

May 4, 2009

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: PITTSFIELD
X-A000(829)
15622
NH 28 / Leavitt Road Safety Improvements Study

DATE OF CONFERENCE: April 29, 2009

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Pittsfield Town Hall

ATTENDED BY:	<u>NHDOT</u>	<u>Others</u>
	C. Green	Pittsfield Selectmen
	T. Zanes	Town Administrator
	W. Lambert	Fire Chief
	K. Mudgett	representative of NHRPC
		Approximately 16 residents

SUBJECT: Project Review with Selectmen

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

C. Green noted the Town had expressed interest in signaling the intersection of NH 28 and Leavitt Road. He explained that the current Federal highway funding law, known by its acronym of SAFETEA-LU, established the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to address the number of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on the nation's highways. New Hampshire receives \$5.5 million per year in HSIP funding to implement modest safety improvements in locations where crash data indicates safety deficiencies. The FHWA requires each state to compile an annual "5% Report" identifying the state's most severe safety needs. The NHDOT developed its "5% Report" and identified locations (both intersections and road segments) with the highest number or rate of crashes. This location is one of 30 that have been identified from the 5% Report for further study.

K. Mudgett described the existing conditions on NH 28 and Leavitt Rd. and reviewed the major issues brought up at the previous public meeting. Vehicles waiting at Leavitt Rd. to turn onto or cross NH 28 have difficulty finding safe gaps to enter partly because they have trouble judging the speed of oncoming traffic, and also because right turning traffic on NH 28 will tend to block the view of the through traffic. The need for a crosswalk crossing NH 28 was also mentioned at the last meeting.

K. Mudgett then went on to describe the proposed design and how it addresses the issues and concerns mentioned. First and foremost the signalization of the intersection should provide safe movement of vehicles off Leavitt Rd. The proposed layout of NH 28 will add a separated

left turn lane, through lane, and right turn lane while Leavitt Rd. will keep its single lane in each direction. A crosswalk will be added with button activated separate phase in the signal.

An estimation of the function of the intersection in the construction year was given as level of service A and in 20 years the intersection is estimated to function at LOB B. As a comparison today the westbound direction of Leavitt rd functions at LOS F.

The proposed intersection should have adequate sight distance over the existing crest curve, the spruce trees at the northwest corner will need to be cleared for sight distance in that direction. The proposed layout will widen the road in the area of the right turn lanes and hold the edge of pavement on the opposite sides. The existing 10 foot shoulders will be reduced to 4 feet next to through lanes and 2 feet next to right turn lanes in order to minimize impacts. The existing 10 foot shoulders will be reconstructed to add strength under the proposed travelway.

The speed limit on NH 28 will be dropped through the intersection from 50 mph to 40 mph. The utility pole at the northwest corner will need to be relocated but water and sewer should not be impacted by this project. All work will be contained in the existing right of way.

Questions and Answers:

Are there going to be sidewalks added in addition to the crosswalk?

No, there will only be platforms constructed next to the signal poles in the location of the crosswalk. In addition, the town will be required to sign an agreement to maintain the platforms year round to provide access to the pedestrian buttons at the signals and to provide a cleared area off the highway to wait prior to crossing.

Since you are tearing up the road will it be a good opportunity for a sewer project to come through at the same time?

The work will only excavate to replace drainage at certain locations. The work on NH 28 will not require excavation in the travel lanes and only minor excavation on the shoulders. Subsequent to the meeting a selectman noted there were no plans developed and he was just thinking if something had to be done to the sewer line he would try to get it included in the project, if the project was proposing to excavate the whole roadway. He was going to talk to the person in charge with the town sewer and see if anything needed to be done and he would be in contact.

Will bicycles have difficulty using the 2 foot shoulder?

Through traveling bicycles would travel between the through and right turn lane and not be in the shoulder. Right turning bicycles and bicycles would be reducing speed within that lane to make their turn. A 12 foot right turn and 2 foot shoulder should give some room for bicyclists under that movement.

Will the Globe business sign need to move? It is electronic and would be costly to do so.

We are still looking into the final slope limits and will review its location proximity.

What will be the cost of the project?

We haven't determined costs yet but would estimate between \$750,000 and \$800,000.

Will this intersection have a separate left turn phase or will it be permissive left turning like at the NH 107 intersection?

We are still reviewing the signal phasing but the initial layout models function well under the permissive left scenario. There are differences between the layout of this intersection compared to that at NH 107. At Leavitt Rd. the left turn lanes are lined up directly, allowing for good sight of oncoming traffic, better than that at NH 107. We are looking into the use of flashing yellow

arrow, which, if used here, will also be installed at the NH 107 intersection for consistency. It is believed that the need to yield is more intuitive with the flashing yellow arrow than from a solid green ball.

Were any other options looked at other than signalization? Like just reducing speed for example.

Minor changes have been implemented, however the accident history and type of accidents demonstrate there is a need for further improvement as being proposed. A speed study by the Regional Planning Commission found that a significant number (40%) of vehicles were traveling at or greater than 55 mph and just down posting the speed limit without other improvements to the intersection may not necessarily change driving behavior.

Will there be opticom installed at the signal?

Yes, opticom will be included in the signal project.

There was a concern expressed with having a short segment on NH 28 posted for 40 mph in the area of the intersection and a short segment of a 40 mph posting for the NH 107 intersection, and both intersection segments having a 50 mph posted speed limit between them.

The Department has not examined the placement of the down posting (to 40 mph) for the intersection yet. The issue of the remaining 50 mph posting will be examined by District 5 after the project is completed, to determine if the whole segment of NH 28 from NH 107 through the Leavitt Rd. intersection should be posted for 40 mph.

Because of the close proximity of Globe drive and the fact that the parking lot accesses both Loudon Road and Leavitt Rd. is there a chance that Globe employees will avoid Leavitt Road because of the signal wait, and would people cut through Globes lot to avoid Leavitt rd?

It is difficult to guess peoples driving behavior but it is likely that people will use Leavitt Rd. because the signal will provide for safe access to NH 28 for left turns and through movements.

There was a concern expressed for when the Globe employees leave work that there would be long backups on Leavitt Rd. They asked if the signal would take into consideration the increased traffic at work let out and that if work hours are changed whether the signal time would adjust automatically?

The signal can be set with a longer maximum green time for Leavitt rd. in that peak hour(work let out). Any adjustment to that peak hour would not be automatic. The signal would need to be re-programmed manually to adjust to the new time.

There is a pipe located on Leavitt Rd. just 130 feet south of the intersection that has a buried outlet. The outlet also has a very deep hole where vehicles have ended up over the years. Is there any way this can be reconstructed differently?

Our work does not extend that far and there are right of way restrictions on working at that location, however, we will look into it.

Mr. Graeme who lives at the corner of NH 28/Leavitt Rd. was concerned with the loss of a screen of trees he had planted (in the State owned ROW) as a shield for errant vehicles. He asked if they could be replaced.

The Department will meet with Mr. Graeme to discuss the loss of the trees. He indicated he would like to be notified prior to the project beginning so he could move a lilac bush he planted (in the ROW).

There appeared to be a consensus for support for the project as shown, and the next step will be to develop final plans and bid documents.

Submitted by: Kirk Mudgett

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Noted By: C. Green

cc: Attendees
M. Dugas
P. Mitchell
M. Hazlett

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