



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



CHRISTOPHER D. CLEMENT, SR.
COMMISSIONER

JEFF BRILLHART, P.E.
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

PROJECT MEETING MINUTES

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Date: February 16, 2012
Time: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Project: Memorial Bridge Replacement Project – 13678F
Portsmouth, NH to Kittery, ME

In Attendance:

NHDOT:	Bill Cass Keith Cota Robert Landry Mark Sanborn
MaineDOT:	Joyce Taylor David Sherlock
Bike/Ped Representatives:	Doug Bates Stephen Koucas Nancy Grant Scott Bogle Jeremy LaRose Steve Workman Dave Topham Charley LaFlamme
McFarland-Johnson:	Jennifer Zorn

The meeting started at 4:00 PM at the Katahdin East Meeting Room, Kittery Trading Post, Kittery, ME.

Keith Cota began the meeting with introductions and provided a brief summary/status of the Connections Study, the Memorial Bridge Project and the Sarah Mildred Long (SML) Bridge Project. In addition, the following information was provided: The shuttle service has had a 13th passenger (on the 12 passenger capacity shuttle) only 2 times since its commencement of operation in early January. The non-peak time average ridership is 3-4 riders, while the peak time average ridership is 6-9 riders with 3 bicycles.

Charlie LaFlamme stated the shuttle would not meet the demands of the warmer months for bicycles and the solution proposed by his organization is to open the SML bridge to bicyclists.

Scott Bogle provided a re-cap of the study of the bicycle/pedestrian users of the Memorial Bridge prepared by the Rockingham County Planning Commission. Scott also recommended that 10 years of work to promote bicycle/pedestrian access/lifestyle should be promoted using the shuttle and SML. Additionally recommended was restriping the SML to 11 foot lanes and 4 foot shoulders, which would only create only a 1 foot width deficiency based desirable 5 foot shoulders. Also, the truck traffic reduction, due to the weight reduction of vehicles currently allowed on the SML, would support safer conditions for bicycle/pedestrian users. Signage could also be posted to inform drivers that bicyclists/pedestrians were also using the SML.

Dave Topham detailed numerous issues that he requested the NHDOT and MaineDOT to review. These issues included:

- Shuttle service is projected to be inadequate in bike tourism season.
- Residents and local workers needing bike/ped assistance should have a higher priority than recreation cyclists and tourists.
- A bicycle ban on SML bridge with 30 foot deck does not seem justified.
- Incidents of bicyclists “running the gate” on SML is unknown.
- Bicyclists/pedestrians in small numbers have been using the SML bridge “illegally” for years.
- Proposed temporary guardrails on SML bridge with a 28 inch width in from each curb narrows deck to 25.3 feet.
- Timing and scope of report recommending temporary guardrails 28 inches into travel is questioned.
- Reducing the SML speed from 35 to 25 mph and re-striping 5-10-10-5 is recommended. In addition, narrower lanes have a direct calming effect and reduce travel speed without the need for active enforcement.
- What happens when touring cyclists follow the Rt 1 detour signs then can’t bike across the SML?
- Bump-outs (belvederes) on the new Memorial Bridge are recommended.
- Full bicycle/pedestrian access on the new/rebuilt SML should be incorporated into the design.

Joyce Taylor informed the group of the current status of the SML resulting from the recent inspections. It was found that the condition of the railings on the SML was a serious safety concern with missing sections, jagged edges, and undermined/deteriorated to the point that they may not adequately redirect a vehicle during an impact situation. Currently, the MaineDOT is working with the engineering firm of HNTB to determine the exact condition of the railings and determine if a portable, temporary barrier should be used to prevent a car from hitting the railing. The temporary/portable barrier may be required to ensure the safety of vehicle traffic. In addition, the portable barrier could be re-used in other locations in the State of Maine, which would save tax dollars.

Charlie LaFlamme questioned the number occurrences of a car hitting the railing.

Dave Topham additionally added that while some bicyclists and pedestrians have been illegally using the SML Bridge for years with no known incidents, BWA-NH is not in favor of promoting a high volume of bike-ped traffic on the current SML Bridge even if re-striped to 5-10-10-5 lane widths. If the proposed barriers are placed on the deck thereby reducing the total width to 25.3 feet, then bike-ped use (or bikes only) mixed with motor vehicles would not be possible in a safe manner.

Keith Cota explained to the group that State liability is very important to the agencies and neither agency can ignore the inspection results. Also, Keith stated, the primary users of the SML are vehicles and a

barrier system needs to be provided to accommodate highway safety for those users and as a result it may limit SML by others, such as bicycles and pedestrians.

Joyce Taylor confirmed, and also stated that vehicular traffic on the three bridges is vital to the economy of the State of Maine.

Bill Cass confirmed what Keith and Joyce stated, and reiterated that safety and caution is the priority of the agencies. In addition, Bill acknowledged the enforcement of the speed limit is an issue.

The representatives of the bicycle/pedestrian groups requested a definitive answer on the policy of the SML and the use by bicyclists and pedestrians.

Joyce Taylor explained that she would review the matter with the MaineDOT and would provide an answer. However, she stated that Maine's current position was to maintain the existing prohibition of bicyclist/pedestrians on the SML, but would support enhancing the shuttle service.

Nancy Grant asked the group to discuss possible out-of-the-box solutions.

In concluding, Keith summarized the following next steps:

- In four weeks, the group would re-convene.
- A cross-section of the SML would be provided to Dave Topham.
- Research would be conducted with HNTB on a barrier system.
- A review of the history of accidents on the SML would be conducted and provided at next meeting.
- The acceptable speed of traffic would be determined and which enforcement agency is responsible for it, based upon the current condition of the railing (not with a barrier in front).

Any persons who take exception to any statement in these minutes or project clarifications shall notify the Preparer, either in writing or at the next project meeting, within one week from the date of receipt of this report, stating in detail the correction or omission. Otherwise, this document shall be considered correct and final. Please submit comments to Jennifer Zorn at jzorn@mjinc.com.

Submitted By:
Jennifer Zorn

