

November 19, 2007

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: PELHAM 14491
(NH 111A, Improvements to Town Center Intersections)

DATE OF CONFERENCE: November 15, 2007

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Pelham Police Community Conference Room

ATTENDED BY: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OTHERS

Chris Waszczuk
Craig Green
Bill Oldenburg
Trent Zanes
Kevin Nyhan

(See Attached List)

SUBJECT: Working Group Meeting #6

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Introduction

Chris Waszczuk welcomed everyone to the sixth Working Group meeting and began with attendee introductions. He noted the purpose of the this meeting was to discuss what came out of the September 13, 2007 Public Workshop/Public Informational Meeting, have a presentation and discussion of the preferred alternative(s), to get consensus on the preferred alternative(s) to take to the formal Public Hearing, discuss the future Public Hearing format, advertisement, and notification, discuss the schedule and miscellaneous issues, and determine the need for another Working Group meeting.

Chris discussed where the project was in the CSS schedule. He pointed out that the project was in the Preliminary Design stage, which started in August 2006 and would culminate with a formal Public Hearing in the spring of 2008. Following the Public Hearing, the next steps in the project development process include performing the final design (assuming there was a successful Public Hearing), developing right-of-way purchase plans to acquire the necessary property rights to construct and maintain the project, securing the environmental permits, and performing the construction (which is anticipated to begin in 2010).

Recap of Public Workshop/Informational Meeting

Chris described the workshop format, which included a display of the material and an opportunity for informal one-on-one question and answer discussions between the public and staff. The Workshop was followed up with a formal presentation of four (4) alternatives that

included one signalized intersection option and three (3) roundabout options. Chris noted that the presentation also touched on the funding and the time line for the project, and how the Town had received federal earmarked funds for the project, which were not part of the financial constraint of the State's Ten Year Plan. The current schedule is to begin construction in 2010.

Temporary improvements were presented at the meeting and computer simulations were provided to demonstrate what affect they might have on the intersections. It was noted that just placing signals at the intersections would result in congestion and potential safety problems.

Question: What temporary options can be done to improve safety at the intersections until the project can be completed? Would a 4-way stop be a possible temporary measure to consider?

Answer: Chris noted that computer simulations of the 4-way stop and the temporary signals found that these options would produce more congestion and considerable back-ups and lead to safety problems.

Discussion: There was a suggestion that Gibson Drive (currently a one-way road) be made two-way as a temporary measure now. The concern with this suggestion is the safety issue with the combination of the sharp skew and poor sight distance at the intersection of Old Bridge St. and Gibson Drive. Jeff Gowen said that he had had a conversation with the selectmen concerning putting in a 4-way stop at the Main St. intersection and they had asked him to contact the DOT to determine the feasibility. He had contacted Bill Lambert, Bureau of Traffic, and his office is reviewing the suggestion. The Working Group noted that there had been 2 bad accidents at these intersections in a 10 day period and felt there needed to be specific answers on why putting in a 4-way stop wouldn't work. Other temporary solutions were suggested including speed humps, improving the signing, and adding flashing beacons with strobes. Chris felt a temporary solution should be a multi-prong effort that included enforcement. Jeff Gowen agreed to invite members of the Working Group to a meeting with the Bureau of Traffic staff when they came out to review the signing. Chris agreed to revisit the potential temporary solution options and to put together a response regarding the 4-way stop after the Bureau of Traffic had completed their review.

Eminent Domain was discussed at the meeting. Chris explained that the Department would prefer to avoid the use of condemnation. Once right-of-way purchase plans are complete the Department will have an independent appraisal done for the affected properties, and offer fair market value for the property or easements needed for the project. If the Department reaches an impasse with the property owner, then eminent domain would be used to secure the property and the owner would be given fair market value compensation for the rights to the property. The owner then could choose to accept the offer or seek additional compensation through the Board of Tax and Land Appeals. If the owner still was not satisfied, they could pursue their argument for additional compensation through the Superior Court.

Question: If there is an owner who refuses the purchase offer, how long might it hold up the project?

Answer: At this time we do not know, however the schedule for the project does allow 12 months for the right-of-way process.

Disposition of the Fire Station was also covered at the Workshop/Informational meeting. Chris stressed that the Fire Station warrant article and the project should be kept as two separate issues. His concern was that if the project alternative required the removal of the Fire Station, and the warrant article to provide a new Fire Station did not pass it could mean a loss or significant delay

of the project. He suggested that there be two alternatives; one impacting the Fire Station and one avoiding the Fire Station building.

Disposition of Old Bridge Street was discussed and it was noted that as part of both roundabout alternatives, this street would become a local road.

The issue of potential congestion between the two roundabouts occurring due to the close proximity of the two roundabouts was brought up at the Workshop/Informational meeting. Chris noted that the Department had performed a computer simulation of the layout and felt it would not be an issue. He noted that the close proximity of the two roundabouts could actually have a traffic calming affect.

Chris also passed out a summary of the written comments received at the Workshop/Informational meeting (attached). It was noted that a majority of the respondents felt the roundabout options had more of the attributes the community desired than the signalized intersection options.

Discussion of a Preferred Alternative

Alternative A



Alternative A

Roundabout at Gibson Dr./ Marsh Rd. and Marsh Rd./Main St./Nashua Rd./Windham Rd.

Bill Oldenburg presented five issues associated with feedback received at the Workshop/Informational meeting for the roundabout option 'A' alternative, which included Gibson Drive, the Boulevard Concept, sidewalk connectivity, and property impacts and acquisition.

Gibson Drive – will be made two-way. As part of this concept Old Bridge Street North would be brought into a 'T' intersection with Gibson Drive and Woodbury Ave. would continue to 'T' into Old Bridge Street North. Gibson Drive would be shifted northerly away from the existing residences to provide an opportunity for creating a buffer between the road and the homes. The

and a sidewalk along the northerly side. The intent is not to impact the Town Common. There was a suggestion that diagonal parking be used instead of parallel parking to increase the number of spaces. This will be investigated. There was a concern for the loss of parking in front of the Congregational Church. It was suggested that parking be considered in the fire station area proposed to be grassed over. This will be investigated. Jeff Gowen asked if a waterline could be run to the roundabout island to allow the Town to water plantings in the island. There was also a request to look at the possibility of making the left turn movement from Common Street to Main Street an easier move as opposed to the skew that exists today. It was agreed to investigate these items.



Figure 3. Common Street from Marsh Rd. to Main St.

Sidewalk Connectivity- Bill Oldenburg reviewed the areas of proposed sidewalks. On Gibson Drive, the sidewalk is on the westerly side and begins at the cemetery and runs to Marsh Road and runs along Marsh Road to the southerly drive of the Town Complex. There was a suggestion to have a sidewalk be considered on both sides of Gibson Drive. Sidewalks are proposed for both sides of Common Street. On Nashua Road, a sidewalk is proposed on the westerly side from the roundabout to the funeral home. The cross walk on Nashua Road will remain in its current location. No sidewalk is proposed on the easterly side of Nashua Road due to the close proximity of a home. There was a discussion of the type of sidewalk material that would be proposed. It was noted that asphalt is generally proposed due to the cost, however, if there was a Town ordinance for a particular type of sidewalk, that it would be used. Pelham has no ordinance that requires a specific type of sidewalk. Jeff Gowen felt if the proposal called for using asphalt, he would prefer a stamped colored asphalt sidewalk. Jeff Gowen also asked that a cost comparison be made between an asphalt sidewalk and a concrete sidewalk.

Property Impacts- Bill Oldenburg reviewed the potential property impacts for this alternative. He noted that the majority of the impacts were with the relocation of Gibson Drive and the relocation of the fire station. Mr. LaMontagne noted there is a septic system in close proximity to the Marsh Road/Old Bridge Street intersection.

Alternative B



Alternative B

Roundabout at Gibson Dr./ Marsh Rd. and Marsh Rd./Main St./Nashua Rd./Windham Rd.
Avoiding the Fire Station

The major difference in Alternatives A and B is that with Alternative B the fire station building remains, but will require an auxiliary building (shown in red on Alternative B plan) be constructed to mitigate the loss of three bays of the existing fire station building. It was suggested that Alternative A and B include emergency signals at the drives out of the fire station

Working Group Recommendation

The Working Group felt the modifications were positive and should proceed to the Public Hearing. It was agreed that if the fire station warrant doesn't pass at the upcoming Town meeting, that two alternatives should be shown at the Public Hearing, and if the warrant does pass, then Alternative A would be the preferred alternative shown at the Hearing.

It was felt one more Working Group meeting should be held before the Public Hearing to get input on the fire station from the fire chief and to make any additional modifications.

Public Hearing Discussion

Chris suggested that an open viewing period from 4:00 to 6:00 pm (similar to the public workshop/informational meeting) be provided prior to the formal Public Hearing. Chris noted that a three-member commission appointed by the Executive Council will chair the Public Hearing, and they would listen to the testimony at the Hearing. Chris explained the notification process. He also noted that an environmental document would be developed to document the natural and cultural impacts of the project. Chris noted that the environmental document would need to be available to the public at least 30 days prior to the Hearing.

Miscellaneous Issues and topics for Discussion

The property owner on Gibson Ave, at the corner of Marsh Road noted there was a drainage easement across his property for the Town Complex drainage, and that the culvert carrying the

drainage was collapsing. Jeff Gowen agreed to have Don Foss (Road Agent) go into the field and investigate the issue.

Jeff Gowen noted he was going to look into different types of gateway signing treatments from a local sign maker, and would be discussing this with the Selectmen.

Next Meeting

The next Working Group meeting will be held January 24 at 6:00 pm in the Pelham Police Training Room. (Subsequent to the meeting, the Working Group meeting was re-scheduled to January 31, 2008 at 6:00 pm due to several conflicts.)

Submitted by:

Craig A. Green, PE
Administrator, Highway Design

Noted by: WJO, CMW

cc: W. Cass
C. Waszczuk
W. Oldenburg
Tom Gaydos, Pelham Town Administrator

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Pelham 14491 Working Group Meeting # 6
Attendance List November 15, 2007

Working Group Members

Marc Duquette	Center Resident
Shirley Sutton	Center Resident
John Crane	Pelham Funeral Home – Business
Elizabeth Leonard	Pelham Senior Citizen Rep (replaced Joyce Mason)
Diane M. Brunelle	Senior Center
Leo Thibault	Former NRPC Commissioner
Jean-Guy Bergeron	Selectman/State Rep
Bob Haverty	Selectman
Lt. Gary Fisher	Pelham Police
Jeff Gowan	Planning Director
Jim Lamontagne	Citizen
Cliff Hayes	Citizen
Chris Waszczuk	NH DOT

NH DOT and NRPC Staff

Craig Green	NH DOT
Bill Oldenburg	NH DOT
Trent Zanes	NH DOT
Kevin Nyhan	NH DOT

Written Comments Received from September 13, 2007 Public Informational Meeting

Alternative Preference						Comment Summary	Fire Station Opinion
Dual Roundabouts Alt. A	Dual Roundabouts Alt. B	Dual Signals Alt. A	Single 5-Leg Roundabout	Other			
1	1					Appreciated presentation and website. Absolutely no signals. New fire station needed.	New
2		2				Initially supported 4-way stop signs. Does not believe new fire station is in the near future.	Old
3					1	Opposed to any option other than placing a signal (no road widening). Against funding a new fire station.	Old
4		1				-	-
5			1			Experience with Meredith roundabout during Bike Week left bad impression.	-
6	1					Recommended computing the square footage of pavement for each alternative.	-
7		1				Town cannot afford a new fire station and high school at the same time.	Old
8	1					Second choice would be Dual Roundabouts Alt. B	-
9	1					Please construct sidewalk on south side of Nashua Road. Would like town officials to estimate costs of replacing fire station.	-
10	1					Could the utilities be relocated underground? What would it cost?	-
11				1		Unable to attend Informational Meeting. Believes one roundabout would be easier to use and will have less congestion.	-

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