action Items:

- NHDOT to schedule Public Working Group Meeting to discuss Next Steps

Prepared by:



Robert Faulkner, PE
CHA Principal

Route 101 Improvements, Keene 41590

Public Information Meeting

February 8, 2024, 6:00 PM

60 Winter St, Keene, NH 03431

Sign In Sheet

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation / Address</u>	<u>Contact / Email</u>
1	ROD FORNATH		
2	CHRIS HALL		
3	NANCY LITTLE		
4	Todd Little		
5	Lorrie Ross		
6	BRENDAN MACK		
7	Glenn & Sharyn Griffith		
8	Jim Robertson		
9	JOHN TERRIAULT		
10	Tammy Adams		
11	Elise Clark		
12	Barbara Skuly		
13	PHILIP JONES		



Route 101 Improvements, Keene 41590

Public Information Meeting

February 8, 2024, 6:00 PM
60 Winter St, Keene, NH 03431

Sign In Sheet

14	J.B. Mock	
15	Tom Haynes	
16	FRANK LENNENBRENGER	
17	Christine Parshall	
18	Mari Bunner	
19	Lucius Parshall	
20	A E SYMINGTON RBR LLC	
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		