



New Hampshire
Department of Transportation

F.E. Everett Turnpike Improvements

Nashua-Merrimack-
Bedford, NH

Communications Plan



State Project No. 13761

February 10, 2017

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1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose of the Communications Plan

The purpose of this Communications Plan (the “Plan”) is to describe a wide range of public outreach activities that will be implemented as part of the F.E. Everett Turnpike Improvement Project (State Project No. 13761). This New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Communications Plan will:

- Provide contact information for the Project Team;
- List project stakeholders (individuals, groups and organizations affected by this transportation project);
- Explain the NHDOT Project Development Process;
- Communicate upcoming meeting dates and overall project schedule;
- List anticipated communication products and methods;
- Keep all interested stakeholders and the public-at-large well informed of the project status and activities; and
- Provide timely, useful, current information through a variety of targeted means and methods.

This Plan will be revised periodically to reflect updates to the list of stakeholders, project meeting dates and locations, project schedule and other salient items that may change over the course of this multi-year project. This Plan will not be considered a complete document until the end of this phase of the project, Preliminary Design.

1.2 Project Background

The F.E. Everett Turnpike (FEET) was constructed in the early 1950s and has served as a link from Central New Hampshire to US Route 3 in Massachusetts. Today it remains a vital north/south transportation corridor linking residents, communities, commerce and year-round tourists throughout New Hampshire and travel between New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The project proposes to widen portions of the roadway and either replace or rehabilitate bridges along a 12 mile corridor beginning in the City of Nashua and extending north to the Town of Bedford.

This project is currently in the Preliminary Design phase, based upon the NHDOT Project Development Process, with an anticipated formal Public Hearing to be held in 2017. The start of construction will be based upon available funding and permitting, but the first phase of construction is tentatively scheduled as early as 2020. The construction of the project will span multiple construction seasons and will likely be completed in multiple construction contracts.

Additional project information can be found on the NHDOT project website. Click the link below to access this website.

www.EverettTurnpikeWidening.com

1.3 Major Project Elements

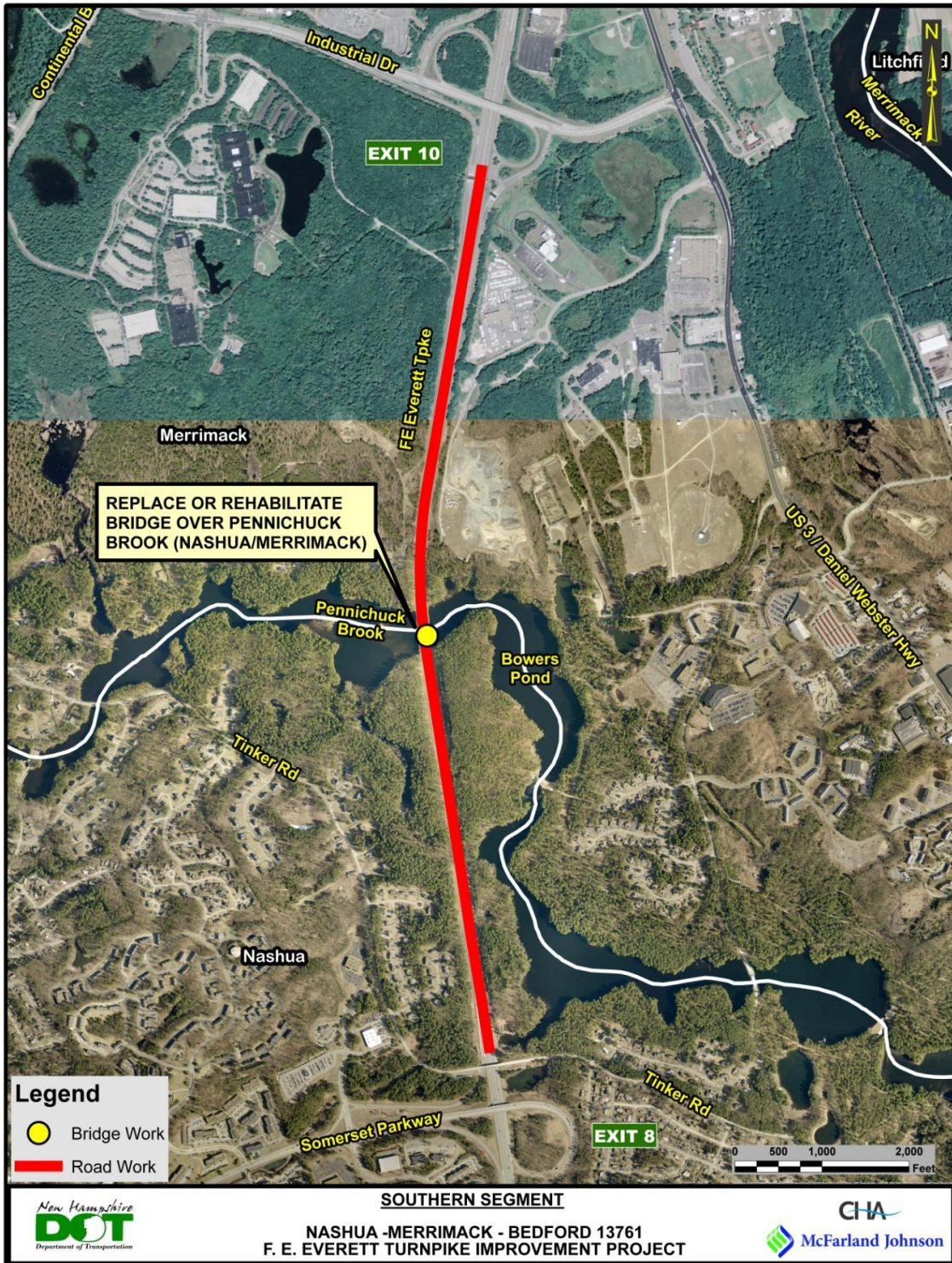
The major components of the project are listed below.

- Widen three segments of the FEET from Nashua north to Bedford to address the need;
- Replace or rehabilitate the bridges over the Pennichuck Brook (Nashua/Merrimack);
- Rehabilitate the FEET bridge over Greeley Street / Continental Boulevard;
- Replace or rehabilitate the Wire Road Bridge over the FEET (Merrimack);
- Replace or rehabilitate the Baboosic Lake Road Bridge over the FEET (Merrimack);
- Rehabilitate or replace the FEET bridge over Baboosic Brook (Merrimack);
- Stormwater Treatment Improvements throughout;
- Noise assessments; and
- Public participation.

1.4 Project Segments

Southern Segment (Nashua and Merrimack):

The southern segment begins approximately 2,000 feet north of the Exit 8 overpass bridge in Nashua and runs north for approximately 1.5 miles, ending approximately 1,000 feet south of the Exit 10 overpass bridge in Merrimack. The following figure depicts the project limits of the Southern Segment on aerial imagery.



Design Considerations:

The two bridges (one on northbound side and one on southbound side) over the Pennichuck Brook will require widening and rehabilitation or reconstruction. Retaining walls may be required along the roadway approaches to the bridges to minimize impacts into the water. Pennichuck Brook is an environmentally sensitive area and is one of the drinking water sources for the City of Nashua. Careful attention to soil erosion control and stormwater management will be required.

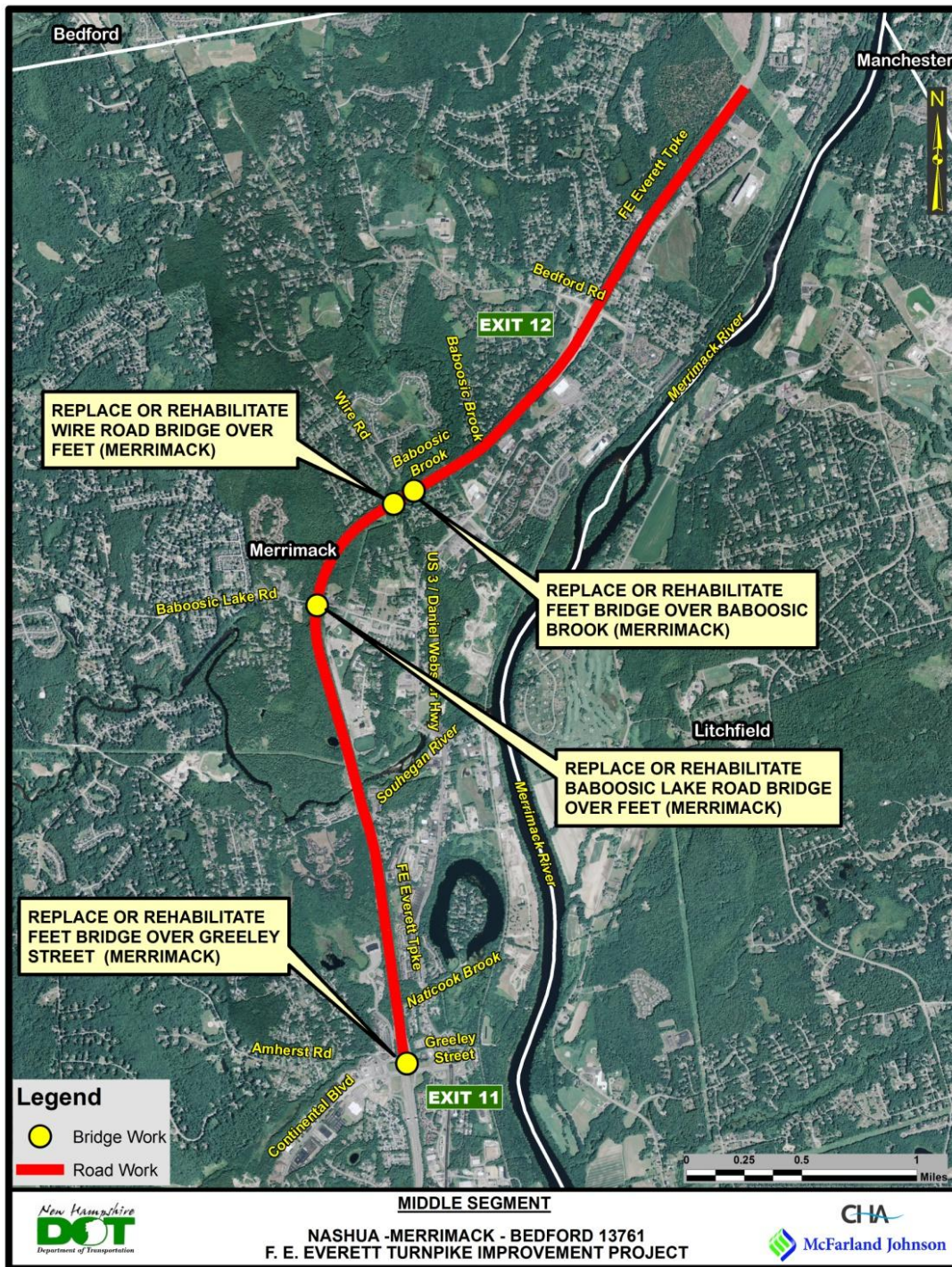
A portion of the Exit 10 southbound on-ramp may require reconstruction however the Exit 10 ramp toll plazas are not anticipated to be impacted.

Cost:

The cost of the Southern Segment, estimated at a planning-level, including engineering and right-of-way acquisition is to be \$14 million.

Middle Segment (Merrimack)

The Middle Segment begins just north of the bridges over Continental Boulevard at Exit 11 and runs northerly for approximately 5.3 miles, ending approximately one mile south of the Bedford Toll Plaza. This segment includes the Exit 12 interchange and is entirely within Merrimack. The following figure depicts the project limits of the Middle Segment on aerial imagery.



Design Considerations:

Portions of the Exit 11 northbound on-ramp and southbound off-ramp may require reconstruction. Impacts are not anticipated to occur to the southbound on-ramp and northbound off-ramp and toll plazas at Exit 11. The FEET bridge over the Souhegan River was reconstructed as part of a previous NHDOT project (Merrimack #12105), and is not anticipated to be impacted.

Two overpass bridges between Exit 11 and Exit 12 will require complete replacement as their lengths (spans) are not long enough to accommodate the additional lane in each direction on the FEET underneath. The bridges carry Baboosic Lake Road and Wire Road over the FEET. Both roads are town-maintained. Developing a preferred alternative will be done in close coordination with the Town of Merrimack.

The bridge that carries the FEET over Baboosic Brook (just north of the Wire Road overpass) would require widening on each side. This will likely be another environmentally sensitive area requiring a greater emphasis on soil erosion control and stormwater management during and after construction.

Portions of the Exit 12 ramps will require reconstruction. The bridge that carries Bedford Road over the FEET at Exit 12 is already wide enough to accommodate an additional lane of widening on each side of the Turnpike.

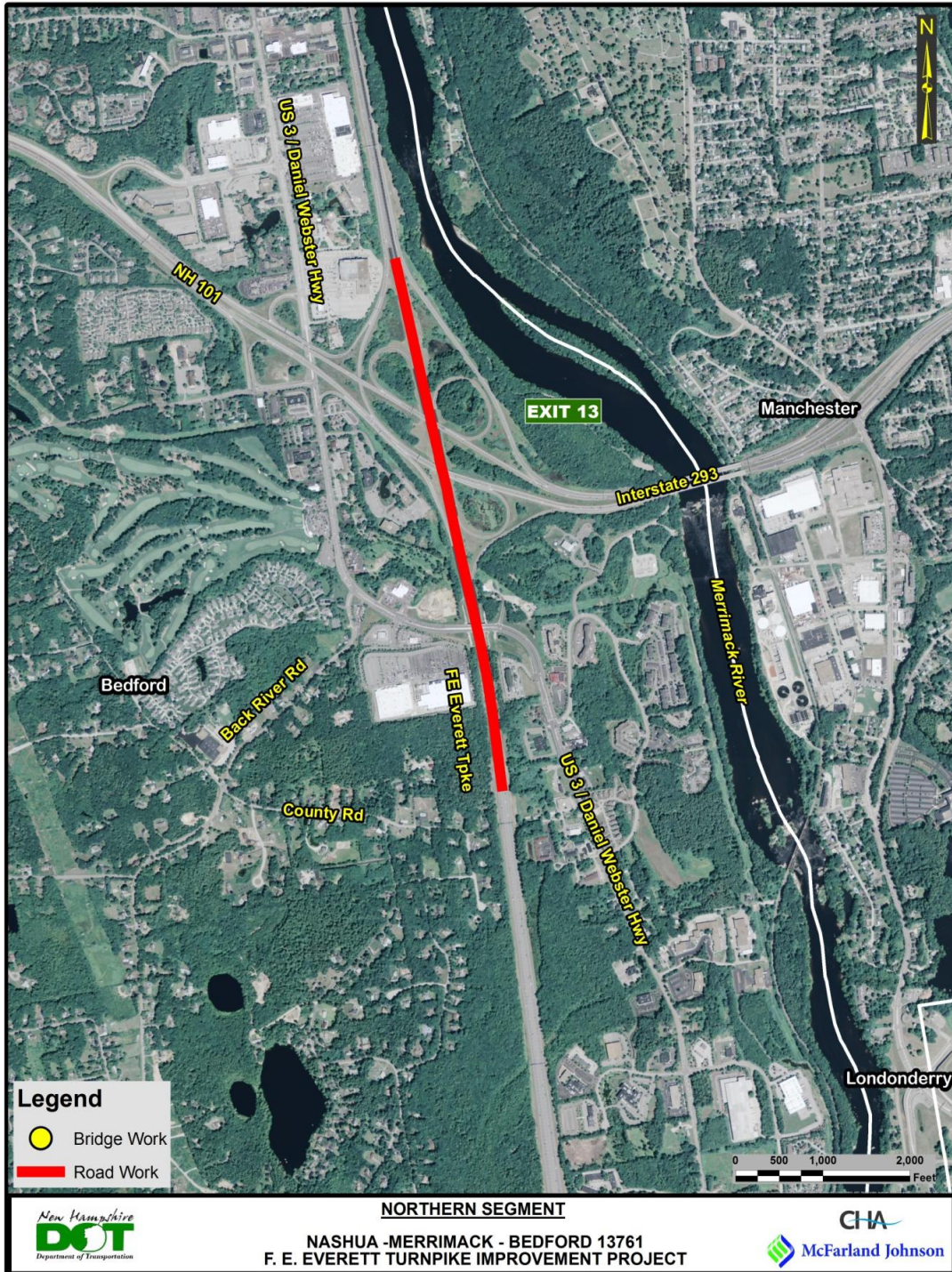
Completion of the Manchester Airport Access Road (MAAR) alleviated some of the demand for completing Exit 12. Widening the FEET through the Exit 12 area would not require the completion of Exit 12, nor would it preclude the ability to complete the interchange at a future date. The northern limit of this Middle Segment would match into the 3-lane FEET completed as part of the MAAR project in 2011.

Cost:

The cost of the Middle Segment, estimated at a planning-level, including engineering and right-of-way acquisition is to be \$45 million.

Northern Segment (Bedford)

The northern segment begins approximately 0.6 miles south of the US Route 3 overpass bridge and runs northerly for approximately 1.3 miles, ending within the I-293 interchange. The following figure depicts the project limits of the Northern Segment on aerial imagery.



Design Considerations:

The southern limit of this segment will match into the FEET widening completed as part of the MAAR Project in 2016.

Cost:

The planning level cost of the Northern Segment, including engineering and right-of-way acquisition is estimated to be \$11 million.

Summary and Finding of Project Segments:

Improving the FEET to provide at least three lanes in each direction from the Massachusetts/New Hampshire state line north to the I-293 interchange in Bedford would require widening three separate segments at the estimated costs listed below.

SEGMENT	LOCATION	LENGTH	COST
Southern	Nashua/Merrimack, Exit 8 to Exit 10	1.5 miles	\$14 million
Middle	Merrimack, Exit 11 to MAAR Project	5.3 miles	\$45 million
Northern	Bedford MAAR Project to I-293	1.3 miles	\$11 million
Total Planning-level Cost Estimate:			\$70 million

1.5 Project Team and Stakeholders

The project objectives will be achieved through collaboration with several key groups, three towns, organizations, professionals and private citizens. The project will be led by the NHDOT, which is the project sponsor. The NHDOT has retained a consultant team, CHA, Inc. and McFarland Johnson to assist in the tasks necessary to complete the Preliminary Design phase of this project.

The point of contact for all inquiries is the NHDOT Project Manager, Wendy Johnson, P.E. The contact information for Ms. Johnson is listed below along with other key members of the NHDOT project team.

NHDOT Team			
Wendy Johnson, P.E.	Project Manager, NHDOT	271-2171	wendy.johnson@dot.nh.gov
David Smith, P.E.	Assist. Administrator, Bureau of Turnpikes	485-3806	dssmith@dot.state.nh.us

The following are the key members of the consultant team from CHA, Inc. and McFarland Johnson that have been retained to assist NHDOT in certain elements of the project.

Consultant Team		
Bill Ashford, PE	Project Manager	CHA
Ben Martin, PE	Highway Design Technical Manager	CHA
Josh Lund, PE	Bridge Design Technical Manager	MJ
Jed Merrow, PWS	Environmental Documentation Manager	
Jennifer Zorn, AICP	Public Involvement Manager	MJ

Stakeholder participants have been identified by the NHDOT and as of the date of this report consist of the following members from regional planning agencies, Nashua, Merrimack and Bedford:

Stakeholders – Agencies / Organizations and Towns	
Name	Contact
Agencies / Organizations	
Nashua Regional Planning Commission	Tim Roache, Executive Director
Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission	David Preece, Executive Director
CommuteSmart	Tim Roache (NRPC) and Nate Miller (SNHPC)
Boston Express Bus Line	To be determined
NH Transit Authority	To be determined
C & J Bus Trailways	To be determined
Pennichuck Water Works, Inc.	Donald Ware
Manchester-Boston Regional Airport	Mark Brewer, Airport Director
City of Nashua	
Contact	
Mayor	Jim Donchess
City Alderman	June Caron, Benjamin Clemons, Mark Cookson, David Deane, Richard Dowd, Don Lebrun, Thomas Lopez, Brain McCarthy, Sean McGuinness, Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Daniel Moriarty, Michael O'Brien, David Schoneman, Ken Siegel, Lori Wilshire
Community Services Director	Sarah Marchant
City Engineer	Stephen Dookran. P.E.
Public Works Director	Lisa Fauteux
Planning Director	Roger Houston
Historic District Chairman	Robert Sampson
Conservation Chairman	Michael Gallagher
Chief of Police	Andrew Lavoie
Chief of Fire	Steven G. Galipeau
Emergency Management Director	Justin Kates
Town of Merrimack	
Contact	
Chairman of Town Council	Nancy Harrington
Town Council	Finlay Rothhaus, Dan Dwyer, Thomas Koenig, William W. Boyd, III, Jackie Flood, Thomas Mahon
Town Manager	Eileen Cabanel
Public Works Director	Kyle Fox, P.E.
Town Engineer	Dawn Tuomala
Planning Board Chairman	Robert Best
Conservation Commission Chairman	Gage Perry
Chief of Police	Mark E. Doyle
Chief of Fire	Michael Currier
Emergency Management Director	Michael Currier

Town of Bedford	Contact
Chairman of Town Council	Kelleigh Murphy
Town Council	Jim Aguiar, Chris Bandazian, Bill Duschatko, John Schneller, Melissa Stevens, David Gilbert
Town Manager	Rick Sawyer
Public Works Director	James Stanford, P.E.
Town Engineer	Jeff Foote, P.E.
Planning Board Chairman	Becky Hebert
Historic District Commission Chairman	Janet Tamulevich
Conservation Commission Chairman	Beth Evarts
Chief of Police	John J. Bryfonski
Chief of Fire	Scott Wiggin
Emergency Management Director	Joey Scollan

2.0 PROJECT PROCESS

2.1 NHDOT Project Development Process

The project is following the standard NHDOT project development process. The project is currently in the Preliminary Design phase, during which project design alternatives will be developed and analyzed for impacts. At the conclusion of the analysis, a preferred design alternative will be identified. Environmental documentation will occur in the form of an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the requirements set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Preliminary Design will be complete when the preferred alternative is presented at a formal Public Hearing and the NEPA Environmental Assessment is approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Record of Decision is issued.

After the completion of Preliminary Design, the next phase of the project will be Final Design, during which final engineering plans will be developed, right-of-way/easements will be acquired as needed, and construction contract documents will be prepared. Final Design is complete when the project is advertised for construction bids and is awarded to a contractor. The start of construction is based upon available funding, contractor schedule, and weather.

2.2 Project Meetings

The NHDOT will hold a series of meetings with local officials, public agencies, transportation and transit agencies, private transportation providers and other stakeholders. A formal Public Hearing will also be held to present the preferred alternative. The overall purpose of these meetings will include:

- Introducing the project;
- Disseminating information within the three communities and provide a setting for discussion and gathering feedback that will help form the alternatives and impacts;
- Presenting and describing the potential alternatives and associated impacts of each;
- Providing adequate opportunity for public comments and public involvement throughout the multi-year process; and
- Addressing concerns of the public, officials, agencies and stakeholders.

The meetings will be open to all members of the public and are anticipated to consist of the following, in these general categories:

- **Public Officials Meetings:** The focus of these meetings is to engage and inform the elected officials, municipal staff, the members of the town boards within the three towns, and other interested members of the public about the details of the project.

These meetings may entail a formal presentation to the elected officials. These meetings (or presentations) will be held throughout the project duration.

- **Local Meetings:** The focus of these meetings is to engage, inform and receive feedback from the specific stakeholders as well as officials and the general public within the three towns about the details of the project. The meetings will be held throughout the project duration.
- **Public Information Meetings:** The focus of these meeting is to engage and inform the general public within the three towns about the details of the project and receive feedback. The meetings will be held throughout the project duration.
- **Public Hearing:** The purpose of the Public Hearing is to inform the public of the design alternative that was selected for construction. This hearing serves to meet the requirements of the NHDOT public information process.

The status and general timeframe of the anticipated public meetings are detailed below. Materials presented will be available on the project website.

Public Meetings		
Entity	Location	Date / Subject of Meeting
Public Officials Meeting	Merrimack	COMPLETED -November 17, 2016
Public Officials Meeting	Bedford	COMPLETED - December 14, 2016
Public Officials Meeting	Nashua	Winter 2016/2017
Local Meeting	To be Determined (TBD)	Spring 2017
Local Meeting	TBD	Spring 2017
Local Meeting	TBD	Spring 2017
Public Information Meeting	TBD	Spring 2017
Public Information Meeting	TBD	Spring 2017
Public Information Meeting	TBD	Spring 2017
Public Hearing	TBD	Anticipated to occur in Summer 2017

2.3 Project Schedule

The schedule is approximate and subject to change. The public meeting dates are provided in a general timeframe. As the project moves forward this Plan will be updated to reflect more specific dates.

Fall 2016	Public Officials Meeting Develop Design Alternatives Research Environmental Resources
Spring 2017	Hold Public Information Meetings Evaluate Design Alternatives Evaluate Environmental Impacts (wetlands, water quality, noise, etc.) Publish Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)
Summer 2017	Public Hearing
Fall 2017	Publish Final Environmental Assessment (EA)
2018 -2020	Final Design Right of Way Acquisitions / Easements Environmental Permitting

3.0 COMMUNICATION METHODS

Effective communication is essential to the on-going success of the project. Below is a description of the communication methods that are planned. As the project progresses, public involvement will be assessed periodically to determine if the methods of communication in use are effective or if adjustments are needed.

3.1 Project Website

Further details on the project are located on the project website. Project materials will be available to the stakeholders and general public. The website includes a description of the project, contact information, relevant links, maps and other visual aids, and meeting information. As the project advances, additional information will be added to the website. Click the link below to access the project website.

www.EverettTurnpikeWidening.com

3.2 E-Mail

The primary method of communication for the project will be e-mail. Meeting agendas, meeting notes, and other pertinent project information will be disseminated to the stakeholders via e-mail.

3.3 Meetings

Public Officials Meetings, Local Meetings, Public Information Meetings and the formal Public Hearing will be used as different avenues to disseminate and discuss pertinent project-related information and to gather information and receive feedback.

3.4 Media Coverage

In order to help maximize the distribution of notices for these meetings and the Public Hearing, news releases and/or notices will be provided to the three towns, local and regional newspapers and news agencies.

3.5 Social Media

Social Media has become the prime means for disseminating information to a large cross section of people. The NHDOT has a [Facebook](#) page and electronic newsletter that will be used to notify and inform the general public regarding project related information and to notify the public of upcoming meetings.

3.6 Newsletter

Two project specific newsletters will be prepared for distribution electronically and via the U.S. Postal Service. The newsletters will also be posted on the project website.

3.7 U.S. Postal Service Notices to Abutters

The NHDOT will provide advance notice to the project abutters through the U.S. Postal Service when the Public Hearing will occur. The location, time and other details of the Public Hearing will be included in the notice.