



New Hampshire
Department of Transportation

NH Route 108 Complete Streets Improvements Project

Dover, Somersworth
& Rochester, NH

Communications Plan



State Project
No.29604

April 2019

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1.0 PROJECT 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 NH Route 108 Complete Streets Improvement Project (State Project No. 29604). This New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Communications Plan will:

- Provide contact information for the Project Team;
- Provide a list of the members of the Project Working Group;
- 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 Communications Plan will be revised periodically to reflect updates to the project meeting dates and locations, project schedule and other salient items that may change over the course of this multi-year project. This Communications Plan will not be considered a complete document until the end of this phase of the project, which is the Preliminary Design.

1.2 Project Description

This project proposes improvements to NH Route 108 from the intersection of NH Route 9/Indian Brook Drive in Dover to Innovation Drive in Rochester, a distance of approximately 5 miles (see Figure 1 below). NH Route 108 is generally two lanes with variable width shoulders through the project area. Localized improvements have been made in recent decades at key intersections and some commercial developments to add turning lanes, shoulders, and traffic signals. However, safety and mobility issues remain a concern. Specific concerns include the following:

- The corridor is subject to very high peak period traffic, which restricts mobility particularly in the vicinity of key intersections.
- The lack of consistent shoulders or sidewalks hinders the mobility of non-motorized users.
- The lack of formal bus stops creates safety concerns for the patrons of COAST Bus, and buses stopped within the highway further hinder mobility.

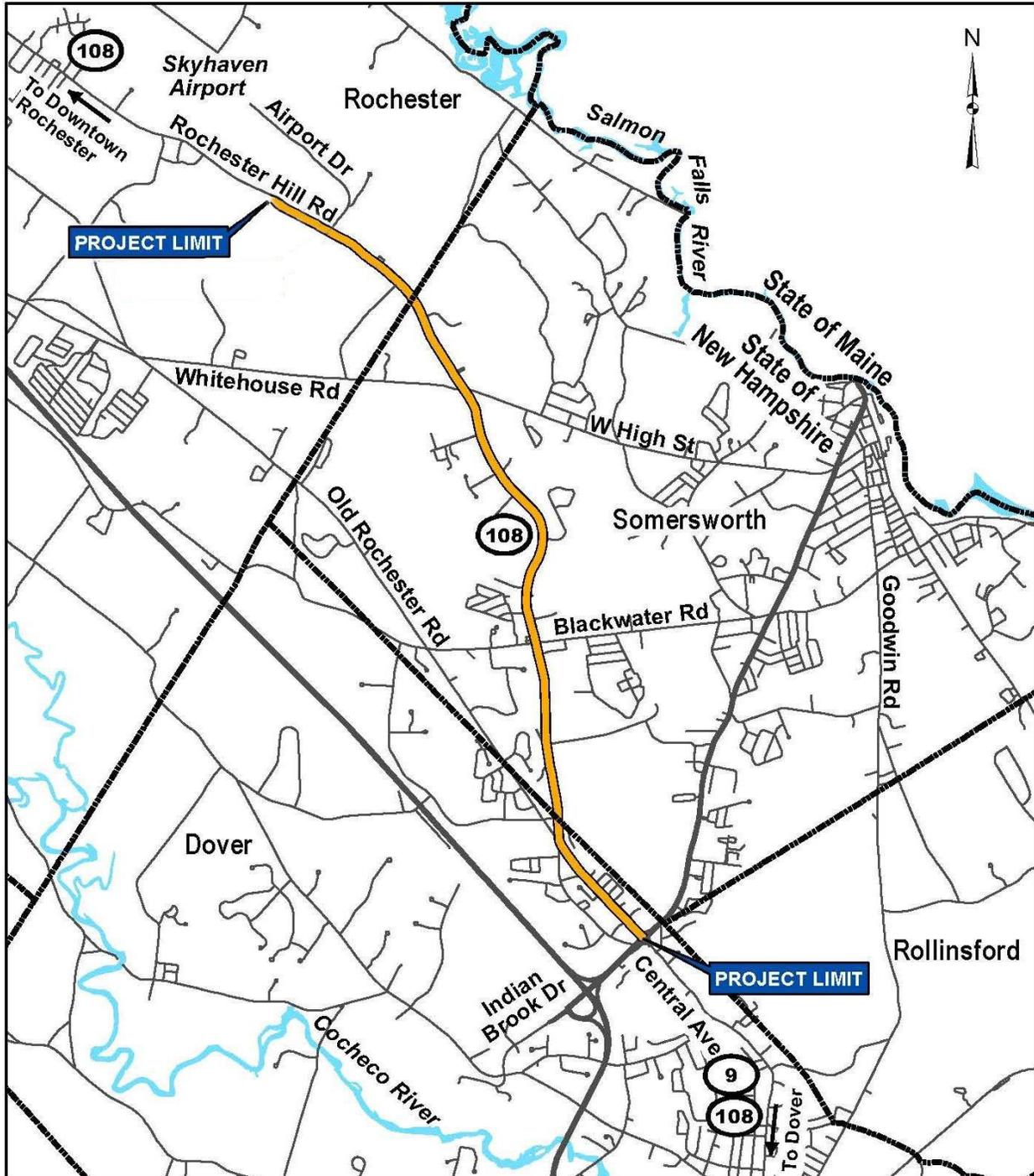
The objective of the project is to develop an alternative that will improve the safety and mobility of all users by applying 'Complete Street' principles with the central goal of achieving an appropriate balance between the needs of motorized, non-motorized, and transit users of the corridor. The three cities of Dover, Somersworth, and Rochester, in cooperation with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, have formed a NHRoute 108 Complete Streets Working Group to provide local perspective on the needs within the corridor. The Working Group will help define the project's purpose and need and guide the alternatives analysis as the project moves forward.

Corridor alternatives will be developed based on the results of the traffic study that is currently underway. The need for widening is assumed. However, the extent of widening has not yet been determined and will depend upon the number of additional lanes needed to meet current and future traffic demands.

In addition to overall corridor improvements, specific intersections will be studied to determine appropriate safety and capacity improvements, which could consist of signalized or roundabout control. These key intersections are listed below:

- NH Route 108/NH Route 9/Indian Brook Drive
- NH Route 108/Hotel Drive/Willand Pond Road
- NH Route 108/Long Hill Road
- NH Route 108/Blackwater Road
- NH Route 108/Whitehouse Road/West High Street (NH Route 236)
- NH Route 108/Innovation Drive

Figure 1 – Project Location



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

www.108TriCityCompleteStreets.com

1.3 Project Team

The project objectives will be achieved through collaboration with several key groups, three cities, organizations, professionals and private citizens. The project will be led by the NHDOT, the project sponsor. The NHDOT has retained a consultant, McFarland-Johnson, Inc., 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.

NHDOT Team			
Wendy Johnson, P.E.	Project Manager, NHDOT	271-2171	wendy.johnson@dot.nh.gov

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

Consultant Team		
Gene McCarthy, PE	Project Manager	MJ
Christine Perron, PWS	Environmental Documentation Manager	MJ
Jennifer Zorn, AICP	Public Involvement Manager	MJ

1.3 Project Working Group

A NH Route 108 Complete Streets Working Group has been formed that will act in an advisory capacity throughout the project duration. The members of the Working Group represent staff from the three cities as well as the Strafford County Regional Planning Commission and COAST Bus. The members of the Working Group, including their role and affiliation is provided below.

NH Route 108 Complete Streets Working Group	
Name/Position	Affiliation
Rad Nichols , Executive Director	COAST Bus
Michael Williams , Director of Operations	COAST Bus
Chris Parker , Assistant City Manager: Director of Planning and Strategic Initiatives	City of Dover
Gretchen Young , Assistant City Engineer	City of Dover
Peter Nourse , Director of Public Works	City of Rochester
Seth Creighton , Chief Planner	City of Rochester
Michael Bezanson , City Engineer	City of Rochester
Robert Belmore , City Manager	City of Somersworth
Shanna Saunders , Director of Development Services	City of Somersworth
Mike Bobinsky , Director Public Works	City of Somersworth
Gary Lemay , City Engineer	City of Somersworth
Jen Czyz , Executive Director	Stafford Regional Planning Commission
Colin Lentz , Sr. Transportation Planner	Stafford Regional Planning Commission
James Burdin , Regional Economic Development Planner	Stafford Regional Planning Commission

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 recommended alternative will be identified and presented to the public. Environmental documentation will occur in the form of a Categorical Exclusion and Section 4(f) Evaluation, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (commonly referred to as NEPA). Preliminary Design will be complete when the recommended alternative is presented to the public at a formal Public Hearing.

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, but the first phase of construction is tentatively schedule for 2024. Construction is anticipated to span multiple seasons.

2.2 Project Meetings

The NHDOT will hold a series of meetings with the public-at-large, local officials, public agencies, transportation and transit agencies, private transportation providers and other stakeholders. 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;
- The comply with the NEPA process which calls for public involvement during the process of evaluating the environmental, social, economic and cultural resource impacts from the project.
- 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 Listening Sessions:** The focus is to kick-off the project with members of the public, commuters and the three communities for the purposes of receiving feedback on all matters of concern or interest.
- **Working Group Meetings:** The focus is the discuss detailed aspects of the project design alternatives and solutions and to understand the specific needs of the three communities, the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, and COAST Bus.
- **Public Officials Meetings:** The focus of these meetings is to engage and inform the elected officials, city staff, the members of the city boards, 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.
- **Public Informational Meetings:** The focus of these meeting is to engage and inform the general public within the three cities about the details of the project and receive feedback. The meetings will be held throughout the project duration.
- **Walking Tours:** The focus is for the public to discuss areas of concern or areas of interest on-site with members of the project team.
- **Public Hearing:** The purpose of the Public Hearing is to inform the public of the recommended design alternative. This hearing serves to meet the requirements of the NHDOT public information process and the necessity of the layout of the proposed action.

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

Working Group and Public Meetings		
Entity	Location	Date/Time
Working Group Meeting	Strafford Regional Planning Commission	November 26, 2018
Public Listening Session	Dover Middle School	March 18, 2019 7pm to 9pm
Public Listening Session	Somersworth High School Career Technical Center	May 2, 2019 7pm to 9pm
Working Group Meeting	TBD	Spring 2019 to Winter 2020
Public Officials Meetings	TBD*	Spring 2019 to Winter 2020
Public Informational Meetings	TBD	Spring 2019 to Winter 2020
Walking Tours	TBD	Spring 2019 to Winter 2020
Public Hearing	TBD	2021

*TBD – To Be Determined

2.3 Project Schedule

The schedule is approximate and subject to change. As the project moves forward the schedule will be updated to reflect more specific dates.

Spring 2019 to Winter 2020	Public Meetings/Walking Tours Develop Design Alternatives Research Environmental Resources Coordinate with Federal & state natural and cultural resource agencies Evaluate Design Alternatives Evaluate Environmental Impacts Publish Environmental Document
Spring 2021 to Fall 2023	Public Hearing Final Design Right of Way Acquisitions / Easements Environmental Permitting
Summer 2024	Anticipated Start of Construction

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 posted on the project website. The website includes a description of the project, contact information, relevant links, maps, public meeting materials and presentations and other visual aids. As the project advances, additional information will be added to the website. Click the link below to access the project website.

www.108TriCityCompleteStreets.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. A project distribution list will be developed throughout the project duration and will be used to email information to interested parties.

3.3 Meetings

Listening Sessions, Public Officials Meetings, Public Informational Meetings, Walking Tours, Working Group 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 public meetings and the Public Hearing, news releases and/or notices will be provided to the three cities, stakeholders, major employers, local and regional 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 (<https://www.facebook.com/nhdot>) and their electronic newsletter that will be used to notify and inform the general public regarding upcoming meetings. In addition, a project specific Youtube page will be created to inform the public. Materials anticipated to be posted on the Youtube page include visualizations and video snippets regarding the project. These visual aids will also be posted on the project website.

3.6 Fact Sheets

Project specific Fact Sheets will be prepared for distribution electronically and handed out at some of the public meetings. The Fact Sheets will also be posted on the project website.

3.7 U.S. Postal Service Notices to Project Abutters

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