

Alton-Gilford 40634

NH Route 11 Planning Study – Public Informational Meeting

January 26, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Project Representatives in Attendance:

Tobey Reynolds, NHDT
Trent Zanes, NHDOT
Hans Weber, NHDOT

Darren Blood, GM2
Jennifer Mercer, GM2

Jeff Santacruce, Weston & Sampson

Russ Wilder, Alton Conservation Commission Member

Kevin Hayes, Gilford Selectman

The meeting was led by Tobey Reynolds using the attached PowerPoint as a guide.

1. Tobey opened with introductions of the NHDOT team and the consultant team.
2. Tobey explained that there was a Corridor Advisory Committee comprised of members of each community to provide input for the Study. Russ was introduced.
3. Tobey explained that this is a Study, not an actual project yet.
4. Tobey gave a brief discussion on the history of the Bypass.
5. Tobey explained that Corridor Advisory Committee was only asked to look at this section of NH Route 11. Someone asked why there weren't more alternatives of the entire "corridor" (to include NH Route 11A) looked at by the Committee and if those Committee members actually knew the area and drove it every day? Tobey replied that the Committee was comprised of community members so he surmised they did drive this area frequently and he explained that they were only tasked with looking at the existing NH Route 11 corridor from Ellacoya to Minge Cove Road.
6. Tobey explained that the Lakes Region Planning Commission could make recommendations to the DOT for other corridors to be evaluated.
7. The Department met with Alton & Gilford selectmen separately as well as with the Parks Commission, prior to this meeting.
8. Hans described the existing conditions of the Study corridor and how the "improved" sections to the east and west are much wider with a 12'-10' typical.
9. The Crash Data shows 142 reported accidents in a 10-year period throughout the corridor. A majority of those happened during the daytime and dry weather

- conditions, so it appears that there could be improvements made to the road to improve safety.
10. It was pointed out that the Crash Data numbers in the chart do not add up. Jeff responded that they aren't supposed to, so he will add a note to the final Study clarifying.
 11. The Department has received comments to slow people down, so intersection improvements at both Scenic Drive (Ellacoya State Park entrance) and Cherry Valley Road (NH Route 11) were explored as part of the Study.
 12. The Department looked at roundabouts at both locations as a "bookend" to this section of the corridor to let drivers know they are entering a different, slower area and potentially widening to an 11'-5' typical in between to make a more consistent, safer section throughout the corridor.
 13. The question was asked as to why you would want to "slow" them down, but widen to an 11'-5' typical section between the "bookends"? Wouldn't that make them go faster in-between the "slower" bookends? Hans responded that an 11'-5' typical section still typically results in lower speeds.
 14. Hans explained that the 11'-5' typical was not "feasible" in a relatively small area within the corridor due to proximity of houses, retaining walls, wetlands, and steep slopes near the lake (Ames Farm area). The question was then asked why you would you not have a continuous section between the "bookends"? Hans replied that there is still value in having a 5' shoulder in the areas that are feasible to lower the exposure to pedestrians, bicycles, and/or disabled vehicles making these areas safer. He noted that an 11'-5' is much different than the 12'-10' located to either side of this section of NH 11.
 15. Hans then described a second Ellacoya intersection alternative where the multiple entrances would be consolidated to just one intersection of Scenic Drive/Ellacoya.

Scenic Drive/Ellacoya Questions and Discussions:

16. Have you ever tried to go up the hill at Ellacoya in the winter? There are accidents every day there. Additional comment was that it's too steep to get up the hill with a roundabout at the bottom.
17. A comment made about having driven the corridor for 54 years. He suggested that the Department move the road to the south and then Lake Shore Park Road could be "offline" by itself. *(Note: later in the meeting it was pointed out that a prime wetland exists in this location.)*
18. Will turning lanes be provided at Scenic Drive/Ellacoya? Left turn lane warrants are met for the addition of a left turn lane however, the wide shoulder is used today as a bypass for eastbound traffic, and therefore the study shows this being perpetuated
19. It was noted that the vegetation to the west of the intersection on the inside of the curve limits the sight distance and should be cut back again like in the past.
20. Someone commented that he is not a fan of roundabouts as people do not slow down (especially coming down that hill). A T-intersection would work better.
21. Can we remove the passing zone going up the hill?

22. Will the “T” configuration cause worse backups because of less stacking room for vehicles waiting to enter Ellacoya? Tobey responded that the Department had discussions with the State Park and there are options for changing the driveway of the park entrance to provide refuge.
23. It was noted that traffic stacks up in the summer waiting to enter Ellacoya State Park.
24. Jim Gray – State Senator – is there a timeline for the this to be done?

NH Route 11A/Cherry Valley Road Intersection Questions/Discussion:

25. Hans discussed the Roundabout and “T” intersection alternatives.
26. It was asked how long the left turn lane would be because, in the winter, the left turns onto NH Route 11A will stack deeper than the storage shown on the alternative plan because of people headed to Gunstock.
27. Question about if it goes into 10-year Plan, would the Department come back to the public to discuss the plan and estimate? Tobey responded that yes, this is just a feasibility study so any project would come back to the public as part of that project development process.
28. It was asked who decides what gets done as a project, i.e. who is the approving body? Tobey explained the Project Development process:
 - a. The Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) work with the DOT to come up with “recommendations” for priority projects to be considered for the 10-year Plan.
 - b. The DOT holds Public Hearings around the state (20 plus) to introduce all the projects that might get added to the 10-year Plan and gathers public testimonies.
 - c. The DOT and the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) meet to decide which projects get added to the end of the 10-year Plan.
29. This report is being provided to the RPC for them to discuss with their member towns to decide which projects they want to put forth to the 10-year plan with their allocated regional dollars. This region gets between \$5 and \$7 million over two (2) years.
30. It is likely that a project would not move forward within this corridor for 8 years and this would be the start the design process.
31. Senator Gray provided additional information from the Legislature process:
 - a. Projects are sponsored by the Executive Council.
 - b. Then it goes to the legislature (can make changes).
 - c. Then to the governor for acceptance and approval.
32. The Design process will have many public meetings (Public Officials Meetings, 2 Public Informational Meetings, and 1 Public Hearing) and then Final Design starts.
33. A question was asked about when the last time the public can influence the project? Tobey responded: at the Public Hearing.
34. A question was asked about how one would have known that the bypass fell out of the 10-year plan after it was put there? Tobey responded that since there is no process for a public notification, then you would have had to been following the 10-Year Plan process to notice it was eliminated.
35. A question was asked about if the bypass would ever happen because we were told in this building that the bypass would never happen because they have no money for it?

- Tobey responded that the bypass would need to be a priority for the Regional Planning Commission for the Department to consider a project.
36. Senator Gray encouraged people to go to the road agent to find out what is happening with NHDOT projects as he is usually “in the know”.
 37. The study won’t be finalized until March.
 38. It was noted that the left turn into Lake Shore Park needs a left turn lane now, not 10-12 years from now. It was also mentioned that the State says there’s no land for that, but there is.
 39. Ellacoya to Ames Farm is the worst section of this road.
 40. No parking signs should be added at the Ellacoya Bar & Grill because vehicles are parked on both sides of the road and it’s very dangerous to try to drive through there, especially in the dark. If signs are added, then enforcement needs to happen too.
 41. It was noted that there is a Prime wetland on the south side of NH Route 11 across from the Ellacoya State Park entrance.
 42. A question was asked that since you have the “seasonal” speed limit, why can’t it always be posted for 35 (not “seasonal”) or even 30 mph? Tobey explained the process that Gilford went through to get that “seasonal” posting:
 - a. The Town of Gilford met with NHDOT traffic engineer to discuss down posting the strip.
 - b. The area was looked at by the State and a speed study was done.
 - c. The State agreed that if the Town puts up and takes down the signs (not the State), then it could be done.
 - d. It was noted that changing the sign won’t change the behavior.
 43. It was noted that the Alton selectmen would need to be engaged to get the speed limit reduced.
 44. A question about what is the process is for lowering the speed limit? Tobey responded that a Speed Study would need to be done. The speed is generally set by the “85 percentile”, which is the speed that 85% of the vehicles are going. This happened in Wolfeboro relatively recently.
 45. Someone questioned whether the safety of the residents was even a consideration?
 46. It was noted that the Alton Town Beach Access (at Riley Road) is very dangerous with people parking along both sides of the road. There are also people are backing out onto NH Route 11.
 47. It was noted that a slower speed limit in this corridor will help.
 48. There was a question about why the Scenic Drive speed limit is 25 mph. Tobey replied that it is a town road, not a state road. A Gilford Selectman replied, the selectmen lowered the speed limit and it is enforced.
 49. Kevin Hayes, a Gilford Selectman, noted that there are so many pedestrians.
 50. Commuters and trucks know this area and are driving very fast. The visitors are not familiar so they are going slower. This is a bad combination.
 51. A concern for trucks carrying fuel and the lake (environmental?), shouldn’t they go around? Tobey responded that it’s a State Road and you can’t restrict them.
 52. It was noted that some local folks avoid this section because of safety.

53. A question was asked if the bypass is “off the table”? Tobey responded that it is not “off the table”, but not a part of this Planning Study.
54. The question was asked as to why you would put \$30M into 4 miles of improvements and abandon the bypass?
55. Someone asked that in 10 years when this project goes to be built, will it be “enough” and added that a bigger look needs to be taken at this entire area.
56. Someone asked if EZPass was monitoring for speed enforcement? Tobey responded no.
57. It was noted that if the bypass is not built, then the widening of NH Route 11 would be a challenge to construct.
58. A question if the State purchased any ROW for the bypass? Tobey responded that he didn’t believe that any land was ever bought for the bypass.
59. A question was asked if money was the reason why the “not feasible” (red) section was labeled as such? Tobey said yes, all of the constraints made it so that widening was not feasible, but reconstruction of the existing roadway could be done within the same footprint that could provide some improvement.
60. Are you looking at taking ROW for the widening? Tobey responded that most of the widening would be within the ROW with some easements for slopes and/or drainage.
61. It was asked if ROW impacts are to one side or the other? Tobey responded that we don’t know yet.
62. It was asked if it is possible in a shorter time period to get some of these improvements done for safety? Tobey mentioned that there are other funding mechanisms that could help with this. The crashes would have to be looked as betterment funds are a possibility.
63. ROW clarification – 66’ is that 33’ on each side of the road? Tobey responded that yes, that’s approximate existing ROW line. The widening may need more room on one side than the other.
64. When gathering the traffic data, can you break the counts down by cars, trucks, and motorcycles? Yes, to cars and trucks, but no to motorcycles. They are counted as cars.
65. Do you have any historical traffic data for the corridor (truck traffic seems to be more today than in past)? Jeff responded that he would have to look for that. He noted counts were in 2021 on July 8, 9, 10 (Thursday, Friday, Saturday).
66. A question was asked if it is hard to count motorcycles? Jeff responded that it is difficult with tube detection, which was the method used.
67. A question was asked if there were counts done at Gunstock? Jeff responded no.
68. A question was asked if there is consideration for motorcycles during the design? Tobey responded that usually only for construction duration / time frame, not the design criteria for the roadway.
69. Someone commented to NOT add rumble strips. Tobey responded that they were not in any plan to do so.
70. A question was asked if there are features such as rock walls that are allowed to be torn down for highways? Tobey responded that there is a stone wall policy and staff

at DOT that evaluates every wall on every project. Senator Gray added that is similar to when there is a cemetery within the project limits.

71. A question was asked about the considerations for people in houses on that road that are “sleeping” (or worried about trucks crashing into their living room) for speed reduction? Tobey responded that it’s a State Road and they cannot limit trucks on it.
72. There was some discussion about modified engine brakes, not original equipment on the trucks.
73. There were multiple concerns for closeness of homes, especially with widening that would put the roadway even closer to the houses (and people would lose their lawns).
74. It was noted that Meadowbrook causes a lot of late-night traffic after the concerts.
75. It was noted that shorter term improvements were identified, including vegetation control, stop bar painting, and signage, that could be completed sooner by working with the towns.

Alton-Gilford 40634

NH Route 11 Planning Study

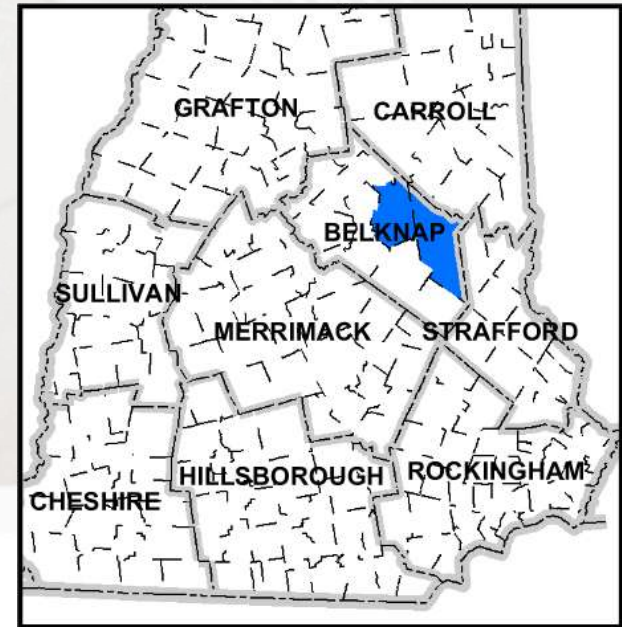


Public Informational Meeting - 1/26/2023

Project Location



- NH Route 11
- From ~Minge Cove Road in Alton to Ellacoya State Park in Gilford
- 5,379 vpd (2021 AADT)



Project History

- Sections of NH Route 11 were improved to a 12'-10' typical on either side of this project back in the 1960s
- A bypass project for the remaining subject section was initiated in the 1990s
- Project scope changed over the years, and eventually the project was eliminated from the TYP in 2009
- In 2015, the Lakes Region Planning Commission submitted a project application for consideration in the 2017-2026 TYP, which led to this project
- The unimproved section existing today is tightly constrained, but would benefit from some form of improvement

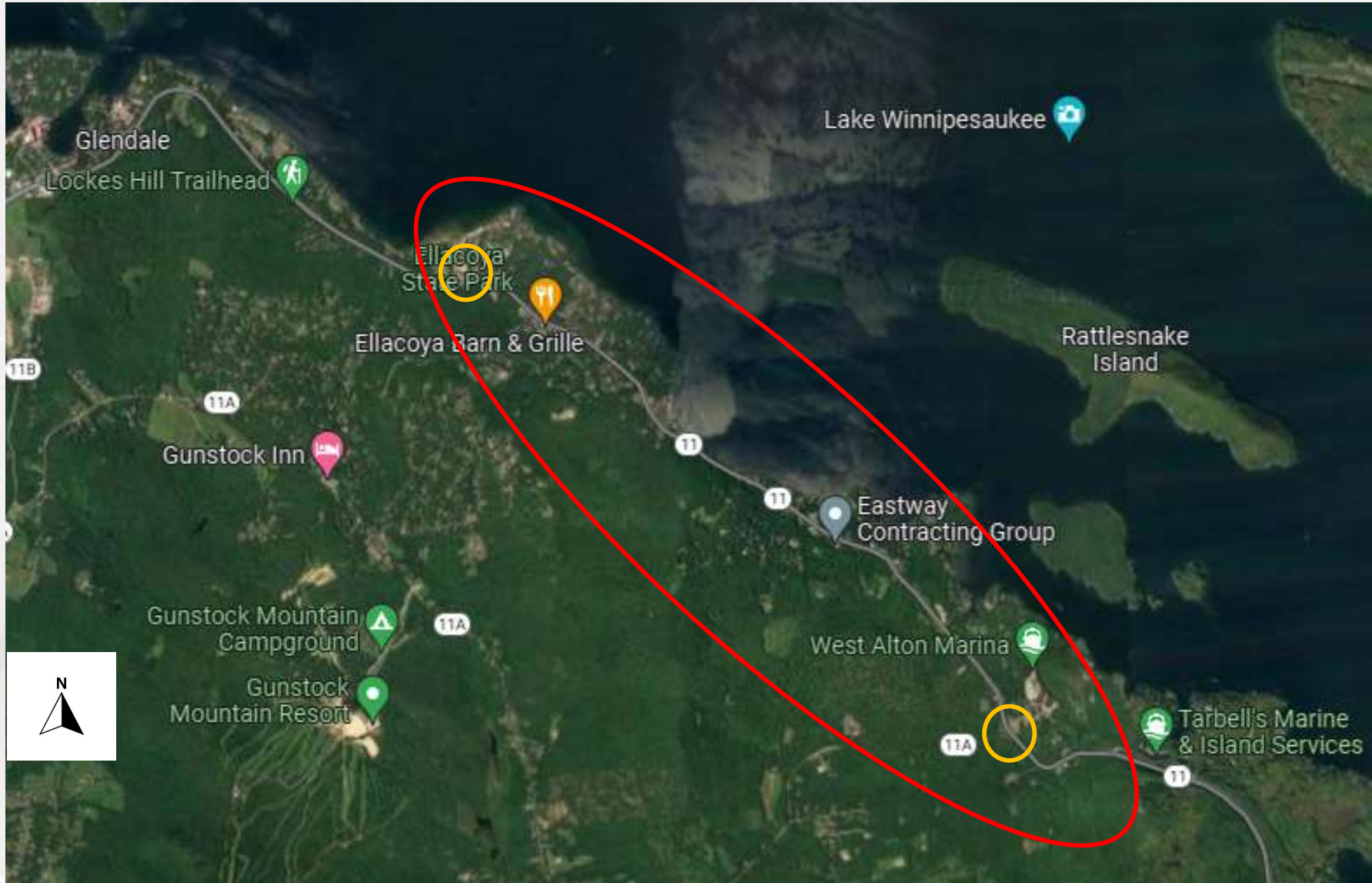
Corridor Advisory Committee

- To best evaluate the needs of the community, a Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) was assembled
- Committee members were drawn from Alton, Gilford, Laconia, and the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC)
- Four (4) meetings were conducted to shape the contents of the study
- Committee members have provided valuable insight about the problems that the roadway experiences, and have weighed in on what improvements they would appreciate seeing implemented

Public Outreach

- Two (2) Public Officials meetings were held to present the findings of the CAC to the Town Selectboards
 - Town of Alton on November 21st, 2022
 - Town of Gilford on December 14th, 2022

Aerial Overview



 Approximate Project Location

 Approximate Intersection Improvement Locations

Existing Conditions

Traffic Volume (2021): <i>*AADT Annual Average Daily Traffic</i>	5,379
Posted Speed Limit:	40 MPH (35 MPH seasonal downpost)
Lane Width:	10.5 - 12 Feet
Shoulder Width:	0.5 - 2 Feet
Right of Way Width:	Approx. 66' wide
Crash Data (2010-2019):	142 crashes; often dry and daytime

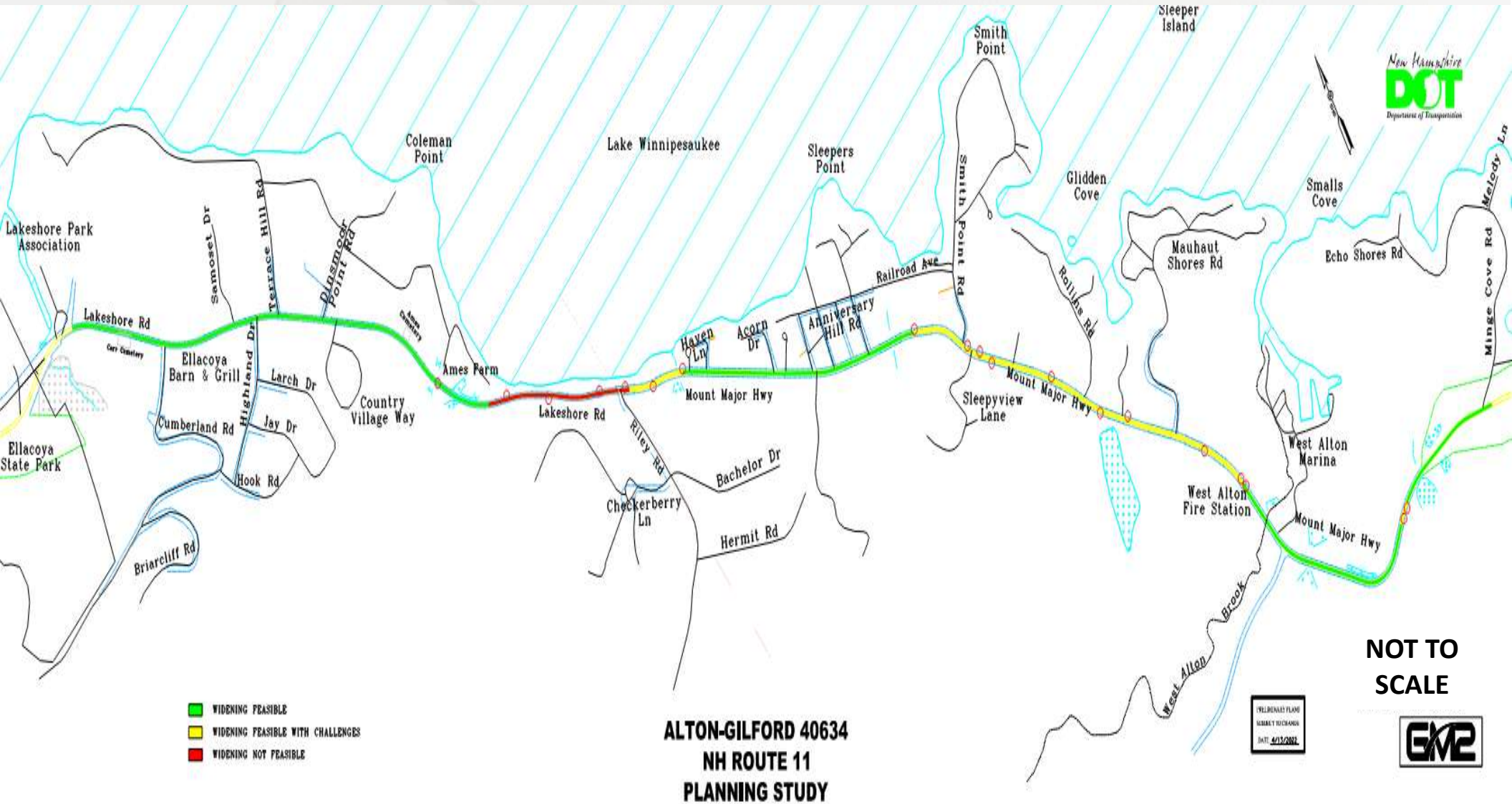
Recommendations

- After review of the corridor, short-term and long-term improvements were proposed
- Short-term improvements include:
 - Increased pavement marking and signage on side road approaches
 - Trimming vegetation near intersections to improve sight distance
 - Removing structures within the ROW near intersections to improve sight distance
 - Provide lighting at key intersections
- Long-term improvements include:
 - Corridor widening
 - Intersection configuration changes

Corridor Widening Feasibility

- Goal of widening the entire corridor to an 11'-5' typical where feasible
- A cursory review of the corridor has been conducted, and sections have been broken into three categories:
 - Widening Feasible
 - Widening Feasible with Challenges
 - Widening Not Feasible
 - (Areas circled in red on the next slide indicate conflicts)
- Additional pedestrian and bicycle accommodations could be implemented throughout the corridor as needed

Corridor Widening Feasibility



Scenic Drive Intersection Alternatives

- The existing intersection is comprised of three different legs connecting Scenic Drive to NH 11
- One of the three legs is two-directional, while the eastern legs are one-way only
- Horizontal and vertical curves on NH 11 create sight distance issues for vehicles entering and exiting Scenic Drive
- Ellacoya State Park drive needs to accommodate larger recreational vehicles
- Two alternatives proposed to address these issues:
 - Roundabout Alternative
 - T-Intersection Alternative

Scenic Drive Existing Intersection



Scenic Drive Roundabout Alt.



Scenic Drive T-Intersection Alt.



NH Rte 11A Intersection Alternatives

- The existing intersection was recently reconstructed to a four-leg configuration with West Alton Marina Road
- The W. Alton Marina Road and NH 11A “Cherry Valley Road” legs are stop controlled, NH 11 is the thru-movement
- Speeds moving west-bound on NH 11 tend to be higher due to the large downgrade east of the intersection; concerns with left-turn vehicle queuing especially during winter months
- WB left-turn warrant met for movements from NH 11 onto NH 11A
- Two alternatives proposed to address these issues:
 - Roundabout Alternative
 - Left-Turn Lane Alternative

NH Rte 11A Existing Intersection



NH Rte 11A Roundabout Alt.



NH Rte 11A Turn-Lane Alt.



High-Level Cost Estimates

- Corridor Widening
 - Segment 1: Scenic Drive to Ames Farm \$4.75 million
 - Segment 2: Riley Road to Smith Point Road \$4.0 million
 - Segment 3: Smith Point Road to W. Alton Fire Station \$4.0 million
 - Segment 4: W. Alton Fire Station to Minge Cove Road \$5.0 million
- Scenic Drive Intersection
 - Reconfiguration: \$300,000 Roundabout: \$3.0 million
- NH 11A Intersection
 - Turn-Lane: \$500,000 Roundabout \$3.0 million
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations
 - Corridor-wide \$500,000

Project Schedule

- Team to evaluate comments over the next couple weeks
- Finalize the Planning Study by March 2023

Questions/Comments?



Contact Information

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