

January 29, 2009

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: EPSOM
X-A000(830)
15623
US 4/NH 107/North Road intersection safety improvements study

DATE OF CONFERENCE: January 26, 2009

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Epsom Town Office

ATTENDED BY: NHDOT
C. Green
J. Butler

OTHERS

Bob Blodgett – Selectman	Rep. Maureen Mann
Joanne Randall – Selectman	Rep. Margaret Porter
Keith Cota – Selectman (recused)	Rep. Carole Brown
Wayne Preve – Police Chief	Rep. Charles Yeaton
Dave Palermo – Deputy Fire Chief	Rep. James Sullivan
Gordon Ellis – Road Agent	
approximately 25 other attendees	

SUBJECT: Project Review with Selectmen

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

C. Green began the meeting by noting the interest the Town and local Legislators had expressed in improving the safety of the US 4/NH 107/North Road intersection. He explained that the intersection had also been identified through the work the Department had done with the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). C. Green explained that the current Federal highway funding law, known by its acronym of SAFETEA-LU, created the Highway Safety Improvement Program to identify highway safety issues and provide for modest safety improvements that would achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries. New Hampshire receives \$5.5 million per year to implement modest safety improvements in locations where crash data indicates safety deficiencies. C. Green stressed that the HSIP is intended to be data driven; that locations identified to use these funds must have a crash history that demonstrates there is a safety need.

The NHDOT develops an annual “5% Report” identifying the State’s most severe safety needs. The Department identified locations with the highest crash rates for roadway segments and highest number of crashes for intersections for each functional class of roadway. From the “5% Report” further analysis of the locations was used to narrow the number of locations to 30. The intersection of US 4/NH 107/North Road was not initially included in the top 30 locations, however, it was added to the list after additional crash data provided by the local police department was reviewed.

C. Green then asked the Selectmen and attendees to discuss their observations of the problems and issues they experienced at the intersection:

- Left turns out of NH 107 during the peak AM and PM peak traffic periods on US 4 are very difficult. Very few gaps in traffic.
- The crest on US 4 to the east of the intersection limits sight distance for vehicles trying to turn left from NH 107.
- The crest on US 4 to the east of the intersection also hinders recognition of the upcoming intersection for vehicles traveling west on US 4.
- The curve on US 4 to the west of the intersection hinders recognition of the upcoming intersection for vehicles traveling east on US 4.
- A vehicle using the eastbound right turn lane on US 4 can hide an eastbound through vehicle from the view of someone trying to exit from NH 107. This was the case with the recent motorcycle fatality.
- Vehicle speeds on US 4 are high.
- Lots of trucks on US 4.
- Poor sight distance to the stop sign on the NH 107 approach.

Representative Maureen Mann expressed her strong support for signalizing the intersection, and submitted a petition and several emails from people supporting a traffic signal at the intersection. She noted that Deerfield students attend Concord High, and many have to make the left turn out of NH 107. She also noted that Senator Barnes (who could not attend) supports signalization and flashing advance signing. Several others also spoke in favor of signalizing the intersection.

Police Chief Wayne Preve expressed concern that a signal could create problems for drivers on US 4 due to the limited sight distances approaching the intersection. He recommended flattening the crest and/or an aggressive advance warning sign package.

Selectman Robert Blodgett was skeptical of installing signals due to the limited sight distance to the signals along US 4. He suggested that a flashing beacon would be a more appropriate solution for now, and that US 4 be reconstructed to improve the crest to the east and horizontal curve to the west. He also expressed concern with eastbound trucks having difficulty getting started on the upgrade if a signal were installed. Craig Green noted that there are no

future projects currently envisioned for this intersection area, so whatever is done with this current project will likely be it for the foreseeable future. Significant reconstruction of US 4 will likely be beyond the scope of this project.

R. Andrew Robertson, Deerfield Selectman, submitted a letter from the Deerfield board of Selectmen expressing their support for signaling the intersection.

It was noted that there used to be a flashing beacon at the intersection. It was suggested that the beacon be reinstalled immediately as a short-term solution.

One person recommended that advance activated signs be installed that would say "Red Light Ahead" when the signal is red on US 4.

It was noted that there are planned housing developments in Epsom on North Road and on Lords Mill Road, which will generate more traffic.

It was suggested that the speed limit be reduced to 40 mph through the intersection, with or without signalization.

Some people commented that the other signalized intersections in Epsom and Northwood work well.

One abutter noted that signals will create more noise from the trucks starting and stopping on US 4.

It was asked how much funding is available for the project? Craig Green responded that the amount for any specific project can be somewhat flexible, however, the intent of the HSIP program is to implement improvements that are modest in scope. No upper limit per project has yet been established, but it would likely be less than \$500,000.

Craig Green explained that the Department is in the process of collecting topographic survey and updated traffic data. It is currently envisioned that a conceptual proposal would be developed by late Spring of this year. The Department would then schedule a Public Informational meeting to gather input on the proposal. C. Green noted that the schedule for advertising a project would depend on the issues or complications that could occur (such as permitting, need for easements, etc.) It was felt that if no major issues arise during the design process or at the Public Informational meeting it could be possible to advertise a construction project this year. Completion of a project advertised this year may extend into the following year.

Submitted by:

John D. Butler, P.E.
Preliminary Design Supervisor

cc: W. Cass
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